



SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' DROPOUTS AND CRIME ESCALATION IN VIHIGA COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

Crime escalation in Africa has been associated with politics. Statistics reveal that to some extent, secondary school dropouts are a trigger to crime in Kenya. The period between 2009 and 2012 had seen the number of children aged between 15 years to 19 years in conflict with the law steadily rise in Vihiga County, Kenya. It was against that background that the current study sought to examine the relationship between secondary school dropouts and crime escalation in Vihiga County, Kenya. The objective was to discuss the criminal activities by secondary school dropouts in Vihiga County, Kenya. The Study was anchored on a conceptual framework of Labeling Theory and Conflict Theory. The target population was 5,760 whose respondents were 112 Principals, 5 District Probation Officers, 5,568 students who had dropped from school, 64 Chiefs, 1 County Commander, 5 Officers Commanding Police Divisions and 5 Divisional Criminal Investigating Officers. The sample size was 1,738. In-depth interviews with key informants were conducted to supplement information obtained from the questionnaire. Systematic random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Data were collected through interviews with chiefs, District Probation Officers, Officers Commanding Police Stations and Divisional Criminal Investigating Officers to get information on criminal activities by dropouts. Questionnaires were administered to Principals and Drop-outs to get information on reasons for dropping out of school. The data were transcribed and analyzed using Correlational survey research design. Findings that emerged from this study indicated that secondary school dropouts committed different types of crimes like alcohol and drug abuse, stealing assault, affray, defilement, robbery with violence and murder. The current study was significant in that it was likely to remain a permanent record of study and would be used to advance

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knowledge by future researchers. It was also anticipated that by using the findings of the current study, Security and Education Agencies would benefit by understanding better the current nature of crime that was committed by secondary school dropouts.

Keywords: crime, dropouts, crime escalation, probation

1. Introduction

Every year, close to one-third of boys aged eighteen years do not finish high school in East Africa and subsequently engage in crimes (World Bank, 2010). According to the Kenya Police Department 2006 in Statistical abstract (2013) highest incidences of offences reported over the five years are alcohol and drug abuse, stealing, break-ins and robbery which contributed 65%, 25%, 17% and 15% respectively of all offences reported to police stations with 57% having an economic motive. This was followed by terrorism, youth radicalization and offences against morality. The least reported incidences of crime were corruption, offences against police and offences against tourists which contributed 0.3% and 0.1% respectively of total crime incidences reported.

According to the report of the Kenya Police Statistical Analysis of Crime Incidences Reports (2013), from the last five years across all the former provinces in Kenya, North Eastern has the highest robbery incidences with 87.4%, followed by Nairobi Province with 79%, Coast Province with 77% and Central Province with 67%. The Provinces that experienced the least number of robbery incidences are Eastern Province and Western Province with 62% and 61% respectively. The study therefore sought to find out why there was crime escalation in the former Western Province that had a comparatively low crime rate.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Africa, most of the youth who dropped out of school were abusing drugs (Oyugi, 2011). In Kenya, some school dropouts were engaging in terrorist activities (Barasa, 2011). There was an escalation of criminal activities by the youth between 2007 and 2012 in Vihiga County (Vihiga County Security Committee, 2012). Most study findings had attributed the crime prevalence to politics (Government Report on Crime, 2012; Muchai 2010; KEPSHA, 2009). Research on crime escalation in the current area of study has been done (Vihiga County Security Committee, 2012; Oyugi, 2011; Nyagah, 2010; Ondego, 2002). However, there seems to exist insufficient literature on the relationship between the nature of criminal activities committed by secondary school dropouts in the county.

1.3 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to examine the relationship between Secondary School Students' Dropouts and Crime Escalation in Vihiga County, Kenya.

The specific objective was to discuss the type of criminal activities committed by secondary school dropouts in Vihiga County, Kenya.

1.4 Research Question

- What type of criminal activities are committed by secondary school dropouts in Vihiga County, Kenya?

1.5 Justification of the Study

From a practical and policy perspective, it was envisaged that the current study would add more information to the current database of knowledge on escalating dropout rate of secondary school students and its effects on crime. This was likely to remain a permanent record and would be used to advance knowledge by future researchers. It was therefore anticipated that by using the findings of the current study, security and education agencies understand better the current nature of crime that is committed by unsuspecting teenagers who have dropped from school.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study basically addresses the relationship between Secondary School Students' Dropouts and Crime Escalation in Vihiga County, Kenya between 2005 and 2012. This period recorded an increase in the number of students who dropped from secondary schools and an escalation of criminal activities in the current area of study (Vihiga County Director's of Education Report on Examinations, 2012: Vihiga County Security Committee, 2012).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Type of Criminal Activities by Secondary School Dropouts

Types of crimes committed by secondary school dropouts are discussed.

2.1.1 Types of Criminal Activities

The question of crime and insecurity has become paramount for the development nationally and internationally. Alcohol and drug abuse account for the majority of arrests and incarcerations in USA (Bratton, *et al.*, 2011). The current study argues that this could be because USA is developed and therefore most of the crimes committed there are leisure related crimes. In Africa, most of the crimes are related with business activities in an effort to develop. Crimes in Africa therefore include corruption and illegal businesses that are associated with poaching, illicit alcohol, abduction and terrorism (Donna, 2012; Shephard & Blackley, 2012). However, it seems crimes against humanity that are carried out by drug traffickers as they relate with secondary school dropouts have not been explored in any depth in the existing research on crime escalation in Africa. Gottfredson, *et al.* (2013) reveals 80% increase in fraud cases from South African companies in between 2005 and 2011. Among the crimes committed, 83% were committed by school dropouts. Likewise, out of the 78% crimes committed in Kenya, only 65 % was committed by dropouts (Chiti, 2010).

Kenya is considered a 'beacon of stability and peace' in the horn of Africa, greater Eastern Africa region and Africa plays an important role (The Police Accountability Report in Kenya, 2012). It serves as an economic and business hub for both national and international investors. It is a tourist destination, and its geographical positioning has made it a key player in international trade serving many landlocked countries. Kenya also serves as a central point for humanitarian aid to the large number of displaced victims of war in its neighbouring countries (Nguzo na Haki, 2011). High incidences of crime and insecurity thus have a strong bearing on the overall development in Kenya. They influence levels of investment both nationally and internationally, the ability of citizens to engage in sustainable businesses; both small and medium enterprises, agricultural production and facilitate movement of goods and services across international borders (Singo *et al.*, 2013). Crime and insecurity undermine the freedom of association and movement of citizens, create a sense of fear and intimidation and hamper the spiritual, economic and social development of individuals.

