

AT RISK BEHAVIORS AMONG LEARNERS AND EDUCATIONAL
ATTAINMENTS IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF
WAMBA ZONE, SAMBURU EAST DISTRICT- KENYA

BY

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND
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UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

Lolkirik Thomas hereby declare that this research report is my original work and has never been presented to any other university for academic assessment whereby other works of other researchers have been used, acknowledgements has been fully made and in some cases quotations made.

Signature.....

Date.....**31st AUGUST, 2010**

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APPROVAL

This is a report on At **Risk Behavior among Learners in Upper Primary and Educational Attainments in Selected Primary Schools of Wamba Zone, Samburu East District Kenya** and was submitted for examination purpose with my approval as University supervisor.

Signature.....*Deborah Taligoola*..... Date *23/8/10*.....

Mrs. TALIGoola DEBORAH

SUPERVISOR

DEDICATION

This work is affectionately dedicated to my beloved wife Francisca Lekupe and children Kahelo Cleophas, Hilary Ltoninge Lolkirik, Rita Simalo Saila, Nairishu Lolkirik, Losurwai Lolkirik and Mercy Lolkirik for their moral and spiritual support they offered to me throughout this research.

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I convey special thanks to my lecturer in Kampala International University who provided executive teaching and guidance to me Mrs. Taligoola Deborah N.

I would also like to take this opportunity of formally acknowledging the encouragement given to me by my dear colleague Mr. Franco Lekisaat, Head teacher Loonjorin primary school and dear father Musa Kasiata Lolkirik who also blessed me when coming to Kampala International University.

On a more personal note I thank my dear wife who took care of our children without being tired or complain.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined risky behavior adopted by the young people in selected primary schools, and how this has affected their academic progress in Wamba Zone Samburu East district Kenya. The researcher adopted the following objectives for the study; to investigate the common types of risky behavior adopted by youth, to find out why the youth have adopted such risky behavior and to assess the negative outcomes of the youth risky behavior. Using a convenient sampling technique, a total of twenty four respondents were picked at random to participate in this study. Quantitative and qualitative methods were also used in this study.

Finding in the study established that rate of crime and violence amongst the young people of school going age was moderate as per seventeen teachers, although three teachers rated it as high. It was also established that due to poverty, some children fail to enroll in school. Also findings shows that fewer schools offered parents and caregivers support in effective parenting even fewer schools offered vocational skills to young boys and girls, that just in case they do not make it they can continue earning a living. Recommendations were also made. Remedial education to those young boys and girls who have already adopted at risk behavior must be provided. This therefore calls for school based diagnosis.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Youth

The stage during which a person moves out of childhood into adulthood

This study categorized the youth as those aged between 12-24

At risk youth

Those young people who face environment social and family conditions that hinder their personal development and their successful integration into the society as productive citizens (Barker and Fontes, 1996)

Risky behaviors

Leaving school early, engaging in unsafe sex early

Risky sexual behavior

Initiating ones sexual life at a young age, engaging in unprotected sexual activity

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

About 200 million people between the age of 12 and 24 years live in Africa today and their share of population rising. By 2010 the youth will account for 28% of the population making the Sub Saharan Africa the youngest region in the World (Garcia and Fares, 2008). The cohort means that the time has never been more urgent to invest in young people in Africa.

Realizing the potential of the youth in Kenya is not only essential to their well being but also to the long term welfare of the whole region. That is why the young people's families, communities and government have a responsibility to help the youth reach the potentials.

According to the Human Development Report the Youth constitute 42.5% of the total population of Kenya (United Nation Development Program, 2006). Realizing the potential of the youth in the country, therefore is not only essential to their well being but also to the long term welfare of the entire country. Therefore the young people's families, communities and the government as well as private, non profit and international organizations have a responsibility to help the youth reach their potential. Infact, there has been successes, as well as failures. How to build on these successes and correct the failure is the subject of this study.

Young people are generally perceived to be as the source of many problems plaguing the Kenyan nation today. Crime violence, illegal drugs are permeating the country. This is an indicator that the youth have some factors in their lives which lead them to engage in behaviors or experiences events that are harmful

to themselves and their societies, and that affect not just the risk taker but the society in general and future generations.

Youth at risk behavior therefore has attracted the attention of educators because the policy makers almost everywhere recognize the benefits of education. Infact returns to education are high and increase with years of education. The youth badly need education because they are the future generation and more time, more education improves employment outcomes (Marcia and Fares, 2008). However when the youth adopt risky behavior all is lost, that is why this study has been conducted.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Young people in the country have been observed to be the source of many problems. The children aged between 12-24 do not complete schooling, implying that they leave school early. The reasons range from early pregnancy shooting of drugs and gangster activities which lead them to committing crime. Allowing this will reap Kenya of the otherwise productive members of the future society. This is the reason why this study was undertaken.

1.2 Objectives of the study

1.2.1 General objective

The major aim of conducting this study was to investigate the risky behavior adopted by the learners in primary schools and how it has affected their educational performance.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

The following objectives were formulated to help carry out the investigation:-

1. To investigate the common forms of risky behavioral tendencies among the youth in Wamba Zone Samburu East district.
2. to find out why the youth have adopted these risky behavioral tendencies

3. To investigate the ways in which government and community are controlling the risky behavior among the youth.

1.3 Research questions

The researcher formulated the following research questions to help focus this research:-

1. What are the common forms of risky behavioral tendencies among the children aged 12 years and above?
2. Why have these young people developed such risky behavioral tendencies?
3. What has the community and government done so far to help control the risky behavioral tendencies?

1.4 Scope of the study

This research was conducted in Wamba zone, Samburu East district in Kenya. The population focus comprised learners from class five upwards because they were of age which constituted the so called youths. The study investigated the youth at risk behavior and how it influenced young people's academic performance. It focused on the following issues; the common risky behaviors among young people age 12-24, the causes of those behaviors, the effect on their educational attainment and what government and society is doing about it. The study begun in March 2010 and ended in August 2010.

1.5 Significance

The following categories of people are to benefit from this study once the findings are disseminated.

The policy makers concerned with youth development and most especially educational policy makers.

It is also important that government enriches the curriculum with vocational skills such that in case an individual is not progressing mentally, he/she can be helped to gain skills which could otherwise give him/her more opportunities in the job market.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviewed what other researcher hinted about risky behaviors among the youth.

There is renewed awareness among the policy makers and within the general population that young people have the potential to be agents of change, not only for themselves, but for their communities and their countries and the world at large. That is why there is now focus being made on including the youth in decision making at household and national level (World Bank, 2006).

