



**AN EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF
WITHDRAWAL BEHAVIOR ON THE ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN KABETE REHABILITATION
SCHOOL, NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA**

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Abstract:

This study aimed to examine the influence of withdrawal behavior on learners' academic performance in Kabete Rehabilitation School, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was based on The Delinquent Behavior Theory and The Theory of Educational Productivity. The study used a concurrent triangulation design in which the researcher implemented the quantitative and qualitative methods simultaneously and with equal weight. The study targeted a total of 70 respondents, which included one headteacher, 29 teachers, and vocational trainers, as well as 40 learners at Kabete Rehabilitation School. Purposive sampling was used to select all 29 teachers and one headteacher, while simple random sampling was used to select 10 learners in the rehabilitation school in Kabete, translating to a total sample of 40 respondents. Questionnaires, interview guides for the head teacher, and observation checklists were used to collect data. Research instruments were piloted among three teachers and vocational trainers from Kiringiti Rehabilitation School in Kiambu County to establish validity and reliability. Quantitative data were analyzed

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using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS version 26.0). The quantitative findings of the study were then presented using tables and graphs. With the qualitative data, the researcher used thematic analysis. Then, a record of all themes was prepared and arranged according to similarities and differences. The themes were afterwards abbreviated as codes, and the codes were written near the related text in a Word document. Findings revealed that the withdrawal behaviors among learners in Kabete rehabilitation school were majorly expressed in feelings of rejection, isolation, and victimization. The study concluded that there was a stronger association between isolation and learners' academic performance in the Kabete Rehabilitation School. The study recommended that the government and or rehabilitation schools need to educate parents and the general public on children's aggressive behaviors and their influence on educational progress in school. The Nairobi County government should ensure professional counselors are deployed in rehabilitation schools.

Keywords: delinquent behavior, withdrawal behavior, the academic performance of learners, and rehabilitation school

1. Introduction

A person who has committed an offense that the community views as bad or criminal, especially a young person, is referred to as a delinquent (Lewis & Salem, 2017). Delinquency threatens the peace and tranquillity that families, schools, and communities worldwide can enjoy (Ugwuzor, 2019). Other issues arising from adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviors include security and financial cost, in addition to society's progressive moral decline (Mayieka, 2019). According to a global analysis, some programs could promote effectiveness in rehabilitating juvenile delinquency (Underwood & Washington, 2016). Young offenders can build on the time they are required to spend away from their homes as they continue to enjoy their childhood journey at juvenile rehabilitation institutions like Crossroads in New York (Poggio, 2018).

According to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) study from 2011 to 2019, community members under 25 were responsible for 56% of all property crime arrests and 45% of all offences (Lantz *et al.*, 2019). Agbowuro *et al.* (2016) undertook a study to examine juvenile delinquency in Government Secondary Schools. According to the survey, many pupils were involved in test malpractice, destruction of school property, shoplifting, hanging from nearby trees and shrubs, and smoking. To better understand how juvenile delinquency affects teenagers' academic performance in Nigeria, Philomena (2014) conducted a study (Mayieka & Obuba, 2018). The results demonstrated that adolescents without delinquent behaviors outperformed those who exhibited such behaviors. In Ghana, De Witt (2009) stipulated established links between neighborhood violence exposure and a host of childhood problems, including symptoms of PTBD, emotionally delinquent behavior, poor academic functioning, internalizing and depression, and externalizing and aggression.

