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SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING CHILD PROTECTION OUTCOMES OF VULNERABLE TEENAGE GIRLS IN LAIKIPIA WEST SUB COUNTY, KENYA

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES OF ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family for the support they have given me throughout my research period.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I attribute the gift of life and good health that have enabled me to pursue my studies to God, and I offer Him my gratitude. I would like to express my appreciation to St. Paul's University for granting me the opportunity to pursue my educational aspirations. I am thankful to all the lecturers who have guided me throughout my course, with a special mention to Professor Gichuhi and Dr. Odek, my supervisors, who provided invaluable guidance in the development of this project. I am also indebted to Anne, who kept on encouraging me on this research journey. Also to my family, as well as my colleagues at work and school, for their unwavering support and encouragement during my academic journey. May God bless each and every one of you.

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ABSTRACT

Children, particularly girls, in many parts of the world are vulnerable to abuse in different forms, exploitation, and neglect. Child protection aimed at vulnerable teenage girls has been implemented in many countries. The purpose of the Study was to examine social factors affecting child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West Sub-County, Kenya. The Study was guided by the following specific objectives: to analyze the effects of teenage drug abuse, to establish the effects of family structure, to examine the effects of literacy levels, and to assess the effects of neighborhood insecurity on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls. The Study was guided by the child rights-based approach and the ecological systems theory. The Study adopted a mixed-methods research design and was carried out in Laikipia West Sub-County, Laikipia County, Kenya, within its six administrative wards. The Study targeted 10,439 community leaders and teenage girls involved in child protection outcomes. The Study used the stratified and cluster sampling technique to sample community leaders and teenage girls, resulting in a total of 384 participants comprising the entire sample size inclusive of 8, community leaders and 384 teenage girls. The researcher collected responses from the chosen participants through of structured questionnaires and an interview guide. Quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS, with descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, and percentages used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics-regression was also conducted, and thematic analysis was used for qualitative data. The Study was beneficial to NGOs and other government agencies interested in child protection outcomes not only for vulnerable teenage girls but also for all children. From the findings, The R-squared in this Study was 0.770, which shows that the four independent variables (drug abuse, family structure, literacy level, and neighborhood insecurity) can explain 77.0% ochild protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. From the findings the researcher concluded that teenage girls drug abuse is a significant issue affecting teenage girls in Laikipia West, with the majority of respondents agreeing that addiction to drugs negatively impacts their wellbeing and protection, as reflected in high mean scores. Also, family structures significantly impact the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls, with a majority of respondents agreeing that negative effects are prevalent in various family settings. Additionally, insecurity significantly hinders child protection outcomes for vulnerable teenage girls. A majority of respondents agreed that insecure neighborhoods increase the risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, undermining child protection efforts. The study recommends the following: community-based interventions should prioritize increasing awareness and education about the risks associated with drug abuse, targeting both teenagers and their families, interventions should focus on strengthening parenting skills among single mothers, acknowledging the greater challenges they face compared to single fathers, prioritizing initiatives that improve the literacy levels of teenage girls in Laikipia West to enhance their understanding of rights and protections will be advantageous, efforts should focus on increasing accessibility to educational resources and support services, addressing financial constraints, and overcoming cultural barriers that impede girls' education, implement comprehensive and community-based strategies to address neighborhood insecurity and its detrimental effects on child protection for vulnerable teenage girls and further studies should be done on investigate how cultural norms and practices within different communities in Laikipia West Sub County impact the vulnerability of teenage girls to various forms of abuse and exploitation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-Based Organization
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the background of the research problem, the problem it aims to solve, and the objectives that it hopes to accomplish. In addition, the chapter discusses the significance of the research as well as the breadth and boundaries of the investigation.

1.1Background of the Study

Children, particularly girls, in many parts of the world are vulnerable to abuses in different forms, exploitation, and neglect (UNICEF, 2020). Child protection aimed at vulnerable teenage girls has been implemented in many countries, including the United States, China, India, and the United Kingdom. In the United States, child protection is a critical issue, particularly for vulnerable teenage girls. According to the Children's Bureau (2021), in 2019, there were slightly above half a million children in foster care, with the majority being teenagers. These children are at a higher risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, and exploitation, making child protection aimed at vulnerable teenage girls essential.