But while these youth are an important asset to all societies, they also contribute to some costly problems that plague the region. In Kenya young boys and girls involve themselves in illegal drugs. Some young girls have fallen victims of early pregnancy; crime and violence are reaching unprecedented levels in the country, shutting down entire neighborhood and terrorizing citizens. This is what is termed as risky behaviors of the youth. The young people who have been considered at risk are those who have factors in their lives that tend to lead to actions that harm themselves or others. These factors according to Cunningham et al (2008), include leaving school without sufficient education being idle, abusing drugs and alcohol, behaving violently and becoming sexually active at any early age and engaging in unsafe sexual behavior. Such behaviors affect not just the risk taker but also the society at large.

People of different ages engage in risky behavior but this study has focused on the young people because helping the youth at risk can ultimately address broader poverty and inequality. It could help educational policy makers find a

way of retaining these youths in school. Also risky youth behavior imposes enormous costs on the society and therefore deserves significant attention. Further more by targeting the youth could be a starting point for reducing poverty and inequality in Kenya. In Kenya for example the youth literacy rate is 30%, with the gross enrollment in secondary school rating at only 42% and the primary completion rate of the relevant age group of young people in Kenya stood at 94% (World Bank, 2008).

Much as these figures look to be higher but what about those who are not represented? They could represent those categories of youth who have already adopted the risky behavior.

More so according to the same Development indicators of the World Bank (2008), adolescent fertility rate for Kenya was reported to be at 104 per 1000 women aged between 15-19. This once again is too high compared to other regions.

By understanding the general special needs of youth at risk, it should be possible to provide this sub group with more of the opportunities available to other young people.

Who are the youth at risk?

At risk youth have been described as those who face environmental, social and family conditions that hinder their personal development and their successful integration into society as productive citizens (Barker and Fontest, 1996).

These category of young people have a greater propensity than their peers to engage in or be subject to, risky behavior including school absenteeism, risky sexual behavior, crime, violence and abuse of substance (Cunningham, 2009). True such above named categories of young people are commonly in existence in Kenya but what must be known is that they suffer grave consequences

which tend to cost the youth themselves. This has to obviously affect their ability to successfully grow into responsible adults.

Consequences of risky behavior are evident in both primary and secondary schools country wide. An enormous number of young people have dropped out of school, some young girls have fallen pregnant, and some have contracted sexually transmitted diseases. As if that is not enough, even there are reported cases of addiction, incarceration and social exclusion.

A characterization of youth at risk

It is evident that quite a number of youngsters in Kenya are at risk, but what must be established is that they are not homogenous in characteristics. On this not Cunningham (2007) highlighted three categories as follows:

Those at risk and beyond. These entailed those who are suffering the consequences of at least one kind of risky behavior, such as those who drop out of school and are parents and are not employed as well as being addicted to drugs or could be in jail.

Secondly those engaging in negative behavior and at risk of suffering consequences. For example those who are ever absent from school and are involved in risky sexual activity and are experimenting with alcohol and drug abuse. They have not left school, they do not have children and have not been arrested but their behavior does not necessarily affect their well being but may destabilize the peace of the society in which they are staying by increasing crime and inciting violence.

Thirdly, those at risk of engaging integrative behavior. These comprise those young people aged between 12-24, who are in circumstances that predispose them to engage in negative behavior including suffering domestic abuse at

some, those having low self esteem, and not feeling connected to schools, their neighborhood and caring adults.

The above categories all are manifestation among the youth of Kenya. This study however left out the youth at risk and beyond, and concentrated on those two who could be located within the school premises for accurate investigation.

Factors present in the young people's environment which expose them to risky behavior

The factors range from social to economic through psychological in nature.

The youth at risk, according to Cunningham et al (2008), tend to come from poor families because findings have suggested that some kinds of risky behavior among the young people such as early school dropout and premature unemployment are as a result of poverty, yet no casual relationship has not been statistically identified between poverty and violence.

More so Garcia and Fares (2008) cited no relationship between Kenya's school enrollment and poverty, when the two established that it was lower in families with a higher wealth quartile compared to those from a lower one (Garcia and Fares, 2008).

However researchers are of view that young girls tend to engage in risky sexual activity because of poverty but a note on which Cunningham et al (2008) found no correlation between poverty and risky sexual activity, prompting the researcher to conclude that there must be other factors which must be present in order to entice the youth into risky sexual behavior such as peer pressure and violent behavioral tendencies, and not only poverty.

Poverty is also blamed on influencing early school drop out of children by a number of researchers. The low rates of school completion among the children is blamed on poverty.

But primary education in Kenya is free except for the policy of cost sharing which forces some children out of schools. Social factors which lead the youth to adopt risky behavior include the following;

Feeling disconnected from school

Negative school environment

Feeling disconnected from school has emerged from some researches, as an explanatory factor for all kinds of risky behavior and some argue that it is the most important factor affecting all kinds of behavior. School connectedness implies that when a youth is in school everybody within that environment cares about his or her wellbeing. School environment has therefore been associated with retention of learners, behavior of children, grade repetition, as well as attendance (Cunningham et al, 2008).

Of course all those mentioned can be negative, if the school learning environment is negative. A school with dangerous environment and overworked teachers will be less likely to connect with the students than safe schools with caring staff.

Parental care

The feeling of having a parent who cares is protective factor of all the five of the risky behaviors which have been discussed earlier on young people who feel disconnected from their parents and less likely to stay in school, enter the labor force prematurely, initiate earlier sex, use condoms, they will adopt violent tendencies due to the anger they experience due to neglect by their parents, they might fail victims of drug and substance abuse.

biology

A better understanding of young people can expose the weakness of existing youth policies and point out where more effective youth specific programs and policies are needed.

Although youth and adults make decisions in a similar ways, there are fundamental differences. These differences even though they may be small but may result in different choices and behavior (Furby and Beyth, 1992). Factors such as peer pressure, the desire to establish independence and the gradual formation of personal identify influence the young people's decisions much more than that of children or adults. Steinberg and Kauffman (1996) found an inverted susceptibility between susceptibility of peer influence and age, with peak around age 14. In the light of the foregoing statement, Cunningham et al (2008) notes that "compounding the effects of peer pressure, young people often overestimate the extent to which their peers engage in various kinds of behavior". As a result young people are more likely to make decisions based on how their peers will judge them than on the perceived consequences of their behavior.

The youth in Kenya could be at risk because of this factor. For example one of the respondents found that a number of girls have fallen pregnant due to peer influences.