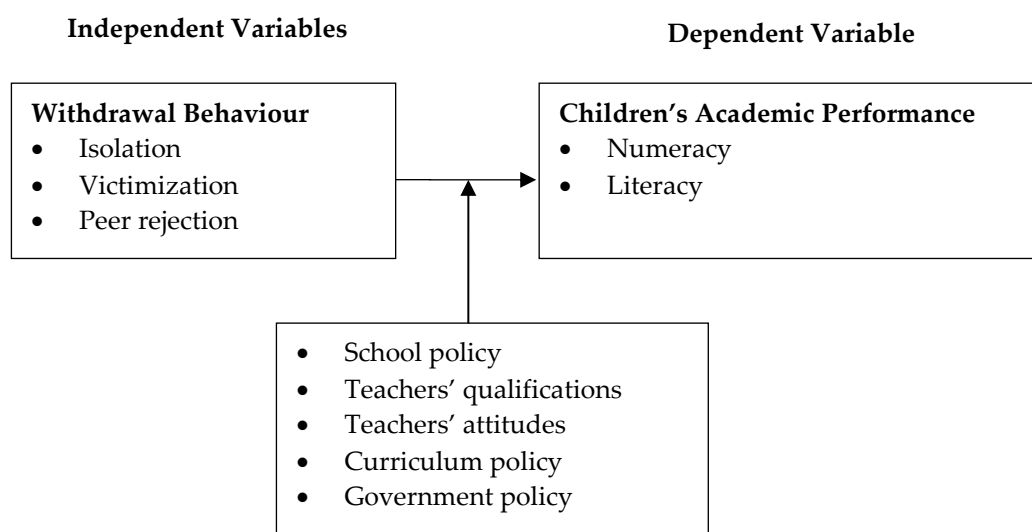
Amongst most learners in rehabilitation schools in Kenya, particularly Kabete, these relations are typically magnified under pre-disposing neighborhood conditions (Mwangi, 2012). However, few studies have examined the influence over time of different types of delinquent behaviors across multiple contexts and on multiple adjustment indicators for girls and boys growing up in disadvantaged city communities. In Kabete, studies focusing on relations between specific types of delinquent behaviors and learners' academic problems can illustrate the specific contribution of a particular behavior to one or more inauspicious outcomes as well as the types of delinquent behaviors contributing to a single unpleasant outcome (Mwangi, 2012).

Despite the government efforts to improve educational provision in rehabilitation schools in Kenya, to date, the efforts have not yielded impressive results due to the dismal performance of learners with delinquent behaviours. The learners' academic performance in Kabete Rehabilitation School has been low, raising concerns amongst stakeholders in special needs education. For example, in the 2016 KCPE examinations, learners in KRS registered a mean grade of D- (minus) (Ministry of Education, 2017). As earlier highlighted, related studies have not isolated the relationship between emotional and behaviour disorders and academic achievement. In addition, there is inadequate information on expected delinquent behavior among children in rehabilitation schools and their influence on academic performance. Therefore, the current study sought to investigate the influence of delinquent behavior on learners' academic performance in Kabete Rehabilitation School, Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

This study examined the influence of withdrawal behavior on the academic performance of learners in Kabete Rehabilitation School, Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.2 Conceptual Framework



2. Literature Review

This section discusses the theoretical framework and the literature related to the study topic.

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was guided by Walberg's theory of educational productivity (sometimes known as achievement theory). This theory posits that learners' psychological traits and immediate learning environments influence educational outcomes. Walberg (2002) proposed nine main aspects which impact learners' educational outcomes. Walberg (2002) shows that characteristics of classroom learning environments demonstrate incremental validity in predicting learner achievement. In this study, educational process goals and achievement goals must be considered to increase educational productivity and efficiency. Thus, the relevance of this theory is that educational process goals are interpreted to include learner perceptions of the social environment, creativity, self-concept, participation in extra-curricular activities, and interest in the subject matter.

The usefulness of the theory of educational productivity is that it combines with the notion of delinquent conduct to establish a connection between delinquency and academic success (Pears *et al.*, 2012). Even while the causal relationship between education and juvenile criminality is inherently complicated, for instance, early acts of aggression may cause issues in the classroom. When a student eventually rejects academic success and prosocial behavior as valid aims and ideals, delinquent peer relationships may also result from their academic failure (Wentzel & Muenks, 2016). Additionally, not all delinquent behavior has the same impact on a student's academic achievement. Whether and how much delinquent behavior affects academic achievement may depend on its seriousness. It seems that among major violent offenders, poor academic achievement is a bigger problem (Loeber *et al.*, 2009).

2.2 Withdrawal Behavior and Academic Performance of Learners in Rehabilitation Schools

In social milieus, shy-withdrawn learners rarely initiate contact with peers, take longer than typical learners to initiate conversation, and speak less frequently than their non-withdrawn counterparts (Coplan *et al.*, 2008). This description not only describes the social initiations and interactions of socially withdrawn learners, but it also partially defines the construct of withdrawal. Gaylord *et al.* (2003) posited that when socially withdrawn learners interact with peers, they appear less socially competent than typical learners. For example, in an observational study conducted in Germany, Stewart and Rubin (2005) found that socially withdrawn learners pursued lower-cost social goals and fewer high-cost social goals and that their attempts to meet them were less likely to succeed than those of their non-withdrawn age-mates.

