

Perceived factors Influencing Deviant Behaviour among the Youth in Njathaini Community, Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract:

The youth are often faced by a number of challenges that are unique. These challenges differ between developed and developing countries, with the latter facing rapid urbanization that does not match government investments in social infrastructure. Irrespective of this, the challenges predispose the youth to involvement in delinquencies the so called deviant behaviour. Recently, youth deviant behaviour has become a global issue of great concern and requires immediate attention. Developing nations in Africa particularly are characterised by growth of slums to meet the challenges of housing. Therefore, the challenges that face the youth in the urban poor settings are many, varied and unique to the context. Despite this understanding, there is a dearth of evidence on the youth deviant behaviours. Particularly, the factors associated with youth deviant behaviour in the informal settlements are not clearly documented. The objective of this study was therefore, to contribute to fill this gap by studying the perceived factors associated with deviant behaviour among the youth living in Njathaini semi- slum. The study setting was an informal setting and the target population were the youth aged between 15 to 35 years. Information on the forms of deviant behaviour as well as hypothesized socio-economic and psychosocial factors that influence deviant behaviour was collected using a structured questionnaire. Data on deviant behaviour was collected using a set of questions that were aggregated together during analysis to generate individual deviant behaviour score. The study used a descriptive survey design methodology. Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics and was done at 0.05 level of significant. Multiple regressions were used to establish the perceived factors that are significantly associated with deviant behaviour. The study involved 395 youths that represented an 87.78% response rate. Purposive sampling was carried out to ensure gender balance. About 80% of the youth had secondary education and below. Education attainment did not differ significantly between male and female youths. Two thirds of the youth had never been married and were not in any employment. The most common forms of deviant behaviour were drug use (92%), pre-marital sex (91%) and alcohol use (87%). These youth deviant behaviours were highly correlated. Perception on youth deviant behaviour was positively associated with employment status, training and skills as well as duration of stay in the slums. The youth who were in employment perceived positively existence of deviant behaviour while the unemployed negatively. Socio-economic factors were found to be of statistical significance to deviant behaviour of the youths in the study area. On socio-psychological factors, those who had stayed in the slum for six years or more perceived the deviant behaviour to be low among the slum youth. The married youth were often faced by a number of challenges that mainly included lack of finances and unfaithfulness. Further, majority of the youth were involved in youth groups. The group activities were largely positive ones. The perceived factors were of statistical significance to youth deviant

behaviours in the area. Youth deviant behaviour in the study community is evident. The government should build institutes of technology to absorb the population of the youths who do not make it to university and other middle level colleges. The study recommended guidance and counselling by relevant organisations to the youths on the dangers of engaging in deviant behaviour. A similar study should be carried out in other slums in Kenya in order to fill the information gap.