Consequences of youth at risk

Consequences of risk behavior among the youth are greater today than before. Children and young people who drop out of school or who fail to learn while in school obviously fail to gain those fundamental skills and abilities that will further sentence them to suffering in their later life (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). Education is one of the main determinants of income, and higher levels of education are associated with higher degree of intergenerational mobility.

It has also been observed that at risk youth may find difficulty in being integrated into labor market and may also experience a high job turnover (World Bank, 2006).

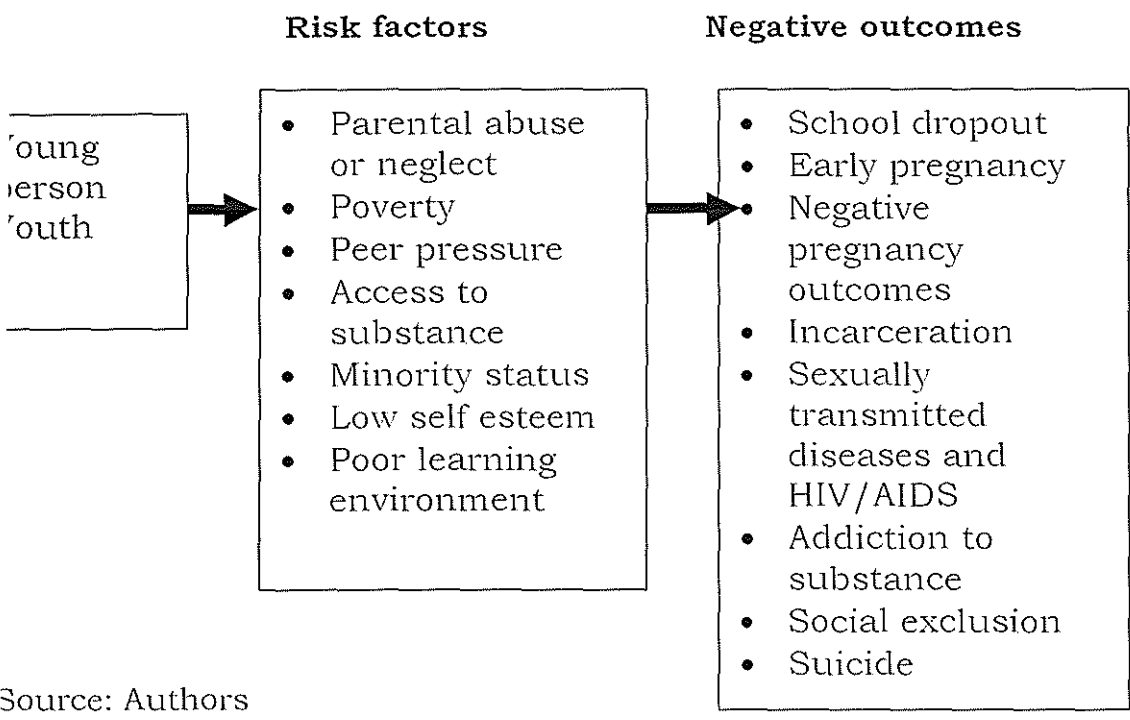
Youth unemployment and inactivity in their working life have their immediate costs but may also have adverse consequences for many years in future. They may again initiate further risky behavior such as violence, crime, drug and substance abuse and sexual activity at a later stage of one's life.

The youth at risk may also engage in unprotected sex early thereby falling pregnant and giving birth at an early age. These bear grave consequences for the young mother, young father and their children. The consequences range from social, economic and medical.

Furthermore early initiation of unprotected sex is associated with school drop out, early marriage; more serious is the contraction of HIV/AIDS and other STIs.

Crime and violence on the other hand results to injuries and deaths of some youngsters (World Bank, 2007) on this note highlights that homicides and nonfatal assaults contribute greatly to the global burden of premature deaths, injury and disability.

Conceptual framework for the youth at risk: link between risk factors, risky behavior and the consequences



Source: Authors

Explanation

The youth who adopt at risk behavior have factors in their environment which force them to engage in negative activities. The factors include an abuse home and school environment. It could be poverty or even negative peer pressure which exposes the youngsters to drugs and alcohol. Some youngsters because of an abusive environment from which they hail, tend to have a low self esteem.

The consequences are many ranging from dropping from school; absenteeism, early pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse. These result into the victim being socially isolated and later suicide attempt.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods used to collect data. It discusses the design, study area, sample size and sampling procedure, instruments, data collection procedure and data processing and analysis.

3.1 Research design

This study used a descriptive survey. The research drew from both the qualitative and quantitative analysis approaches in order to get a bigger picture both in number and data.

3.2 Study area

This study was conducted in selected Wamba Zone Samburu East district Kenya.

3.3 Sample framework

3.3.1 Sample size

This study obtained information from learners aged 12 and above and teachers were used for this study.

3.3.2 Sample technique

Using a convenient sampling technique, a total of twenty four respondents were picked at random to participate in this study.

3.3.3 Sample procedure

In carrying out the research, the researcher obtained a release letter from the course administrator which he presented to the schools under study.

3.4 Methods for data collection

3.4.1 Instruments

Questionnaires

These were used to extract information from teachers, focus group discussions from community members and interviews for parents. Open ended questionnaires were suitable for investigating deeper the subject matter. Observation was also done on the status of the children.

3.4.2 Sources of data

This study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected using questionnaires and interviews were carried out with both learners and teachers. Secondary data were gathered through document analysis in the form of reports, training manual, news papers, and journals for the period under study was read and the required data collected from them.

3.5 Data processing and analysis

Qualitative data involved three sets of activities which included; editing, coding and frequency tabulations. Editing was done by looking through each of the field responses from interview guides ascertaining that every applicable question has an answer and all errors eliminated for the completeness, accuracy and uniformity.