A study by Gorman-Smith and Tolan (2008) in Austria revealed that when socially withdrawn learners attempt to meet their social goals in the company of their peers, they

are more likely to directly experience peer neglect and rejection than their more sociable peer's age-mates. Such learners register paltry grades in mathematics, sciences, and social studies. Relatedly, it is also well known that socially withdrawn learners are actively disliked by their peers (Oh *et al.*, 2008). Social withdrawal is one of the strongest correlates and consequences of peer rejection during middle childhood and adolescence. It is argued that peers reject socially withdrawn learners because their demeanour contradicts age-specific norms and expectations for social interaction, relationships, and group involvement.

Researchers have argued that atypical behavior becomes more salient to the peer group with increased age; this may explain why the association between social withdrawal and peer rejection steadily increases (Ladd, 2006). Approximately 10% of the school population experiences victimization by peers (Olweus, 2004). Victimized learners experience consistent physical and verbal abuse from their peers and classmates. Given the reserved and quiescent demeanor of many socially withdrawn learners and that they often attempt to avoid social company, to begin with, one might expect they would be protected from a bullying experience.

Significant associations have also been revealed between social anxiety and victimization during later adolescence (Grills & Ollendick, 2002). In most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, aggressive learners may "invite" or encourage peer victimization through peer provocation, like upsetting other learners and initiating fights (Bell & Wolfe, 2004). In contrast, in a study conducted in Morocco, Shaw & Emery (2008) posited that socially withdrawn learners' shy, timid nature may elicit the social perception of being easy targets. In South Africa, De Witt (2009) indicated that, although socially withdrawn learners may have difficulties forming large numbers of friendships, it is nevertheless the case that withdrawn learners and young adolescents are as likely as their typical age-mates to have at least one mutual and stable best friend. For example, De Witt (2009) found that approximately 65% of socially withdrawn 10-year-olds had a mutual best friend. Approximately 70% of these best friendships were maintained across the academic year; this friendship-involvement and -stability percentages were nearly identical to those of non-withdrawn 10-year-olds.

In Kenya, it is nevertheless the case that socially withdrawn learners do differ from their peers on other dimensions of friendship (Okoth, 2011). Moreover, the best friends of extremely withdrawn learners and young adolescents are more likely to be socially withdrawn and victimized than are the mutual best friends of non-withdrawn learners (Rubin *et al.*, 2006d). Thus, many socially withdrawn learners and young adolescents appear to be involved in friendships with other learners experiencing similar psychosocial difficulties. Mwangi (2012) reported that eight- and nine-year-old friendship dyads comprising one or two socially withdrawn learners were rated by observers as relatively restricted in their verbal communication. Mwangi (2012) found that withdrawn young adolescents rated their best friendships as lacking in helpfulness, guidance, and intimate disclosure; the best friends of these withdrawn young adolescents

rated their friendships as involving less fun, help, and guidance than did the best friends of non-withdrawn young adolescents.

In Kabete, given that socially withdrawn learners and young adolescents often experience peer rejection and victimization, it is not surprising that they feel and think poorly of themselves (Wilson, 2011). Moreover, as noted above, the social initiations of socially withdrawn learners often result in peer non-compliance, even though these initiations and requests are less likely than those of non-withdrawn learners to carry out an action involving effort and mobility (Wilson, 2011). However, reviewed empirical studies did not indicate how such failure to obtain peer compliance and collegiality with peers predicts their academic performance in internal, joint, and national exams; this study sought to fill a research gap.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Target Population

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were utilized for more accurate and reliable results (Queirós *et al.*, 2017). In the qualitative data analysis, the inherent ambiguities in human language were acknowledged and considered (Ochieng, 2009). This is because, during data collection and analysis in a qualitative study, sensations, feelings, and opinions about numerous factors relevant to the research problem were considered. Additionally, adopting quantitative procedures allowed the researcher to tabulate acquired data, analyze it, and compare it using different quantitative statistical techniques, simplifying data management (Glass & Hopkins; Nardi, 2018). This study targeted a total of 70 participants, comprising the manager, 29 teachers, and vocational trainers.