Teenage girls from low-income families and minority groups may face additional barriers in accessing services, thus increasing their vulnerability to abuse and neglect (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020). Another challenge pertains to the significant number of teenage girls who experience early pregnancy or parenthood. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021), approximately 194,377 babies were born to teenage mothers aged 15-19 in the United States in 2019.

The global growth of CBCPS may be traced to the 1990s and 2000s, when a significant amount of child protection efforts by international organizations focused exclusively on concerns such as child labor, street children, child sexual exploitation, and child trafficking. Despite these initiatives aiding children, research indicates that their effectiveness in safeguarding against abuse was limited and that these treatments were disjointed (Reuben et al., 2022).

In China, the existing child protection system emphasizes four domains: family, education, judiciary, and social welfare. The identified areas pertain to the primary entities accountable for safeguarding children: parents or guardians, educators and school personnel, judicial officials and attorneys, and the broader community. These regions correspond to the many

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environments and hazards that children encounter throughout their life. The child protection system comprises macro-level protection from societal and judicial entities, meso-level protection from community and social services, and micro-level protection from familial and educational institutions. This system has obstacles in the evolving society (Wu, 2020).

According to the Ministry of Women and Child Development (2021), in 2019, there were approximately 159 million children under the age of 18 in India, with a significant number being teenage girls. India has implemented a range of child protection activities aimed at promoting the safety and well-being of vulnerable children, including teenage girls. These activities focus on prevention, protection, and rehabilitation efforts and include education, health services, life skills training, and legal protection. Despite these efforts, the outcomes of child protection in India still face significant challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of resources, particularly in rural areas, where many vulnerable children reside. Additionally, issues related to poverty, gender inequality, and cultural practices can impact the outcomes of child protection aimed at teenage girls. Traditional cultural norms and practices, such as child marriage and dowry, can increase teenage girls' vulnerability to abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

Inadequate policies and weak institutional frameworks also hinder the effective outcomes of child protection (Singh, 2021). Furthermore, child trafficking is a significant issue in India, particularly in states such as West Bengal, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh. Teenage girls are particularly vulnerable to trafficking and are often forced into prostitution, domestic work, or other forms of exploitation. The government of India has implemented several measures to address child trafficking, including the Anti-Trafficking Bill and the National Plan of Action for Children (Singh, 2021).

Child protection is a critical issue in Africa, with many children, including teenage girls, facing a range of risks, including abuse, neglect, and exploitation. African governments have implemented a range of laws, policies, and programs aimed at addressing these challenges, but many countries still face significant challenges in implementing effective child protection (UNICEF, 2021). One of the main challenges is the limited resources and capacity of many African countries to implement effective child protection. This has been exacerbated by poverty, conflict, and weak governance in some countries. In addition, cultural norms, beliefs, and practices can also hinder the outcomes of child protection, particularly in rural areas where traditional practices and beliefs may be deeply entrenched (UNICEF, 2021).

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Despite these challenges, many African countries have made progress in developing and implementing child protection. For example, several countries have implemented child protection laws and policies, established child protection units within government institutions, and developed child helplines and other support services for children (UNICEF, 2021). However, there are still significant gaps in the outcomes of child protection across the continent. For example, many countries lack comprehensive data on child protection issues, which can hinder efforts to develop evidence-based policies and programs. In addition, the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have further highlighted the need for strengthened child protection, particularly for vulnerable children, including teenage girls (UNICEF, 2021). Efforts are being made at the regional level to address these challenges. For example, the African Union (AU) has developed a child protection framework that aims to guide African countries in developing and implementing effective child protection. The framework emphasizes the need for a multi-sectoral approach involving government agencies, civil society, and other stakeholders to address child protection challenges (African Union, 2021).

In Kenya, child protection remains a significant challenge, with many children facing a range of risks, including abuse, neglect, and exploitation. According to a 2018 report by UNICEF, child abuse is prevalent in Kenya, with one in every three Kenyan girls experiencing sexual violence before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2018). Child marriage is also a common problem, with one in five girls marrying before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2018). The government of Kenya has implemented a range of laws, policies, and programs aimed at addressing child protection challenges, including the Children Act (2001), which provides a legal framework for the protection and welfare of children, and the National Plan of Action for Children (2015-2022), which outlines a multi-sectoral approach to addressing child protection challenges (Government of Kenya, 2015).