Data were then presented in frequency tabulations rendering it ready for interpretation. Quotations and field notes made were also included.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This study examined risky behavior adopted by the young people in selected primary schools, and how this has affected their academic progress. The researcher adopted the following objectives for the study;

- To investigate the common types of risky behavior adopted by youth
- To find out why the youth have adopted such risky behavior
- To assess the negative outcomes of the youth risky behavior

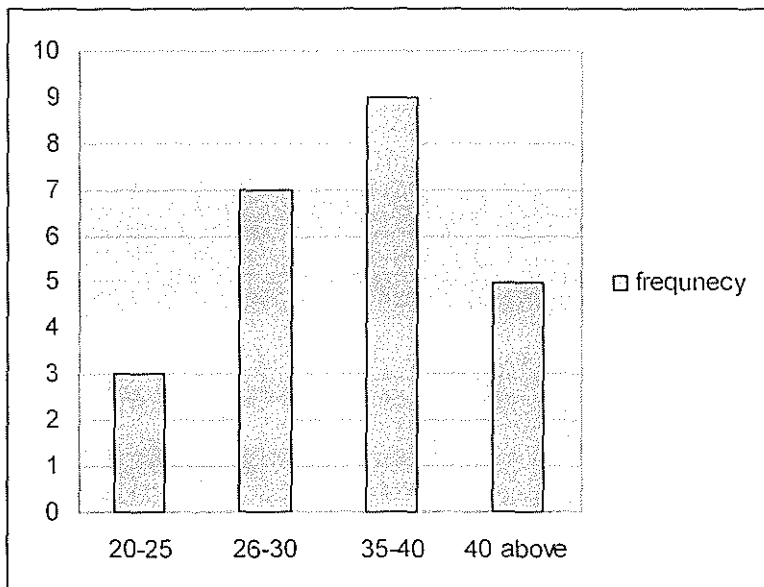
The researcher at this stage presents data, which were collected from the field about factors for youth at risk behavior and outcomes. Twenty four teachers were used to conduct this research but one questionnaire was declared invalid during the editing of the data which were collected.

4.1 Background characteristics of teachers

4.1.1 Age of respondents

Age is one variable which enables the respondents to give sensible answers.

Figure 1: Presents age group of teachers



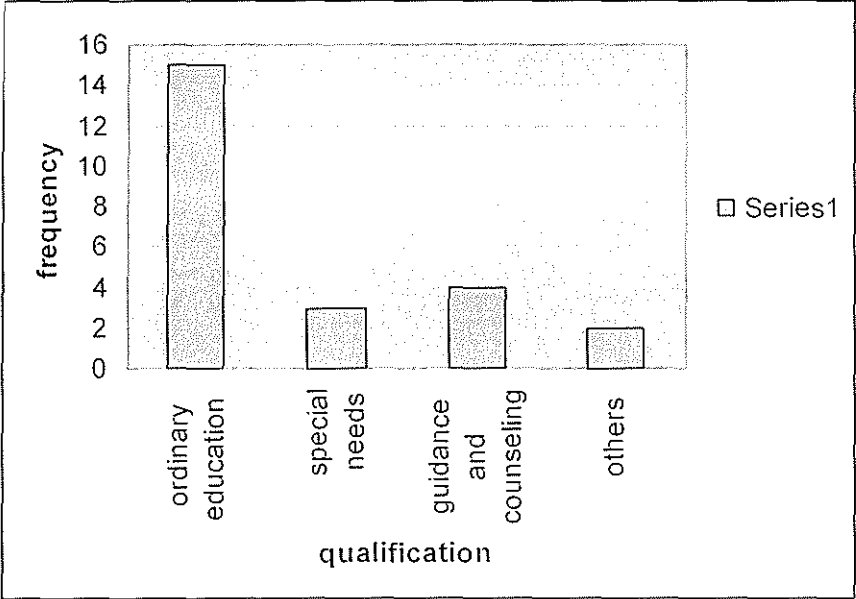
Source: Field data 2009

From the figure 1 revealed that six teachers were aged between 20-25; seven teachers were aged between 26 and 30; nine teachers were aged 35-40 and the remaining five teachers were aged 40 and above. The above finding shows that the teachers who acted as respondents.

4.1.2 Qualification of teachers

The study had to assess and establish the professional qualifications of teachers as this could facilitate those qualified teachers to identify the young people who were experiencing risky behavior.

Figure 2: Presenting the professional qualification of teachers



Source: Field data 2009

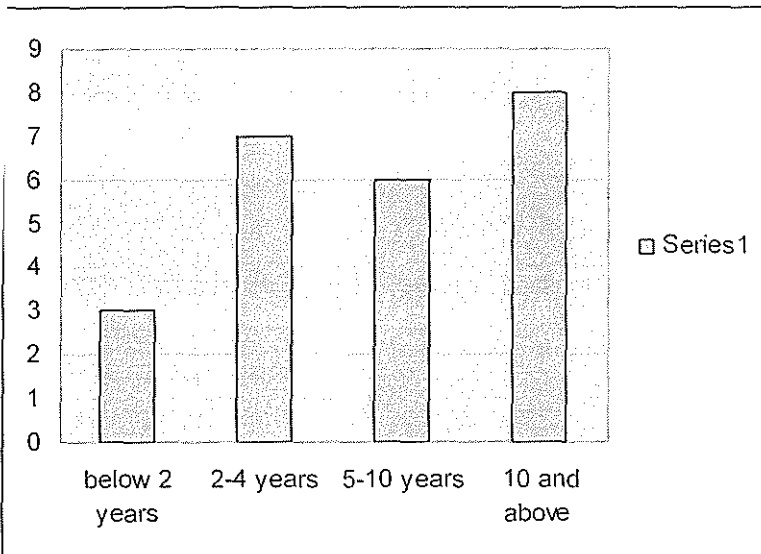
From the above figure 2 it was established that fifteen teachers in the study area were professional general education teachers, three teachers were special needs teachers. And four teachers were counselors while two teachers had other professional qualifications.

All the above teachers had the relevant professional qualifications which could enable them to spot youth at risk behaviors among the young people.

1.3 Numbers of years in the teaching profession

It was assumed that all those teachers who had taught for more than five years in the field had the relevant knowledge and skills to handle and help the children who were already victims of youth at risk behavior to cope.

Figure 3: Presenting the teachers working years in the field



Source: Field data 2009

From the data in figure 3, three teachers had been in the field for less than two years. These could be categorized as those still under probation with the professional knowledge but with little exposure to instructional technicalities. Seven teachers had taught for up to four years. This still was just like warm experience for the teachers to carry out effective school practice. Six teachers had taught up to ten years. Lastly eight were in the field for over ten years. Further more almost all teachers had enough experience and therefore together with their professional qualifications they would be they would be able to identify and counsel the young people with youth at risk behavior.

1.2 Common forms of risky behavior

Studies conducted by expert researchers such as Cunningham et al (2008) cited a range of risky behavior which the young people engage into. They mentioned tendencies such as school drop out, school absenteeism; premarital sex, early pregnancies, violence, incarceration and drug and alcohol abuse. The researcher had to find out the prevalence of the above mentioned at risk behavior.

1.2.1 The prevalence of school absenteeism and drop out among the pupils in upper primary

Teachers were asked whether in the schools where they taught, were experiencing problems of young people not attending regularly or have dropped from the school.