3.2 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study used a Central Limit Theorem to select a sample of 40 respondents. The Central Limit Theorem states that for any sample size, $N \geq 30$, the sampling distribution of means is approximately a normal distribution irrespective of the parent population (Kothari, 2005). The head teacher was selected using purposive sampling, considering their position as policy implementers. However, all 29 teachers and vocational trainers were selected using the census method since their number is relatively small. On the other hand, 10 learners in the rehabilitation school in Kabete were selected using simple random sampling. Simple random sampling ensured that every subject in the population was given an equal chance to participate in the study. This procedure enabled the researcher to realize a sample of one head teacher, 29 teachers and vocational trainers, and ten learners.

3.3 Research Instruments

The study used questionnaires, interviews, an observation checklist, and a document analysis guide. This study used a combination of a semi-structured questionnaire and an

observation checklist. The study applied a self-designed questionnaire with closed-ended test items to collect quantitative data from teachers and vocational trainers—a structured interview with open-ended test items to gather qualitative information from the head teacher. The researchers' ability to monitor the behavior and manners of the observed individual was aided by developing an observation form. Document analysis consisted of existing records and documents on learners' academic performance in rehabilitation schools.

3.4 Pilot Study

Research instruments were piloted amongst three teachers and vocational trainers and 4 learners from rehabilitation in Kirigiti Rehabilitation School in Kiambu County. To test validity, items were analyzed to check for content validity. Where the researcher, with the help of experts in the special needs' education department at Kenyatta University, went through each item, and the responses were given to establish whether the items generated the required information. The test re-test method was used to measure the instrument's reliability. The questionnaire was issued to the same respondents two times. Correlation between the two sets of scores from piloting was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha Method, and a reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained; hence, the instrument was considered reliable enough.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

After obtaining the requisite letters of authorization and permits, the researcher embarked on the data collection process. The researcher pre-visited Kabete Rehabilitation School to seek permission and book appointments with the participants to carry out the research and familiarize himself with the participants before the actual study. The researcher administered questionnaires to teachers and vocational trainers for five days on the research objectives. At the same time, the researcher conducted interviews and observation schedules.

3.6 Data Processing and Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods were used. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS, version 26.0). The quantitative findings of the study were then presented using tables and graphs. With the qualitative data, the researcher used thematic analysis. After that, a list of every theme was created and categorized by similarities and differences. The themes were then condensed into codes and inserted next to the pertinent content in a Word document.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Bio-Data of the Respondents

Teachers and vocational trainers were asked to indicate their gender. This data is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Gender of the Teachers and Vocational Trainers