The security situation in Vihiga County was characterized by a significant increase in all categories of crime between 2005 and 2012 (Vihiga County Security Committee, 2012). The county experienced increased cases of theft of stock, breaking, motorcycle and other thefts, other offences against persons, criminal damage, theft by servant, possession of dangerous drugs, consumption of local brews, affray, robbery, homicide, stealing, offences against morality and economic crimes (Vihiga County, Police Commissioner's Report, 2012). The crime that seemed to be common was abuse of alcohol and drugs. The trend of crime and insecurity has been orchestrated by, among others, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, inequitable distribution of resources, organized crimes, high unemployment rate, drug and substance abuse, high illiteracy levels and sophistication of technology (Gimode, 2011; Okello, 2011; Chiti, 2010). Since, abuse of alcohol and drugs was common, the research looked at literature that seemed to discuss alcohol and drug abuse in relation to other criminal activities.

2.1.2 Link between Alcohol and Drug Abuse with Criminal Activities

Research conducted in Australia say that a significant proportion of those apprehended for a range of criminal offences are frequent alcohol and drug abusers (Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program, 2011). This is supported by Ball *et al.* (2012) who say that, statistics indicate that 60% to 80% of all crime is alcohol and drug related. Such high claims from researchers have tended to be repeated by drug policy campaigners.

Boyum & Kleiman (2012) attribute half of crime to the idea that a lot of crime is committed by alcohol and drug users. This is also supported by research on people who are in prison or drug treatment (Brotheton, 2011; Buchanan & Younge, 2010). Studies repeatedly find that high proportions of prisoners have used drugs and have had drug problems, and that drug treatment clients report that they have committed a lot of crime. Translation of these studies into policy has tended to assume that, because there is an overlap between reported levels of crime and drug use in these populations, a high proportion of crime is caused by alcohol and drug abuse. However, the current study sought to argue that this is an over- simplistic view of the alcohol and drug-crime link.

Prisoners and arrestees may be using more alcohol and drugs than the rest of the population. And it is likely that their offending accelerates during periods of heavy alcohol and drug use (McSweeney & Hough, 2013), and also that many problematic drug users finance their drug use by offending. While the figures indicate that some offending is directly linked to illicit drug use, they do not necessarily show that drug use is a precursor to crime. Criminals often start offending before they use drugs, and they sometimes continue after they have stopped using drugs (Seddon, 2013). A Canadian team of researchers asked prisoners about the links between their use of substances and their crimes and a high proportion of the prisoners reported using drugs, but fewer linked this to their offending (Lavine, 2013). Bailey & Hubbard (2013) found out that, males who used illicit drugs during their lifetimes were more likely to have committed offences prior to drug use, whereas women were almost equally as likely to have commenced either first. The majority of young people surveyed started drug use and offending at an early age, with drug use beginning before or around the same time as offending.

Another theory related to the alcohol and drug abuse -crime link suggests that there are factors which increase both the risk of becoming involved in offending and the taking of illicit drugs (Donnelly *et al.*, 2012). Perhaps factors such as an abusive childhood or parental absence may predispose individuals to involvement with crime and drugs or that lifestyle influences may be a driver. The researcher sought to argue that, whether the literature does not statistically show that alcohol and drug abuse was a precursor to crime, but there was a relationship between alcohol and drug abuse. This is supported by Sheeran *et al.* (2011) who say that, substance abusers are common among street children and urban city secondary schools. Cooper (2012) further says that, drug abuse, violence and reckless sexual behavior have a close relationship with consequences of unwanted pregnancies, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV & AIDS. Since school dropouts were among the crime offenders, the research looked at the literature related to secondary school dropout rate.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The current study adopted two theories which were Labeling Theory and Conflict Theory. In sociology, labeling theory is the view of deviance according to which being labeled as a "deviant" leads a person to engage in deviant behavior (Sumner, 1994). According to Memmi (1968), the proponents of the theory were Geoge Hebart Mead (1934), Becker Howard (1963) and Edwin Lemert (1951). Originating in Howard Becker's work in the 1960s, labeling theory explains why people's behavior clashes with social norms (Lemert, 1951). For example, a teenager who lives in an urban area frequented by gangs might be labeled as a gang member. Accordingly, the teenager might begin to behave like a gang member or become one (O'Grady, 2011).

Labeling theory had its origins in *Suicide*, a book by French sociologist Émile Durkheim (Mead, 1934). He found that crime is not so much a violation of a penal code as it is an act that outrages society. He was the first to suggest that deviant labeling satisfies that function and satisfies society's need to control the behavior.

Labeling theory is a vibrant area of research and theoretical development within the field of criminology. Originating in the mid- to late-1960s in the United States at a moment of tremendous political and cultural conflict, labeling theorists brought to center stage the role of government agencies, and social processes in general, in the creation of deviance and crime (Macionis & Gerber, 2010; Macionis & Linda, 2011). Cullen (1984) argues that, the theory represented both a theoretical and methodological break from the past, and it could reasonably be argued that it was one of the dominant theoretical perspectives in the study of crime and deviance from the late 1960s until the early 1980s.

Labeling theory is based on the idea that behaviors are deviant only when society labels them as deviant (Becker, H. 1963; Tannenbaum, 1938). As such, conforming members of society, who interpret certain behaviors as deviant and then attach this label to individuals, determine the distinction between deviance and non-deviance. Labeling theory questions who applies what label to whom, why they do this, and what happens as a result of this labeling. Powerful individuals within society like politicians, religious groups, judges and police officers typically impose the most significant labels. Labeled persons may include drug addicts, alcoholics, criminals, delinquents, prostitutes, sex offenders, and psychiatric patients, to mention a few (Memmi, 1965; Macionis, 2012).

Conflict Theory was authored by Collins, 1982. He says that the social order is based on cohesion and exploitation. Sociologist Shleicher (2007), who is a conflict theorist, argues that to function most effectively the family requires adults who specialize in particular roles. He views the traditional gender roles as arising out of the need to establish a division of labour between marital partners. Vartanian & Gleason (2010) contend that, women take the expressive, emotionally supportive role and men the instrumental, practical role, with two complementing each other. According to this theory, women become anchored in family as wives, mothers and household managers; men become anchored in the occupational world outside the home (Max & Engels, 1948). The weakness with this frame work is that it was only relevant in the 1950s when more women were full time home makers than is the case. Conflict Theory assumes that social behavior is best understood in terms of conflict or tension between competing groups. Such conflict need not be violent; it can take a form of labour negotiations, party politics, and competition between religious groups for new members or competition between genders for the scarce resources.