Table 1: Presents the prevalence of learners school drop out and level of absenteeism

Rate of school drop out	Frequency	Percentage
High	6	25
Moderate	13	54
Low	5	20.8
Total	24	99.8

Source: Field data 2008

The above data in table 1 indicates that according to six teachers claimed that the level of absenteeism and school drop out was high among the young people in their school; thirteen teachers claimed that the levels were moderate their schools but the five remaining teachers reported the rate of absenteeism and dropout as low.

The above analysis highlighted the magnitude of school absenteeism and drop out as alarming.

4.2.2 Prevalence of violence and crime among children aged 12 and above in primary schools.

The study went onto find out from the teachers whether crime and violence was also common among the learners aged 12 and above.

Table 2: Presents teachers ratings of the prevalence of violence and crime

Prevalence of crime and violence in primary schools	Frequency	Percentage
High	3	12.5
Moderate	17	70
Mild	4	16.6
Total	24	100

Source: Field data 2009

The analysis in table 2 shows that only three teachers reported high crime and violence among the youngsters in their schools. Seventeen teachers however expressed that violence and crime in schools were moderate in schools. Lastly, four teachers agreed that the at risk behavior was low.

The findings above revealed that violence and crime was moderate prevalent among the primary school pupils aged 12 and above. This shows that within the children's environment; be it at home or school, there are factors which are influencing the children to adopt at risk behavior.

4.2.3 Early sex and pregnancy among the girls aged 12 and above

Early sex is one risky behavior which young people tend to adopt, for reasons range from peer influence to social deprivation at home. The researcher had to find out whether this was the case in upper primary classes.

Table 3: Presents the prevalence of children who have already engaged or show signs of getting involved in early sex

Prevalence of sexually active children	Frequency	Percentage
Very many	8	33.3
Average number	16	66.6
None	-	
Total	24	99.9

Source: Field data 2009

From the foregoing analysis in table 3, sixteen teachers shared that the prevalence of sexually active pupils in upper primary school was average, but the remaining eight shared that they were very many. Surprisingly no teacher shared that the sexually active students were not in schools.

The above finding implies that there are sexually active pupils in primary schools. They have already engaged in risky behavior and are on the verge of being hurt in different ways. As predicted by WHO (2002), sexually transmitted infections including HIV prevalence is highest in the Sub Saharan Africa. These could be the next victims.

4.2.3 Cases of early pregnancies reported in primary schools

The chances the young girls who engage in sexual activities will use contraceptives are minimal. Many consequences of risky sex are greater than before. There are more teen mothers today than at any time in history because of increasing number of teenage population (Cunningham, 2008). Teachers were asked if they have had any case of early pregnancy among the girls of recent.

Table 4: Presents the number of girls who had become pregnant

any cases of early pregnancy	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	33.3
No	16	66.6
total	24	99.9

Source: Field data 2009

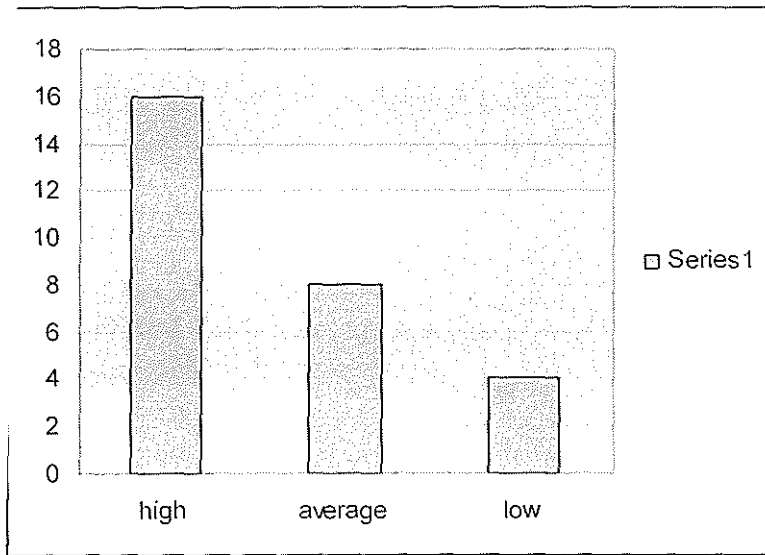
According to the analysis in table 4, eight teachers reported some cases of pregnancy. The eight represent two schools. The remaining Sixteen teachers reported no cases, implying that the four schools did not have cases of their pupils falling pregnant.

The two schools represent those girls who have already adopted the risky sex behavior. These are what Cunningham referred to as the at risk and beyond and whom the US Surgeon General (2001) categorized as type III.

4.2.4 Violent and criminal children in schools

Young people engaging in violence and crime have become an out cry in a number of societies. In school the common offences of violence include molesting fellow pupils, gangster fighting. Criminal offences in school include pupils raping others, stealing from other pupils or from the neighborhoods. These are forms of risky behavior since they have negative outcomes. The research investigated this by asking the teachers whether this could be a problem in this school.

figure 4: Presenting prevalence of crime and violence in primary schools



Source: Field data 2009

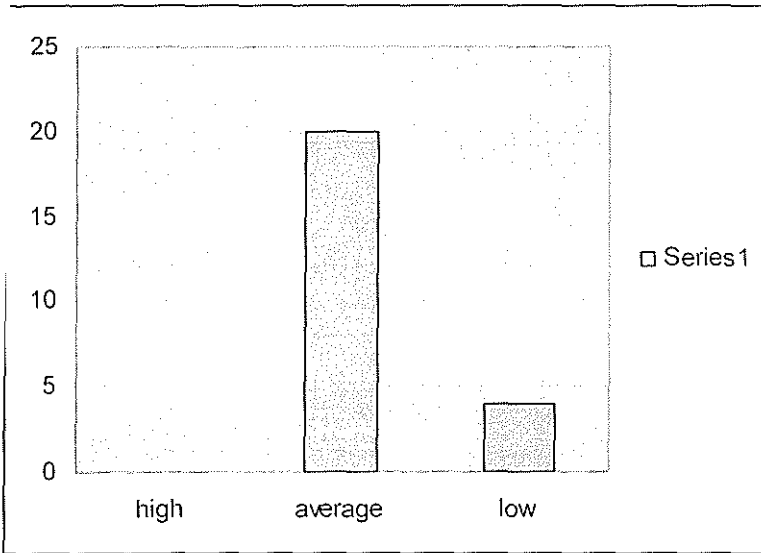
The above analysis in figure 4 indicates that in one school, crime and violence among the pupils was rate as high by their teachers. Two schools rated the state of crime and violence among the youngsters as average and the remaining school said that in theirs it was low.