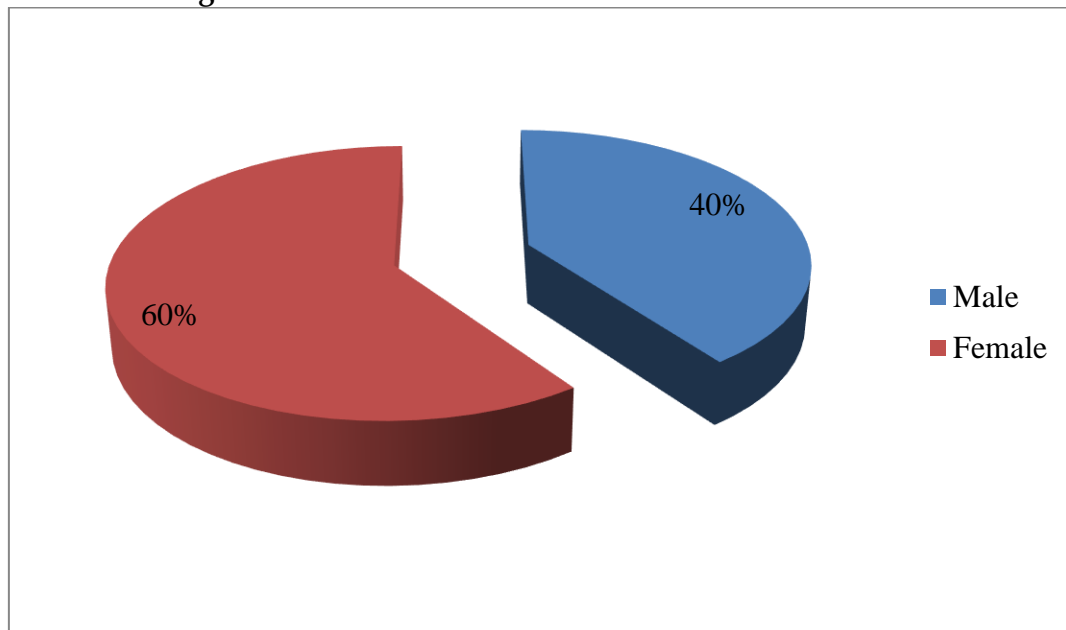
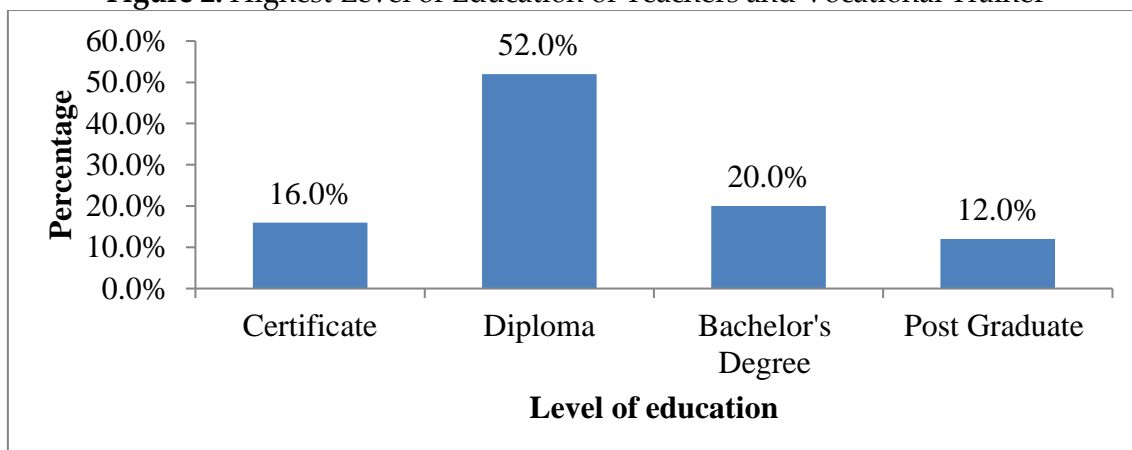


Figure 1 stipulates that significantly more than half, 15(60%) of the respondents, were female teachers, while only 10(40%) were male. This finding insinuates that teachers were not equally distributed regarding gender because male teachers would not match the number of male learners (Krämer *et al.*, 2016).

The level of education of the teachers and vocational trainers was obtained by asking the respondents to indicate the highest education level they had attained. The results are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Highest Level of Education of Teachers and Vocational Trainer



Results presented in Figure 2 stipulate that the education level of teachers and vocational trainers is distributed at all levels. However, 52.0% of the respondents had a Diploma. On the other hand, the number of teachers with post-graduate was presented by 12.0%.

4.2 Withdrawal Behavior and Academic Performance of Learners

To meet this objective, teachers and vocational trainers were asked to indicate the degree of their agreement with items measuring the extent to which withdrawal behavior influenced the academic performance of learners in rehabilitation school and the results were presented in the following subsections:

4.2.1 Withdrawal Behaviours

Teachers and vocational trainers were asked to indicate the forms in which learners manifested withdrawal behavior in their schools. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Aspects of Withdrawal Behaviour as Reported by Teachers

Aspect of withdrawal	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Feeling of rejection	3	12.0
Isolation	15	60.0
Victimization	7	28.0
Total	25	100.0

Source: Questionnaire.

Results in Table 1 indicated that withdrawal behavior manifested by learners was dominated by isolation as reported by the majority 15(60.0%) of the respondents. The results further showed that 7(28.0%) of the respondents reported that the withdrawal aspect was displayed in form of victimization while only 3(12.0%) reported that learners demonstrated withdrawal through feelings of rejection. According to Coplan *et al.*, (2008), isolated learners rarely initiate contact with their peers, take longer than typical earners to start a conversation, and speak less frequently than their non-isolated counterparts. Henderson *et al.* (2004) speculated that the expression of socially reticent behaviour elicits peer rejection and victimization; some socially anxious learners may mask their social reservations by expressing quite constructive and exploratory activity among peers.