Several government agencies, including the Department of Children's Services, the National Council for Children's Services, and the Gender Violence Recovery Center, have been established to address child protection challenges. In addition, several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations are also working to promote child protection in Kenya. Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain in the outcomes of child protection in Kenya. Resource constraints, limited institutional capacity, and weak governance continue to hinder the effectiveness of child protection. In addition, cultural

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practices and beliefs, particularly in rural areas, can also pose challenges to the outcomes of child protection. These challenges leave a knowledge gap that this study sought to fill. The study focuses on the social factors that affect the outcomes of child protection. The results obtained from the study are significant in guiding organizations relating to child protection to more lasting solutions.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to a 2018 report by UNICEF, child abuse is prevalent in Kenya, with one in every three Kenyan girls experiencing sexual violence before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2018). Child protection is a major concern that impacts the wellbeing of vulnerable teenage girls in many developing countries, such as Kenya. Social factors like neighborhood insecurity and drug abuse significantly contribute to child protection issues by increasing vulnerability to violence and neglect. Unstable family structures, such as single-parent households, often struggle with economic stress, leading to inadequate supervision and support for children. Additionally, low literacy rates can hinder parents' awareness of their rights and responsibilities, limiting their ability to advocate for their children and seek necessary help.

Despite efforts from various organizations such as Child and youth development centers to address this issue, the outcomes of child protection can be hindered by multiple social factors (Abiddin et al., 2022). In Laikipia West sub-county Kenya, teenage girls who are already vulnerable due to poverty and other social factors face further challenges such as early marriage, gender-based violence, lack of education, and poverty. Organizations such as St. Martin, CYDCs, and other CCIs have implemented child protection in this region to mitigate these challenges. However, there are still many challenges facing the outcomes.

To address the knowledge gap that has contributed to the challenges of child protection outcome, the study aimed to investigate the social factors that affected the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. The study specifically explored different social factors such as substance use, literacy, parenting, and neighborhood insecurity.

1.3 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate the social factors affecting child protection outcomes for vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West Sub-county, Kenya.

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1.3.1 Specific Objectives

i.) To analyze the effects of teenage girl's drug abuse on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya.

ii.) To establish the effects of family structure on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub county, Kenya.

iii.) To examine the effects of literacy level on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya.

iv.) To assess the effects of neighborhood insecurity on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya.

1.4 Research Questions

i.) What is the effect of teenage girl's drug abuse on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls?

ii.) What is the effect of family structure on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls?

iii.) What is the effect of literacy level on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls?

iv.) What is the effect of neighborhood insecurity on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls?

1.5 Justification of the Study

Child protection in Kenya continues to be a major concern since many children are at risk of various forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. A 2018 UNICEF research states that child abuse is common in Kenya, with one in three Kenyan girls reporting having been sexually abused before turning 18 (UNICEF, 2018). In many poor nations, like Kenya, child protection is a serious issue that affects the well-being of young girls who are particularly susceptible. Numerous social issues can impede the efficacy of child protection even in the face of efforts to address this issue by different organizations (Abiddin et al., 2022).

This study seeks to critically examine the underlying reasons why child protection outcomes for vulnerable teenage girls continue to fail despite the extensive efforts and resources invested by the government, non-governmental organizations, and community members. Understanding these failures is crucial as they persist in the face of significant interventions, indicating that existing strategies may be insufficient or misaligned with the specific needs of this group. By focusing on this particular demographic, the research will address a gap in

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current child protection literature and contribute to the development of more effective, targeted interventions that can better safeguard the rights and wellbeing of vulnerable teenage girls. Residents of Laikipia West subcounty and NGOs involved in child protection will be the primary beneficiaries of these research findings. The study will provide actionable insights into the specific challenges and barriers faced in protecting vulnerable teenage girls in this region. For local residents, the findings could lead to the development of community-driven initiatives that more effectively address the root causes of child protection failures. For NGOs, the research will offer evidence-based recommendations that can refine their intervention strategies, improve program effectiveness, and enhance collaboration with local communities. Ultimately, the findings could inform policy adjustments that lead to more responsive and impactful child protection efforts, ensuring that resources are allocated where they are most needed and that interventions are tailored to the unique needs of this population

1.6 Significance of the study

The results of this study will have important implications for the development of policies and practices aimed at protecting vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub county, Kenya. By identifying the social factors that affect the outcomes of child protection, this study will inform the development of sustainable and effective strategies to address the root causes of vulnerability among teenage girls (Richter et al., 2017). The study findings will help to shape policies that focus on addressing the underlying social factors that perpetuate vulnerability, such as cultural beliefs, economic conditions, gender dynamics, and community support systems.