The analysis highlighted a problem here, because these children are likely to face grave consequences in future such as imprisonment or even health and disability if not helped now.

4.2.5 Prevalence of alcohol and drug in primary schools

Teachers were asked if some of their pupils abused any drugs and alcohol.

Figure 5: Presents ratings of prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse among the pupils in primary schools



Source: Field data 2009

From the figure 5, it was established that alcohol and drug consumption was average in five schools, while in the remaining school it was low.

Whether average or low, the problem remains and confirms that fear of at risk behavior of this category. It shows that some youngsters have already been exposed to drugs and alcohol.

4.3 Why the young pupils in schools have adopted at risk behavior

According to CEPAL (2004), an extensive literature identifies a number of factors that give young people the incentive to engage in risky behavior. Researchers have highlighted factors ranging from individual to household, school influences as well as the community in which they live. These were investigated at this point.

3.1 Factors which have led children to adopt at risk behavior

Teachers were asked why some children have resorted to risky behavior. The following were some of their views;

Table 5: Presents factors which have led children to adopt at risk behavior

Why children choose risky behavior	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty at home	24	100
Unstable home background, where parents have poor relationship	18	
Adolescent age	24	100
Lack of parental support	15	
Vulnerability due to HIV/AIDS and gender	21	
Peer influence	24	100
School environment	20	
Culture	24	100

Source: Field data 2009

The findings in table 5 revealed that according to all teachers, the young people in primary schools adopted risky behavior because they had the following factors in their environment; poverty, peer influence, culture and adolescent stage. Twenty one teachers shared that some young girls and boys were just made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS as well as the matter of them being girls. Twenty school teachers mentioned the school environment as influenced at risk behavior among the children. Some fifteen teachers contributed that the children behave badly because of lack of parental support and eighteen teachers mentioned of the unstable home background, where the parents marital relationship was unstable.

The above contributions made by teachers were all valid, since some experts in social psychology such as Cobb (1997), Berk (2000) and Santrock (1997) had hinted on these occurrences.

For example, a child who experiences maltreatment may grow up being aggressive as a way of airing out his/her anger. Children who are not given love at home, most especially girls tend to look for it else where.

1.3.2 How poverty influences at risk behavior

According to World Bank (2006) one of the factors which influenced risky behaviors such as school drop out, child prostitution was household poverty. The report further explained that children from poor families often drop from school or do not attend regularly because they have to look for jobs and support their families. Teachers were therefore asked how poverty has influenced at risk behavior.

Table 6: Presents teachers views on how poverty has forced children into risky behavior

How poverty influences at risk behavior	Frequency	Percentage
Some children have to split their time to go and work	17	70.3
Some children do not enroll in school because of lack of funds	22	91.6
Girls have been forced to look for money by involving themselves in prostitution	19	79.1
Children who drop out of school because of low income may later join gangsters and commit crime later on	16	66.6

Source: Field data 2009

From the foregoing analysis in table 6, seventeen teachers contributed that some pupils do not attend regularly school, because they have to work in order to make their families survive financially. Here we observe that money is the driving factor for children attending school or not. According to twenty two teachers, some do not enroll completely. The bad thing about this one is that

they are further exposed to risk factors such as early sexuality and gangster activities.

Nineteen teachers reported that some girls have been forced to engage into sex activities because of money. The above findings report similar observations made by World Bank (2006) and the US Surgeon General (2001).

4.3.3 How parental support could expose children to risk factors

More recent evidence suggests that young people in Argentina, the Dominican Republic and Peru, said they left school because they received no support from their parents (Dasso, 2006).

The study investigated whether this was the case in Kenya.

Table 7: Presents the teachers views of how lack of parental support would influence at risk behavior

How parental care influences at risk behavior among young children	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of parental love forces girls in prostitution and early sex	13	54.1
Lack of love reduces the self esteem of both boys and girls and this can in turn influence other behaviors	13	54.1
When children do not receive any parental care it is easy to join bad groups	20	83.3
Children who lack parental care perform poorly in school and are most likely to drop out	24	24
Children without parental care are depressed and could resort to drinking and drug abuse	14	58.3

Source: Field data 2009

Findings in table 7 revealed that lack of parental care forces girls into early sex activities such as prostitution according to thirteen teachers. This was mentioned by Cobbs (1997) who also noted early sex as one symptom of girl child neglect. According to thirteen teachers it reduces the children's self esteem and this exposes them to more risk factors such as drug abuse, depression. It also could influence a risky behavior of drug and alcohol abuse. This concurs with Cobbs (1997) twenty teachers said that when the children do not get parental care, they could join bad groups. All teachers contributed that poor performance, irregular attendance and school drop out are partly due to lack of parental care. Their contribution concurs with that of (Kioller et al, 2005).

4.3.4 Vulnerability of children and at risk behavioral tendencies

Research observes that when children loose their parents to HIV/AIDS or even war they tend to involve themselves in anything in order to survive. More so, the girls were most likely to get involved in risky behavior just because of their gender stereotypic tendencies. The researcher had to find out this.

Table 8: Presents teachers opinions on how vulnerability of children exposes to risk behavior

Teachers opinions on how vulnerability of children exposes to risk behavior	Yes	No	Don't know
Children whose parents have died or ill due to HIV/AIDS can easily adopt risky behavior	13	11	2
Children from families with a history of Alcohol abuse also end up adopting the behavior	17	6	1
Girl children tend to adopt at risk behavior because they are stereotyped	3	7	14

Source: Field data 2009

From the foregoing analysis in table 8, thirteen teachers were in agreement that when parents die, children try to survive by working or even involving in sex activities. This is in agreement with (UNAIDS, 2000). Of eleven teachers however did not agree with the statement, seventeen teachers agreed that children from alcoholic families will develop the behavior, although six teachers did not agree with this statement and one had no idea. This evidence of the influence of the home environment on the behavior of children as earlier on cited by McNeely and Rinehart (2002). About the notion of girls adopting at risk behavior due to gender influences, only three teachers agreed to the statement, seven disagreed and the fourteen did not know what to believe. The conclusion made here was that no relationship existed between gender and at risk behavior of girls. Instead Cunningham associated gender influence with boys tendency to drop out of school.

Vulnerability in general exposes the children to risk factors in a way that it deprives them of socio-economic needs which they have to find means of getting them no matter what it takes. Secondary children become vulnerable because in their state of being unable to make decisions, they blindly adopt any behavior. Age also makes them vulnerable.