Conflict theorists, then, see gender differences as a reflection of the subjugation of one group (women) by another group (men) (Durkheim, 2005). If we can use an analogy of Marx's analysis of class conflict, we can say that males can be likened to the bourgeoisie, or capitalists who control most of the society's wealth, prestige, and power. Females are like the proletariat, or workers who acquire valuable resources only by following the dictates of their bosses. Men's work is uniformly valued while women's work whether unpaid labour in the home or wage labour is devalued (Santrock, 2008; Bandura, 1997).

The Labeling Theory helped the researcher to identify the activities that the society labeled as deviant. The study identified what deviant activities basing on recommendations by what the religious groups, chiefs, police officers and judges

typically imposed the most significant labels. Labeled persons included dropouts who abused alcohol and drugs, thieves, those who fought in public, sex offenders, robbers, murderers and those who broke traffic laws. Conflict Theory helped the researcher to identify factors that emanated from the social cultural arrangement of the society which influenced students to drop of school. They included sex discrimination, gender stereotypes and social economy.

3.1 Research Methodology

3.1 Study Locale

The current study was carried out in Vihiga County. The county has 2 National Schools which are Bunyore Girls and Chavakali High School. It has five constituencies, namely, Emuhaya, Hamisi, Sabatia, Luanda and Vihiga which oversee the allocation and disbursement of Funds to help needy students pay their fees (IEBC Report, 2013).

It has five local authorities, namely, Vihiga Municipal Council, Mbale County Council, Hamisi County Council, Sabatia County Council and Luanda County Council.

The county had 412 public primary schools and 112 public secondary schools. See appendix one for the list of public secondary schools. The secondary school enrolment was 136,082 with a teacher to pupil ratio of 1:31 in public schools. It had more than 10 tertiary colleges (VCDE's Report on Staff Establishment, 2013). It had 17 girls' schools, 10 boys' schools and 85 mixed schools.

The area of study was chosen because of the increased dropout rate of students and escalating criminal activities between 2009 and 2012 (V.C.D.E's Report on Examination, 2012: Vihiga County Security Committee, 2012). The completion rate for girls was 53% and for boys was 47% in K.C.S.E, 2011 unlike in 2008 when it was 39% for girls while 42% for boys, in 2009 it was 47% for girls and 45% for boys and in 2010 it was 50% for girls and 46% for boys (KNEC Analysis Report, 2012).

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted correlation survey design. The relationship between types of criminal activities and dropouts was tested by T-test and descriptive statistics.

3.3 Study Population

Study population refers to an entire group of individuals, events or objects having common observable characteristics from which a sample which is a smaller group is obtained. (Mugenda, 2003; Ahuja, 2001; Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). It defines the universe of the study. The study focused on Secondary Schools, Police Stations and Provincial Administration Offices.

The target population was 5,568. The categories of target population were 112 Principals, the dropouts were 1820 from Luanda, 1240 from Emuhaya, 997 from Hamisi, 941 from Vihiga and 570 from Sabatia. The total dropouts in the county were therefore, 5,568 (Director of Education, Vihiga County, 2012). The researcher got from the office of the Vihiga County Director a list of 64 Chiefs equivalent to the number of locations in the

county. 5 Probation Officers, each representing a sub county, 5 Officers Commanding Police Divisions and 5 Divisional Criminal Investigating Officers were taken each representing a Police Division.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

A sample is a small part of a statistical part of population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole population (Bowley, 1989; Gay, 1981; Miller, 1979). The study targeted 112 secondary schools in the county because it was reported that they all registered high dropout rate between 2009 and 2012, (VCDE, 2012). Schools were grouped into three strata which were 10 boys' schools, 14 girls' schools and 89 mixed schools.

The researcher selected 10 boys' schools and 13 girls' schools by purposive sampling since they were few (Dooley, 2001; Koul, 1992). 26 mixed schools were selected by taking 30 % of the schools. This was because Kothari (2004) says that, 30% of a population that is big is considered a good representative of the population.

Simple random sampling was used to select Principals and Chiefs. This sampling technique was considered appropriate based on Dooley (2001), who says that, a study which probes deeply into the characteristics of a small sample, will often provide more knowledge than a study which looks at the same problem by collecting shallow information from a large sample. The simple random sampling was used to give each respondent an equal chance to respond and be involved (Okoth, 2012; Tondon, 1979). Table of random numbers was used to select the respondents.

Purposive sampling was used to select the Divisional Criminal Investigating Officers, Officers Commanding Police Stations. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to subjectively use only those elements in the population that were considered to have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999; Gosh, 1971; Myers, 1997).

Students who dropped out of school were selected because they were the target group and they were hoped to provide the correct information that made them drop from school. The sample size was got as per the Sub County using 30 % of each population by simple random sampling technique. This is in regard to Rajaraman (1985) and Fiebleman (1972) who say that, 30 % is suitable for it reduces sampling error. Therefore, the sample sizes were, 546 which was 30% of 1820, in Luanda, in Emuhaya, 372 which was 30% of 1240, in Hamisi, 299 which was 30 % of 997, in Vihiga, 282 which was 30 % 941 and in Sabatia 171 which was 30% of 570. The total sample size for school dropouts was therefore 1,670.

School principals were selected because they are the Chief Executive Officers of schools and therefore overall in charge of the day to day administration of the schools. They are therefore in charge of curriculum implementation and custodian of students' records and teachers' records in schools.

Chiefs provided crime rate of school dropouts' information in the village that could not be reported to the police. According to Kothari (2004) and Kelingher (1983),

30% of a population that big is considered a good representative of a small number. In the current study therefore, 30% of 112 principals was 34, 30% of 64 Chiefs was 19.

District Probation officers were selected because they were the custodians of criminal records of teenagers who were preferred charges in the courts. The police gave criminal data of school dropouts of those students who were reported in police stations and preferred charges. Since they were few, 100% of the target group was selected (Okoth, 2012). 100% of 5 District probation Officers was 5, 100% of 5 Divisional Criminal Investigating Officers was 5, 100% of 5 Officers Commanding Police Stations were 5.

The summary of the sample sizes and sampling techniques is shown in Table 3.4 that follows overleaf:

Table 3.4: Sample Size

S/N	Respondents Target	Population	Sample Sampling	Size Technique
1	Principals	112	34	Simple Random
2	School dropouts	5568	1670	Simple Random
3	County Commander	1	1	Purposive Sampling
4	District Probation officers	5	5	Purposive
5	Chiefs	64	19	Simple Random
6	DCIO	5	5	Purposive
7	OCPD	5	5	Purposive
8	Vihiga County, Police	1	1	Purposive
	Total	5,759	1738	

Source: Author (2014).