The headteacher was asked to list some of the withdrawal behavior patterns that were often manifested by learners and how such behaviors influenced the academic performance of learners in the school. The headteacher reported that most children felt lonely and isolated because their parents did not care about their whereabouts and welfare. During the interview, he reported that:

"Most of these children feel rejected because their parents no longer provide for their needs. Their concentration on studies is minimal, and this adversely affects their academic performance" (Source: Interview)

A lack of conversation also accompanied the feeling of rejection as a form of withdrawal. This is in line with Mwangi (2012), who reported that eight- and nine-year-old friendship dyads comprising one or two socially withdrawn learners were relatively restricted in their verbal communication.

4.2.2 Influence of Withdrawal Behaviour on Academic Performance of Learners

Items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). So, to discover the impacts of withdrawal on learners' academic performance, the 'Academic Performance Rating Scale' for instructors was utilized. Teachers addressed everything by utilizing a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) Likert scale outline. Their responses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Influence of Withdrawal Behaviour on Academic Performance of Learners (N=25)

Items		SA	A	U	D	SA
Learners in my school always isolate themselves from peers, which has negatively affected their performance in internal, joint, and national examinations.	F	15	8	0	2	0
	%	60.0	32.0	0	8.0	0
Feelings of rejection manifested by learners in my school have lowered their grades in internal, joint, and national examinations.	F	9	13	2	1	0
	%	36.0	52.0	8.0	4.0	0
My learners usually feel victimized in every situation, which has lowered their performance in internal, joint, and national examinations.	F	5	14	3	2	1
	%	20.0	56.0	12.0	8.0	4.0

Key: F = Frequency, % = Percentage, SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree.

Results from Table 2 showed that the majority 15(60.0%) of teachers and vocational trainers strongly agreed that learners in their school always isolated themselves from peers, which had negatively affected their performance in internal, joint, and national examinations. Findings also indicated that 9(36.0%) strongly agreed that feelings of rejection manifested by learners in their school had lowered their grades in internal, joint, and national examinations. Finally, 14(56.0%) agreed that learners usually felt victimized in every situation, lowering their performance in internal, joint, and national examinations. These findings show a strong influence of withdrawal on the academic performance of learners in Kabete rehabilitation school, mainly dominated in the form of isolation among the learners with delinquent behaviours.

Further interviews with the head teachers indicated that isolation among learners was the primary factor influencing learning patterns and academic achievement among children. In a statement, the head teacher remarked:

"The majority of these children do not have friends and, in most cases, spend time alone because their peers subject them to bullying and humiliation. Therefore, they completely feel that they are rejected and would not concentrate on learning, and this, I think, lowers their performance due to lower mastery skills. Nevertheless, the non-withdrawn children relatively perform better than the most withdrawn." (Source: Interview)

The above finding was echoed by the findings of Stewart and Rubin (2005), which indicated that socially withdrawn learners pursued lower-cost social goals and fewer

high-cost social goals and that their attempts to meet their social goals were less likely to succeed than those of their non-withdrawn age-mates.

In a similar finding, Smith and Tolan (2008) also revealed that when socially withdrawn learners attempt to meet their social goals in the company of their peers, they are more likely to directly experience peer neglect and rejection than their more sociable age-mates. Such learners register paltry grades in mathematics, sciences, and social studies. Decreases in social withdrawal were evident for those young adolescents who experienced decreases in rejection and victimization as they made the transition from elementary to rehabilitation schools (Wilson, 2011).

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings, it is logical to conclude that most learners in Kabete Rehabilitation School displayed delinquent behaviours both physically and emotionally in forms of social isolation, crying instead of answering questions, being shaggy, failure to finish assignments, violence, fighting in class, mood swings, truancy, and high tempers among learners.

6. Recommendations

- 1) The study recommended that the government and/or rehabilitation schools educate parents and the general public on children's aggressive behaviours and their influence on educational progress in school.
- 2) The Nairobi County government should ensure professional counsellors are deployed in rehabilitation schools. This would help to enhance attendance, improve learning patterns, and boost academic output.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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