4.4 Outcomes of at risk behavior

The US Surgeon General (2001), cited that for the unfortunate, there are negative consequences which included school drop out, adolescent pregnancy, addiction to drugs or alcohol. The researcher therefore wanted to find out whether the learners manifesting at risk behavior were finding problems in school.

Table 9: Presents the views of how learners with at risk behavior have been affected

Negative outcomes of youth at risk behavior	Agree	Not always	Not at all
Pupils with at risk behavior are indisciplined and therefore have to be expelled from school	12	8	4
Pupils with at risk behavior are among those who do not attend school regularly	17	4	3
Strikes in schools have been initiated by such children with at risk behavior	09	09	06
Some young girls from my school have died due to abortion or giving birth	04	-	20
Some pupils are repeating grades because of their at risk behavior	18	6	-

Source: Field data 2009

From the analysis in table 9, twelve respondents agreed that at risk behavior results in indiscipline, which in the end causes children to be forced out of school. Eight respondents said that this was not always the case and the remaining four said it was not the case.

About school attendance, seventeen teachers supported the view that pupils who had adopted at risk behavior were irregular in class, although four teachers claimed that this was not the case after all, and the remaining three disagreed.

About strikes in school nine teachers agreed that those children with risky behavior were most likely to initiate strikes while nine of the teachers said this was not the case. The remaining six teachers disagreed to the statement.

About mortality due to abortion or giving birth by young girls, only four teachers agreed to this statement and the remaining twenty disagreed.

About repetition of grades, eighteen teachers agreed that this was happening and the remaining six said it was not always the case.

The above findings clearly indicate that there are indeed negative outcomes for at risk behavior among the young people. The finding highlights how at risk behavior affects educational attainments of individual young people. Education is the key to the development of any society, but at risk behavior negatively impacts it. Therefore the likelihood of a successful transition of school-to-work is non-existent. That is why there are quite a number of unemployed youth out there.

4.5 What has been done to address the youth at risk behavior

The study sought to establish if at all the schools and government at large have formulated any policy or programs to reduce the number of young people at risk.

Table 10: Presents the ways in which the community has worked to reduce at risk behavior

Prevention and remediation of interventions at risk behavior among the young	Yes	No
Re-admission of young mothers in school	20	4
Remedial classes for young people who exhibit at risk behavior		24
Support offered to parents and caregivers ineffective parenting	12	12
Improved services for the disadvantaged young people	8	16
Sex education and other life skills	24	
Vocational training in primary and secondary institutions	08	16
Supervised after school programmes	04	20
Youth seminars and debates on sex and other life skills	20	4
Guidance and counseling services	24	-

Source: Authors of conceptual framework for youth at risk application (2008)

According to the above table, teachers shared that in schools, the young mothers are readmitted into school to continue with their education. This is one of the policies in both primary and secondary schools. However four teachers said it was non-existent in their school. No primary school offered classes for the young people who exhibit at-risk behavior. This showed that schools have done little to manage the negative outcomes of young people.

Twelve teachers offered to parents and caregivers of children, support, ineffective parenting. This showed that schools are trying hard to mitigate risky behavior. The remaining 12 did not therefore exposing the children further to possible at-risk behavior, related to poor parenting.

Only eight teachers agreed that they offer improved services for the disadvantaged young people. The remaining sixteen disagreed.

By not providing improved services for the disadvantaged children most especially those that were earlier categorized as vulnerable, the schools are not encouraging any protective factors that could help the children to avoid at-risk behavior hence more exposure.

All teachers agreed that in their schools, the life skills were being taught to their pupils, hence further encouraging protective factors as well as mitigating risky behavior. Already mentioned earlier, that the young people's decision making differs greatly from adults; it shows that these youth are given enough to adopt any behavioral tendency whether desirable or not from one another.

Twenty teachers said they offer and organize youth debates and seminars for them to hear one another's experiences and learn from them.

Lastly all schools had guidance and counseling services available to manage the negative outcomes of the at-risk behavior as well as mitigating risky behavior.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter the findings in chapter four were summarized and discussed where possible. A conclusion was drawn and recommendations given.

5.1 Summary of findings

Common types and forms of risky behavior adopted by young people

Findings in table 3 highlighted moderate rate of school dropout in schools as per thirteen teachers, although in some schools it was high. This had been cited in Cunningham (2007) in a study conducted in Latin America and Caribbean.

The study also established that rate of crime and violence amongst the young people of school going age was moderate as per seventeen teachers, although three teachers rated it as high. This once again agrees with that of McNeely (2002).

Further more early sex and pregnancy were also prevalent in primary school girls but were rated as moderate. This could further expose them to more risk factors and lead to negative outcomes such as contracting HIV/AIDS. The cases of early pregnancy were however low and had not occurred in four of the schools used for this study. On contrary Cunningham had cited early pregnancy as critical and increasing constantly.

Violence and crime rate was also prevalent in primary schools but on average scale. Whether moderate or high a problem still remains a problem and

exposes young people to problems such as disability and death. This also clearly reveals to us that indeed there are negative factors which could either macro, Micro and even individual.

Alcohol and drug abuse, according to the respondents was also average. Once again substance abuse could further expose the victims to other risky behavior, such as crime and violence as well as prostitution. This was cited by Cunningham (2008).

Factors that put the young people at risk

The dominant factors which expose the young boys and girls to risky behavior, according to the respondents, included poverty at home, adolescent age, peer influence and culture. Other factors include the negative school environment, vulnerability due to orphanage, disease and gender, unstable home background, and lack of parental support.

The above factors agree with what a number of researchers also established when they carried out their studies. Scholars such as Cobbs, 1997; Berk, 2000; and Santrock, 1997; all of which are child development psychologists.

It was further established that due to poverty, some children fail to enroll in school. This agrees with the World Bank (2006) citation on factors which influence at risk behavior. Secondly, poverty forces girls into sexual activities and on this note. Cunningham (2008) highlighted that the major motive here is money. Thirdly poverty forces children into child labor and this has consequences on their educational attainments, most especially their attendances and retention in school. This finding concurs with the Surgeon General report of 2001.

Lastly because of poverty forcing children out school, the changes are high that these children are further exposed to more risk factors, which in turn

nfluence dangerous behaviors such as gangster activities and crime as well as prostitution.

About how parental support and its effects in risky behavior all teachers contributed that those children who lack parental care perform poorly in school, repeat grades and will eventually drop out of school. All the above are risk factors, which obviously will expose children further to risky behavior.