3.5 Instruments of Data Collection

Instrumentation involves the tools used in the study to find out the required information. Researchers prefer using methods that provide high accuracy, generalizability and explanatory power, with low cost, rapid speed and maximum management demands and administrative convenience (Warwick & Lininger, 1975). A combination of the following research instruments was used in the current study for complementary purposes: questionnaires, interview schedule and document analysis.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires were preferred because they allowed the researcher to get information from a large number of target group spread within a large geographical area in a short time. They were also relevant in collecting confidential information from the respondent since their names were not indicated in the questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered to the Principals. The researcher used semi structured questionnaires to search for information about factors that influenced Dropout Rate of Students in Public Secondary Schools in relation to crime escalation. Part A included demographic data such as age, sex and academic qualifications while other parts included the responses of the specific target group in relation to the research questions.

3.5.2 Interview Schedule

The interview schedule was prepared and used to collect qualitative in-depth data from the field (Bordens & Abbott, 2005; Sharma & Mukherji, 1983). This instrument was used to obtain data from Probation Officers, Divisional Criminal Investigating Officers and Officers Commanding Police Divisions. The items in the interview schedule sought information on factors influencing dropout rates of students in public secondary schools and crime escalation. In the development of the interview schedule, the fixed-choice and open-ended formats of items were used to avoid limiting the respondents' response and to facilitate guidance and probing for further clarification. The questions were designed on the basis of the objectives of the study, the research questions and conceptual model.

3.5.3 Document Analysis Schedule

Document analysis is a critical examination of recorded information related to the issue under study. It is used to obtain unobtrusive data at the pleasure of the researcher (Best & James, 2002; Fisher, 1960). School admission books, class registers and monthly returns from the Deputy Principals were examined with a view to finding out information on dropout rate by sex from 2005 to 2012. The data were used to determine the nature and pattern of student dropout rate from public secondary schools from 2005 to 2012. The students who were in Form Four in 2009 were assumed to have joined Form One in 2005.

3.6 Pilot Study

Delamont (2003) observes that, it is highly desirable to run a pilot test on a questionnaire and to revise it based on the results of the test. Piloting was done to establish whether the instruments could be used to collect relevant data, identify any problems likely to occur at the time of actual data collection process and to also check whether the instructions in the questionnaires were understandable to the respondents. The study used 3 schools for piloting which were 10 % of the sampled schools. This is in line with Ahuja (2001) who says that, 10 % of the subjects of study can give an adequate representation of the study. The schools selected for pilot study were not considered for the main list. The responses from the pilot study were discussed with the supervisors to ensure that dropout rates and crime escalation in Vihiga County, Kenya were adequately captured by the instruments. The results were used to test the validity and reliability of the research tools and also to determine field experiences. The researcher therefore sought first to establish the validity of the study.

3.6.1 Validity of the Instruments

Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure for a particular purpose and a particular group (Okoth, 2012). It also refers to the degree to which a test appears to cover the relevant content it purports to (Fisher, 1958). Validity also assesses the extent to which something that is being measured is the intended construct, content or criterion (Dooley, 2001). In addition, it focuses on the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of inferences that the researchers make based on the data they collect. According to Ackoff (1961), face validity is the commonly

used way of estimating validity of data. It refers to the degree to which a test appears to cover the relevant content it purports to (Denis, 1960). The researcher developed the instruments based on objective of the study and submitted to the supervisors who ensured that all the themes in the research objectives were covered. They also checked on the research questions, research design and methodology in order to determine the face and content validity and their views were used to improve the instruments. Having established the validity of the study, the researcher sought to establish the reliability of the study.

3.6.2 Reliability of the Instruments

According to Kothari (2004), reliability refers to the degree to which an instrument consistently measures what it is meant to measure. Reliability assesses the extent to which a measure reflects some consistent aspect of people or events and not random error (Dooley, 2001).

The above instruments were piloted to determine their validity and reliability. Test-retest technique was applied to ascertain the reliability of the instruments whereby the instruments were administered at a two week interval. The responses were scored to obtain a set of scores (T1).

After 14 days, the instruments were administered to obtain another set of scores (T2). Scores were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

The method used was as shown below:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N\Sigma XY - \Sigma X \Sigma Y}{\sqrt{(N\Sigma X^2 - (\Sigma X)^2)(N\Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2)}}$$

Pearson's *r* is an internal measure of relationship that reflects the proportional reduction of error when one shifts from the mean as the prediction rule to the linear regression equation. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was adopted for the study because it is a measure of correlation that shows the type and strength of the relationship between two variables under study (Mugende & Mugenda, 1999). Here the aim was to determine the relationship between the two test scores for each individual on two different occasions.

A correlation was established between the scores on the items. The Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient(*r*) was used to determine the coefficient of internal consistency of the test items in the test. The Pearson's (*r*) coefficients obtained were 0.833, for principals and 0.878, for students' questionnaires.

This was regarded as reasonable reliability index for the research instruments, since the values were above the minimum *r*-value which Koul (1992) pegs at 0.5. Sarantakos (1998) observes that, a high reliability value (0.70 or higher) shows that, the characteristic it was designed to measure (p.210) is actually measured. These results were considered to be high enough to be accepted as reliable internal measure of consistency of the questionnaire (Kerlinger, 1983).

3.8 Data Analysis

This covers the analysis of data collected. It involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. This is because the research instruments yielded both quantitative and qualitative data. Data obtained from the interviews and questionnaires from the field were sorted, edited, coded, classified and tabulated for analysis. Quantitative data were transcribed, put into various categories and thereafter reported according to emergent themes and sub themes. Qualitative data from the interview were tape recorded transcribed, analyzed and reported in form of text and verbatim. To facilitate the analysis, the raw data from the tests on the variables were summarized in tables and coded before they were entered into the computer for analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Computer Package Version 11.5. Descriptive statistics was used.

The objective sought to discuss the type of criminal activities by secondary school dropouts in Vihiga County, Kenya. Descriptive statistics such as pie-charts and frequency tables were applied in the presentation of findings by use of SPSS Computer Package Version 11.5. The researcher carried out also a t-test to establish whether the difference in the dropout rates of boys and that of the girls in the county was statistically significant.

4. Research Finding and Conclusions

This chapter addressed the findings of the nature of criminal activities committed by secondary school dropouts.