Dropping out of school denies the young boys and girls opportunities of better employment. This finding concurred with those Koller et al (2005).

More so when the young boys and girls do not receive any love and care from the parents it exposes them to bad groups. Teachers also noted that parental love could force the young girls to look for it from the opposite sex as cited by Cobb (1997). That it also lowers the individuals self esteem, which in turn may influence him or her to abuse substance, join bad groups or even engage in early sexual activities.

How vulnerability of young boys and girls exposes them to risky behavior?

Majority of the respondents agreed that any young girl or boy from a family which abuses alcohol or drugs may adopt the same behavior. Thirteen teachers also agreed that those young people whose parents have died of or are ill due to HIV/AIDS can easily adopt risky behavior such as prostitution and are further exposed to other risk factors such as early leaving of school and repetition of grades. In other words due to vulnerability the children are exposed to a number of risk factors which can influence them to behave negatively. Lastly the researcher found no significant relationship between girl children adopting risky behavior due to gender, yet McNeely and Rinehart had established the relationship between the two.

Outcomes of at risk behavior

Respondents cited the following characteristics among the pupils they thought had adopted at risk behavior; repetition of grades, poor school attendance, indiscipline and eventually expulsion from school. The above characteristics concur with the findings in Cunningham et al (2008). However it was not established whether some children had died as a result of at risk behavior or strikes in schools being started by children with at risk behavior.

Interventions put in place to reduce at risk behavior among the youth

The study at this point wanted to establish what had been put in place as measures to curb at risk behavior among young boys and girls in schools. All schools had implemented guidance and counseling services. All schools were offering sex and other life skills education, majority of the schools were organizing youth Seminars and debates, some of the schools had allowed all the young mothers to continue with school.

But fewer schools offered parents and caregivers support in effective parenting even fewer schools offered vocational skills to young boys and girls, that just in case they do not make it they can continue earning a living.

Very few schools took the initiative to supervise school programs and practically no school carried out any remedial classes for those young boys and girls who exhibited at risk behavior.

The findings highlighted the following issues; first the school community has adopted some appropriate policy responses to different types of risks to minimize them and encourage protective factors such as life skills education. It is also trying to mitigate some risks among young boys but some important interventions such as remedial classes, supervising after school programs, vocational skills and training parents and caregivers about the importance of parenting have practically been ignored.

5.2 Conclusion

At risk behavior tendencies among young people are indeed a reality, although the magnitude in primary schools seems to be average. It should be remembered that the potential of young people in Kenya is essential to their well being and to the long term welfare of the entire nation. By ignoring these risks among these boys and girls is upholding the failure of the entire general.

True, when the young boys and girls adopt at risk behavior, they are most likely to get hurt emotionally physically, psychologically and mentally. These could be long term. It is now evident that these do not just occur but within their environments, there are factors which are responsible for influencing these at risk behavioral tendencies. They may be from home, schools or the community at large.

All in all the school community has tried to put in place interventions to reduce at risk behavior but has failed to implement to control and remediate these negative tendencies.

5.3 Recommendations

The following were recommended;

First the victims of at risk behavior need to be identified and characterized in order to be able to help them, depending on the characteristics they exhibit.

Minimizing risk factors

Early childhood development programs and services must be strongly emphasized. For example proper child health and nutrition must be highly observed as well as cognitive development. This can minimize negative behavioral tendencies among children right from their early years. It will help them to adopt positive socialization thereby preventing conditions such as low self-esteem.

It is also important that the school as an institution designs means of sensitizing parents and caretakers of children about positive parenting. For this will help to minimize occurrences of child abuse or maltreatment, which are factors that lead to at risk behavior among young boys and girls.

Educational policy makers must find ways of encouraging children to remain in school and to keep them connected as this will enhance their educational attainment and hence less exposure to at risk factors such as unemployment, child labor, prostitution and others.

Remedial education to those young boys and girls who have already adopted at risk behavior must be provided. This therefore calls for school based diagnosis.

It is high time educational institutions began to emphasize non formal education whereby the young boys and girls are sensitized about the dangers of violence and how to prevent it. Formal youth services opportunities should be given to them.

Life skills education must be given to the fullest to the young people to ensure that they can avoid at risk behavior.

It is also important that government enriches the curriculum with vocational skills such that in case an individual is not progressing mentally, he/she can be helped to gain skills which could otherwise give him/her more opportunities in the job market.

There must be improved services for the vulnerable young people and their communities from which they hail.

In case of after school programs being carried out there must be close supervision. There must be some youth friendly health services.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear Pupils

I am carrying out a research on **at risky behaviors among learners and education attainments in Wamba zone**. Any assistance offered to me shall be highly appreciated.

Instructions

Please tick or fill in the right answer

Profile of respondents

- 1. Age
- 2. Area of specialization
- Special needs
- General education
- Guidance and counseling
- 3. For how long have you taught?
.....

Forms of risky behavior

- 4. In the schools you teach, do you experience any problem of learner's absenteeism?
High
Moderate
Low
- 5. What about crime and violence among pupils?
High
Moderate
Low

5. What about any cases of early pregnancies?

High

Moderate

Low

7. Do you have some pupils who abuse drugs and alcohol or whose parents use drugs and alcohol?

High

Moderate

Low

Reasons for children adopting risky behavior

3. Give reasons why some children have adopted risky behavior while others have not?

.....
.....
.....

9. Show how poverty has contributed to the children at risk of failing in school

.....
.....
.....

10. Explain how HIV/AIDS puts children at risk of failure in education

.....
.....
.....
.....

Consequences of risky behavior

11. Is it true that when children adopt risky behavior, they become indisciplined and therefore are most likely to be expelled from school?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

12. Is it true that it is those pupils with risky behavior who dodge school?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

13. Even strikes and violence in school have at always been initiated by those children with risky behavior

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

14. Are there any young girls who have died as a result of either abortion or giving birth?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

15. Do you have pupils with risky behavior who repeat classes?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Interventions adapted to control at risk behavior among pupils

16. Do you offer remedial classes to the pupils showing signs of decline in education?

Yes

No

17. Do you readmit young mothers in school?

Yes

No

18. Do you give any financial or psychological assistance to parents and guardians of pupils who you realize are at risk of school failure?

Yes

No

19. Do your schools offer sex education?

Yes

No

20. Do you teach vocational subjects in both primary and secondary schools?

Yes

No

21. Do you supervise after school activities?

Yes

No

22. Do you offer guidance and counseling services?

Yes

No

Thank you very much