4.1 Type of Crimes Committed by the Dropouts

The researcher asked the Vihiga County, Police Commissioner to name various crimes that were commonly committed by the general public and dropouts. Basing on his records the findings were as indicated in Table 4.1 that follows:

Table 4.1: Types of Criminal Activities committed between 2007 – 2012
in Vihiga County by the Vihiga County Police Commandant (n=1)

Types of Crime	Crimes Committed by all Criminals	Percentage (%)	Crimes Committed by Dropouts	Percentage (%)
Alcohol and Drug abuse	1512	27.15	841	55.62
Stealing	1851	33.24	1014	54.78
Assault	853	15.32	435	51.00
Affray	564	10.13	288	51.06
Defilement	454	8.15	132	29.08
Robbery with violence	175	3.14	89	50.86
Murder	127	2.28	45	35.43
Others	33	0.59	21	63.64
Total	5,569	100	2,865	51.45

Source: Field Data (2012).

From Table 4.1 above, a total of 5,569 cases of crime were reported, out of which 2,865 crimes were committed by the school dropouts. That constituted 2865(51.45%) of the total criminal activities that were reported. The criminal activities committed were, alcohol

and drug abuse 1512(27.15%), stealing 1851(33.24%), assault 853(15.32%), affray 564(10.13%), defilement 454(8.15%), robbery with violence 175(3.14%), murder 127(2.28%) and others 33 (0.59%). Out of those criminal activities, those committed by dropouts were as follows: alcohol and drug abuse 841(55.62%), stealing 1014(54.78%), assault 435(51.00%), affray 288(51.06%), defilement 132 (29.08%), robbery with violence 89(50.86%), murder 45(35.43%) and others 21(63.64%).

The criminal activities committed by the dropouts were high 2,865(51.45%). This was a high number since it was more than half the population. The rate is considered to be high because Kenya Police Department in Statistical Abstract (2013) elucidates that crime type committed by one group of persons that rate above 40 % is considered to be high and should not be ignored. Uganda also recorded a high crime rate more than 40% between 2008 and 2010 (Kemple, 2011). There seems to be a similarity in crime rate between Vihiga and Uganda because they are from the same region. This is supported by Jothie (2012) who says that, communities from one region tend to influence one another while committing crimes. This is contrary to Sutherland (2013) who says that, it does not necessarily mean that if a country in a particular region is engaging in crimes, other countries in that region are engaging in crime. Jothie (2012) and Sutherland (2013) seem to differ because their studies were in different environments and at different times.

Edwards (2012), in support of high prevalence of crime rate by dropouts, argues that, they do so because of their low level of education. The current study argues that a person who has completed secondary school may not engage in as much criminal activities as compared to the one who dropped from school because he has the power to be rational. This is supported by Headden (2009) who says that, an educated person is able to think logically about the perplexing issues of life and make an informed decision.

The findings further reveal that, out of 1512 of all criminals that abused alcohol and drugs, 841(55.62%) were dropouts. Similarly, out of the 37 people who died in Eastern Province due to using illicit brews, 24 were secondary school dropouts (Kamau, 2014). This was similar to the study in South Africa by Leach & Humphrey (2007) which reveals that, 75% of dropouts abused alcohol & drugs.

The similarity might have arisen because it involves Africans. This implies that the problem of alcohol and drug abuse by dropouts is common in Africa. The dropouts might have started abusing alcohol and drugs while still in school and perhaps they found it difficult to stop the behaviour even after dropping from school. This is in line with Kramarae (2009) who argues that, students who are expelled from school tend to perpetuate the behaviour that they were expelled for into the community.

Criminals who committed theft offences rated 1851 from which 1041(54.78%) were dropouts. Stealing is a crime according to the Penal Code of the Laws of Kenya, Chapter XXVI (268) (Laws of Kenya, 1970). It seems stealing was favoured by many dropouts. This can be supported by Maier (2009) in his study on theft by juvenile which says that, most dropouts (89.3%) preferred stealing to any other crime because one could not be easily identified. They might have also engaged in theft to get money to buy local brews. Fagot & leinbach (2008) supports this by saying that, most youth who drink local brews steal household items to get money for buying the drinks because they are not employed.

The findings further indicate that out of the rate of 853 that committed assault, 435(51.00%) was committed by the dropouts. Moreover, out of the 564 that committed affray, 288 (51.06%) was committed by dropouts. Affray is a felony of fighting in public in accordance with the Penal Code of the Laws of Kenya, Chapter IX (92) (Laws of Kenya,1970). They might have engaged in such like crimes because they used drugs that increased their adrenaline. Okello (2011) supports that, people who use bhang fight occasionally because it arouses adrenaline which makes them to have a lot of energy which they divert into crime.

The findings indicate that out of 454 that committed defilement, 132(29.08%) was committed by dropouts. The number seems to be low because perhaps some of the cases were not reported because of the nature of the offence. Mwanguri & Oculi (2012) say that, cases of defilement are not reported because defilement causes stigma. Estimates of sexual assault prevalence have been based on a variety of sources, including police reports, national random samples of crime victims, interviews with incarcerated rapists and interviews with victims who seek hospital treatment, general population surveys of women and surveys of male and female college students (Fagan & Najman, 2012). According to Fisher (1953), the most reliable estimates derive from studies using correlation surveys that is, measures containing several questions describing behaviors which constitute sexual assault in simple and relate to other causal factors like drug abuse.

From the findings, out of the 175 who committed robbery, 89 (50.86%) were dropouts. In spite of the robbery incidences being few, the cases committed by dropouts were high. Robbery cases might have been few because the penalty for such like an offence is severe. This is supported by Mugisha (2006) who says that, robbery cases are few in Kenya because people fear to be sentenced to death. Out of the few, people who committed robbery, the majority were dropouts. This might be because of the influence of illicit brews and use of drugs which many dropouts engaged into.

Some dropouts were reported of committing murder. Out of 127 who committed the offence, 459 (35.43%) was committed by dropouts. This is a small rate and it is similar to the study by Paleri (2009) who says that, murder cases in Tanzania are few.

This was committed by few dropouts because people who commit murder are marked and feared by the society. This is supported by the family members of one of the terrorist suspect who claimed that they had been isolated by the entire society (Maiyio, 2013).

Lastly, out of the 33 who committed other crimes, 21(63.64%) was committed by the dropouts. This implies that many dropouts participated in other offences. Becroft (2013) supports this by saying that, many dropouts engage in low profile offences which can appear negligible because of their age as most of them are in adolescence stage. Low profile offences are commonly committed by youth who abuse drugs at times for fun (Singo, 2013). This is supported by Hahn & Danzberger (2009) who argues that, drug addicts at times steal to amuse people.

The most prevalent crimes reported to the Police were therefore, alcohol and drug abuse 84(55.62%), stealing 1014(54.78%), assault 435(51.00%) and affray 288(51.06%).

There seemed to be a link between dropouts who abused alcohol and drugs, and other offences like stealing, assault, defilement and other crimes.

Having looked at the nature of crimes as reported by the police, the researcher looked at the nature of criminal activities committed by the dropouts as reported by the Chiefs to cater for some of the offences that could not be reported to the police. The researcher therefore sought to establish the crime prevalence per sub-county using data got from the Chiefs and the findings were as indicated in Table 4.2 that follows :

Table 4.2: Crimes committed by Dropout per Sub-County as Reported by the Chiefs (n=19)

Types of Crime	Sub-Counties					Total	
	Luanda	Emuhaya	Hamisi	Vihiga	Sabatia	Percentage	(%)
Alcohol and Drug abuse	303	261	102	204	144	1014	35.39
Stealing	214	168	162	158	139	841	29.35
Assault	84	102	127	57	65	435	15.18
Fighting	78	69	67	36	38	288	10.05
Defilement	12	11	39	35	35	132	4.61
Robbery with violence	26	21	15	16	11	89	3.11
Murder	11	12	13	4	5	45	1.57
Others	7	6	3	3	2	21	0.73
Total	735	650	528	513	439	2,865	100
Percentage (%)	25.65	22.69	18.43	17.91	15.32	100	

Source: Field Data (2012).

From Table 4.2 above, out of the 2,865 crimes committed by the school drop outs, 1049(35.39%) and 841(29.35%) of the crimes constituted alcohol and drug abuse and stealing respectively while a further 435(15.18%) and 21(10.05%) of the crimes comprised of assault and fighting respectively. At the same time, defilement and robbery with violence comprised of 132(4.61%) and 89(3.11%) respectively while murder and other crimes comprised of 45(1.57%) and 21(0.73%) respectively. The criminal rate for the sub counties were as follows: Luanda 735(25.65%), Emuhaya 650 (22.69%), Hamisi 528(18.43 %), Vihiga 513 (17.91%) and Sabatia 439(15.32%). The findings show that Luanda (303) and Emuhaya (261) had high prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse. Hamisi (102), Vihiga (294) and Sabatia (104) had a lower prevalence of crime. The Geographical Location of Luanda and Emuhaya indicate that they were on the Eastern Block of the county.

It is possible that since the dropouts were from one direction, they influenced one another. This can be supported by GoK Report (2009) which says that, people from the same locality tend to commit similar offences.

The Sub Counties recorded the high prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse 1041(35.39%). This could be linked to the topography of Lwanda, Hamisi and Emuhaya which provided a good hiding place for local people who trade in illicit brews and bhang. This can be supported by Gimode (2011) who says that, geographical factors have a bearing on the nature of crime that is committed by a society. Sabatia and Vihiga had valleys and tea plantations which made bhang to thrive unnoticed by the security agents.

Luanda and Emuhaya had the highest rate of criminal activities which were 735(25.65%) and 650(22.69%). This implies that a society that has high criminal rate of alcohol and drug abuse also has high rate of criminal activities. The link between crime and drug use is complex. Many persistent offenders frequently use fraud, corruption and theft to pay for their drug purchases (Seddon, 2013; Donnelly *et al.*, 2012).

Psychoactive drugs have pharmacological properties that affect mood, cognition and therefore offending (Bratton, 2012). It has been suggested that use of drugs causes violent crime by affecting metabolism and electrophysiological activity in the brain (Amen *et al.*, 2012). It has also been proved that prolonged drug use causes long-term changes in the areas of the brain that are linked to cognitive functions that may have an effect on criminal behaviour (Shepad & Blacley, 2012).

There is continuing debate over the effects of particular drugs on psychopharmacological violence, with cocaine as the most commonly cited suspect. Cannabis and intoxication are thought to have high association with crime, since withdrawal and related mental health problems may be linked to increased aggression in some cases (Boyum & Kleiman, 2012). Bhang use is thought to be linked more to property crime than to violence among its users while non-prescribed use of tranquillisers is rarely associated with crime, which may be due to a combination of their psychoactive effects and their low price (Baron, 2013).

Stealing was rated second 841 (29.35%) in all the Sub Counties. This could be because they stole to get money to buy the local brews and bhang since they were not in stable employment as they had dropped from school. It is often suggested that addicted users of illicit alcohol and drugs are compelled to commit crimes in order to get money to buy them (Brotherton, 2011). This economic-compulsive link was perhaps the most widely supposed link between alcohol and drugs, and crime.

There was a low rate of defilement 432(4.61%) in the county. Luanda and Umuhaya recorded the lowest rates of defilement which were 12 and 11. This could be attributed to abuse of alcohol and drugs. This can be supported by Brook *et al.* (2013) who alludes that, approximately 80% of all sexual assault victims reported that they were not alcoholic and drug addict. Perhaps too much alcohol and drug abuse lowers down libido in the victims. This can be supported by Brown (2011) whose findings indicate that, the spouses of males who abused alcohol and drug had secret extra marital affairs for sexual satisfaction.

Robbery with Violence and Murder had the lowest rating of 89(3.11%) and 45(1.57%). This could be attributed to the fact that these were cases reported to the police and not the chiefs. This is supported by Collins (2010) who says that, it is only a court that can hear cases involving high profile crimes like murder and robbery. However, the current study argues that since chiefs stay with these criminals, they should be involved in the judicial processes of murder trials.

The findings from the chiefs therefore reveal that there were prevalent criminal activities by dropouts in all the Sub Counties of Vihiga County. The total number of criminal activities was 735 in Luanda, 650 in Emuhaya, 528 in Hamisi, 513 in Vihiga and 439 in Sabatia. Luanda and Emuhaya had the highest incidences of crime. The most

prevalent crimes committed by the dropouts in all the sub counties were alcohol and drug abuse 1014(35.395), stealing 841(29.35%) and Assault 435(15.18%). The findings also relate strongly abuse of alcohol and drugs with other crimes.

Having studied the type of criminal activities committed by the dropouts as revealed by the police and the chiefs as the major security agents in the county, the researcher, looked at the type of criminal activities by dropouts by asking them to give information about criminal activities. This was hoped to give information that the security agents could not give.

The study therefore sought to establish the prevalence of the types of crime that the drop outs had committed.

To do this, the drop outs were asked to either Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2) or Strongly agree (1) that the drop outs in Vihiga county had committed. Thereafter, the crimes prevalence was measured using the scale that is shown in Table 4.3

Table 4.3: Types of Criminal Activities that Dropouts had Committed reported by Dropouts (n = 385)

Types of Crime Frequencies	5	4	3	2	1	Mean Rating
Alcohol and Drug abuse	201	98	70	10	5	4.25
Stealing	182	84	82	21	15	4.03
Fighting	102	75	94	79	34	3.34
Defilement	95	67	105	90	27	3.29
Robbery with violence	69	55	125	106	29	3.08
Others	52	54	142	100	36	2.96
Classification of Crime Prevalence: 4.1 - 5.0 = Very High Prevalence 2.1 – 3.0 = Low Prevalence 3.1 – 4.0 = High Prevalence 1.0 -- 2.0 = Least Prevalence						

Source: Field data (2012).

From Table 4.3 above, alcohol and drug abuse had a mean rating of 4.25, stealing had a mean rating of 4.03, fighting had a mean rating of 3.34, defilement had a mean rating of 3.29 while robbery with violence had a mean rating of 3.08 and other crimes had a mean rating of 2.96. The findings indicate that alcohol and drug abuse had the highest mean rating of 4.25. These crimes included Drunkenness of illegal brews and use of bhang. Consumption of illegal brews and abuse of drugs is a crime in Kenya.

This is supported by the Penal Code of the Laws of Kenya, Section 6, Laws of Kenya (1970) which prohibits drinking or brewing of local brews and use of intoxicating drugs. Other crimes in this class of alcohol and drug abuse crime included taking beer which is lawful and subsequently engaging in criminal activities.

Many of the dropouts engaged in local brews because they were cheap as revealed by one of the. Chiefs. When a chief was interviewed over drunkenness of illegal brews, he said,

“Some of the boys end up in the cheap brew dens, popularly known as “Eshikombe” yaani a cup of busaa or chang’aa. This cup of illicit cheap brew reduces the youth to helpless citizens who cannot work and have a desire to go to school.”

This is supported by the studies which have shown that dropping out of school for adolescents leads to alcohol disorders and heavy drinking (Friedenberg, 2009; Williams & Wynder, 2003).

Based on psychological and sociological factors, literature has shown that failure to meet social goals due to dropping from school leads to behavioral problems such as drinking (Keegan, 2011). Jessor & Jessor (2010) further suggest that, failure to meet educational goals within society leads to behavior such as taking of illicit brews. Students who do poorly in school may use alcohol and other substances to cover up their feelings of depression, anxiety, and inadequacy and/or to increase their social acceptability within peer group (Kimani, 2005). Ellickson *et al.* (2009) through logistic regression found out that, alcohol use during seventh grade predicts dropping out of high school even after controlling for demographics, family structure, academic orientation, early deviance, and school environment for Asians, African- Americans, and Whites, but not for Hispanics.

The current study found out that a good number of students used bhang. After using it, the boys had extra energy which they used in harvesting stones as revealed by one of the cultural leaders. However, one of the chiefs who were interviewed said that, it made the users to engage in other crimes like fighting.

Stealing had a mean rating of 4.03. This was revealed by one Chief, who was interviewed and said,

"These are young boys who have dropped from school and they break into kitchens at night when it is raining. We know that they are teenagers because they only eat meals that are left over and they steal chicks. If they were grownups they would steal cocks which can fetch good money. Infact I know one boy ambaye alikataa kusoma kama ako Form Three. Anasumbua sana."

One of the Police Officers who was interviewed over the same said,

"These boys like stealing items like bicycles, motorcycles, cattle and even dogs. After dropping from school, they find themselves having no money and therefore they steal to survive. Most of them are school dropouts and they are underage."

Another police officer said,

"In my station, most of the dropouts are charged for offences of stealing laptops and mobile phones. They collude with some students in the neighbouring university who steal and give these dropouts to go and sell. Surprisingly they sell to the same university those stolen items."

Siegel (2013) supports the allusion that dropouts engage in petty offences like stealing by saying that the average age for first arrest had increased significantly. He further said that between 60–80% percent of adolescents, and pre-adolescents engaged in

stealing. This could be because they were young and therefore idle since they were not in school.

According to the current study, fighting had a mean rating of 3.34. When one Chief was interviewed as to why school dropouts fight, he said,

"These youth have big dreams while at school. This is because politicians promise them to be tomorrow leaders, and when tomorrow seems to be a mirage, they get frustrated and drop from school. They fight their brothers and sisters who seem to be doing well economically. Some dropouts fought others after being drunk as reported by one of the chiefs. This is supported by research which shows that alcohol consumption is associated with aggressive behavior (Brook et al., 2012). Although there is little research on this issue as it affects dropouts specifically, studies show that a substantial proportion of young adults engage in fighting while intoxicated (Dee & Evans, 2013). Alcohol-related aggression is a serious problem among the dropouts, but it is not clear whether alcohol promotes aggressive behavior in some people or whether individuals who are more aggressive tend to drink more."

When one chief was interviewed as to why young boys were defiling young girls and old women, he said,

"When these boys are drunk they go on defiling young girls and old women because they cannot defend themselves. It seems when these boys are drunk, their sexual appetite is high and they fail to control themselves."

This can be supported by studies which have shown that high school dropouts who drink heavily are more likely to engage in unplanned sexual activity than students who do not drink heavily (Centre for Disease Control & Prevention, 2013).

Although research indicates that the relationship between alcohol use and risky sexual behavior is complex, it also suggests that when alcohol is used in the context of a sexual or potential sexual situation such as a date, it is associated with increased sexual risk-taking under some circumstances (Ferguson & Horwood, 2013; Cicirelli, 1982). Alcohol use appears to be more likely to promote sexual intercourse when the male partner drinks and in situations involving new or occasional sex partners. Drinking prior to intercourse has been consistently related to casual sex as well as to a failure to discuss risk-related topics before having sex (Cunningha, 2013). The disinhibiting effects of consuming alcohol may help explain the relationship between drinking and risky sexual behavior. Alcohol appears to disinhibit behavior primarily as a result of its pharmacologic effects on information processing (Koch & Riba, 2012). By reducing the scope and efficiency of information processing, alcohol allows simple, salient cues that instigate behavior—such as sexual arousal—to be processed, while blunting the processing of more distal and complex cues, such as the possibility of contracting a sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS (Grossman, 2013; Koch & Riba, 2012).

When one District Criminal Investigation Officer (DCIO) was asked to comment on the reason for robbing people of their motor cycles, he said

"They sell the motor cycles in Kisumu because the town is a hub of fishing industry and therefore it provides ready market. The engines of motor cycles are used to make motorboats. We will not allow these robberies. I have instructed my boys to be alert. Serikali ina mkono mrefu, tutawakamata na kuwaweka ndani."

There was prevalence of hijacking of motorcycles in the county. This implies that there was high poverty level as many people could not afford to buy vehicles (Vihiga County Security Committee, 2012). This is contrary to South Africa which has a high record of car hijackings (Blair, 2013). This could be due attributed to South Africa being on a higher scale of development than Kenya.

Another crime was misuse of their mobile phones. One DCIO who was interviewed said,

"These dropouts are glued to mobile phones. They indulge in pornography and some sent anonymous threatening messages to parents whenever they punish them. Others write messages to the Police Stations cheating that they have seen a bomb which is ready to explode."

One Probation Officer said,

"Our boys who drop from school are now engaging in soft ware crimes that include internet pornography, blogging, text messaging and stealing of money by mobile phones. They write messages to people claiming purporting that they have sent money erroneously and they a need refund."

This report is supported by Akin- Little (2012) who says that, cell-phone text messaging and e- mail provide additional platforms that support a new form of violence known as cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying occurs when young people use electronic media to taunt, insult, or even threaten their peers. Hirschi (2012) also supports by saying that since the 1990s, the internet blogging, e- mail, and cell-phone text messaging have grown to play significant roles in the erosion of community safety.

Another crime in this category was vandalism. One Probation Officer admitted that some dropouts had a problem of vandalism and property damage. They destroyed railway lines which they sold to Kisumu in the *Juakali* industries. This was further revealed by Vihiga County Security Committee Report (2012) which said that, 78 percent of dropouts admitted damaging property or vandalizing electric transformers and telephone wires. They sold the oil from the transformers which are believed to have medicine healing. This is supported by Chiuri (2005) who says that the problem of alternative medicine is that it is not scientifically approved, therefore traders target rare herbs and items and attaché medicinal beliefs on them. Some dropouts committed traffic

offences. According one OCS, every weekend most teenagers were arrested for driving while drunk, over speeding or driving without valid licenses. When another OCS was interviewed over traffic offences, she said,

"Every weekend we arrest almost 15 teenagers who commit traffic offences. Most of them have dropped from school and they want to drive around to embrace their girl friends and boyfriends. They play loud music and do romance in vehicles."

In another police station, One Police Officer said,

"About one-half of all fatal traffic crashes among 15- to 20-year-olds involve alcohol, and many of those killed are school dropouts. Last week, one boy aged 16 years who had dropped from school took the car of his mother and lamed 9 children into the vehicle from the estate. He failed to stop at the junction and were it that the trailer was over speeding it would have crashed them."

This was supported by (King & Murray, 2001) who said that 30 percent of dropouts who drank in the past year said they had driven after drinking alcohol during the past 30 days. In the Core survey, one-third of dropouts (39 percent of drinkers) admitted over speeding under the influence of alcohol or other drugs within the past year.

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter provides a summary of findings, conclusion, recommendations of the study and suggestions for further research. They are presented from the view point of specific research objectives and research questions posed in pursuit of the general objective of examining the relationship between Secondary School Students' Dropout rate and Crime Escalation in Vihiga County, Kenya.

5.1 Summary of Findings

A summary of the findings is presented under themes derived from research objectives.

5.1.1 Type of Criminal Activities by Secondary School Dropouts

The researcher selected Vihiga County Commissioner of Police's office, the chiefs and the dropouts to give information on the nature of criminal activities committed by the dropouts.

From the Vihiga County Commissioner of police's office, it was found that a total of 5,569 cases of crime were reported out of which 2,865 crimes were committed by the school dropouts. This constituted 2,865(51.45%) of the total reported criminal activities. Alcohol and drug abuse, stealing, assault and fighting were the most prevalent crimes in the county with 1851(33.24%),

1512(27.15%), 853(15.32%) and 564(10.13%) of the total crimes respectively. Out of the alcohol and drug abuse, 841(55.62%) were committed by school dropout while 1014(54.78%) of the recorded stealing crimes were committed by school dropouts. In addition, 435(51.0%) and 288(51.06%) of the assault and fighting crimes respectively were committed by school dropouts.

Furthermore, 132(29.08%) and 89(50.86%) of the defilement and robbery with violence crimes respectively were also committed by school dropouts. In addition, 45(35.43%) and 21(63.64%) of the committed murder and other crimes respectively were also committed by the dropouts.

Findings from the chiefs revealed that out of the 2,865 crimes committed by the school drop outs, 1014(35.39%) and 841(29.35%) of the crimes respectively constituted alcohol/ drug abuse and stealing while a further 435(15.18%) and 288(10.05%) of the crimes comprised of assault and fighting respectively. Defilement and robbery with violence comprised of 132(4.61%) and 89(3.11%) respectively while murder and other crimes comprised of 45(1.57%) and 21(0.73%) respectively. The crime rates per Sub County were as follows: Luanda 735(25.65%), Emuhaya 650(22.69%), Hamisi 528(18.43%), Vihiga 513 (17.91%) and Sabatia 439(15.32%).

Findings from the dropouts revealed that they committed alcohol and drug abuse (4.25), stealing (4.03), assault (3.34), defilement (3.29), robbery with violence (3.08) and others (2.96). Using the scale to measure the prevalence, the mean ratings imply that the crime with the highest prevalence among dropouts in Vihiga County was alcohol and drug abuse which had very high prevalence. In addition, stealing, assault and defilement respectively had high prevalence. On the other hand, robbery with violence and other crimes could be measured as having low prevalence.

Most of the dropouts resorted to alcohol and drug abuse they were cheap and easily found as revealed by one of the Police Officers. This is supported by the studies which have shown that dropping out of school for adolescents leads to alcohol disorders and heavy drinking behaviour (Friedenberg, 2009).

7.2 Conclusion

The highest prevalent crimes among dropouts were alcohol and drug abuse and stealing. This was agreed upon by the Vihiga County Commissioner of Police, the chiefs and the dropouts.

7.3 Recommendations

If alcohol and drug abuse by dropouts can be controlled, crime escalation can be controlled. This is because alcohol and drug abuse influenced the escalation of other crimes committed by the dropouts.

7.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The present study was confined to a discussion on the nature of criminal activities by secondary school dropouts. There is need to conduct a related study in public primary schools.

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