In addition, the findings of this study will inform the development of curriculums that help the recipients to learn effective communication. By understanding the social factors that affect the outcomes of child protection, stakeholders can work together to develop a collaborative approach to addressing the needs of vulnerable teenage girls (Roy et al., 2019). This approach can involve the sharing of resources and expertise, as well as the development of joint strategies aimed at addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability.

This research will contribute to the literature on child protection in developing countries, providing valuable insights into the complex social factors that affect the outcomes. The findings of this study will be used to inform future research in this area, providing a basis for the development of new theories and models aimed at improving the effectiveness of child protection in developing countries.

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1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is justified by the pressing need to understand the social factors influencing child protection outcomes for teenage girls in Laikipia West Sub- County, where the population of teenage girls exceeds ten thousand. By focusing on critical social factors such as teenage girl's drug abuse, neighborhood insecurity, literacy level, and family structure, the study aims to illuminate the complex interplay between these variables and their impact on the wellbeing of young girls in the region. Engaging community leaders and teenage girls as primary respondents ensures that the research captures a holistic view of the issues at hand, incorporating both community perspectives and the voices of those directly affected. Conducting this study between June and August 2024 allows for timely data collection and analysis, enabling the findings to contribute meaningfully to ongoing discussions and interventions aimed at improving child protection outcomes in the area.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The researcher confronted many difficulties, including lack of cooperation from respondents in providing critical information. However, the researcher overcomes this obstacle by stating that the study's objective is solely academic and that all information obtained would be kept confidential. Some respondents were hesitant to provide confidential information that is critical to the study due to fear of being victimized by their superiors; nevertheless, the researchers ensured them that the information provided was kept confidential and utilized solely for academic purposes.

1.9 Assumptions

This study was based on the assumption that all of the information provided by the respondents was accurate. Additionally, the study assumed that the individuals who completed the surveys would be willing to discuss sensitive topics such as their level of addiction, family problems, and family structure.

1.10 Definition of Key Terms

Child protection- is the prevention of and response to all forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse, including neglect and harmful practices, against children. This includes protecting children from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, as well as neglect, exploitation, and other forms of harm. It also involves creating a safe and nurturing environment for children to grow and develop, and ensuring that children's rights are respected and upheld.

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Drug abuse- According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), drug abuse or substance abuse/use refers to the consumption of any substance that alters the normal functioning of the body, including drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

Family: A social unit of individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption who typically live together and provide emotional and practical support to one another.

Literacy: The ability to read, write, and comprehend written language. It encompasses not only basic reading and writing skills but also the capacity to understand and critically evaluate information in various forms, enabling effective communication and participation in society.

Neighborhood insecurity: Neighborhood insecurity refers to the subjective feeling of fear or anxiety that individuals experience when they perceive their neighborhood to be unsafe or dangerous.

Vulnerable teenage girl- A vulnerable teenage girl is a young female between the ages of 13 and 19 who is at a higher risk of experiencing harm or disadvantage due to various factors such as poverty, lack of education, discrimination, abuse or neglect, poor mental or physical health, homelessness, and exposure to violence or exploitation.

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CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the review of the literature. It includes theoretical and empirical literature. In the theoretical review, social learning theory and ecological systems theory were selected to anchor the study. In the empirical review, past studies were reviewed, and gaps were identified. The purpose of the review is to identify what has already been done in regards to social factors affecting the child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage, thereby identifying gaps to be filled by this study. A conceptual framework showing variables and their indicators is also presented.

2.1Theoretical Review

This study used two theories in total, which included the implementation theory and the ecological systems theory. These theories helped inform the study and assisted in tying different objectives with the theoretical views of other authors.

2.1.1 Implementation Theory

According to Yeaton and Sechrest (1981), implementation is defined as "the degree to which treatment is delivered as intended" (p.160). Durlak (1995) defines implementation as "what a program consists of in practice" (p.5) and assesses the extent to which it is executed as originally planned (Durlak, 1998). Weissberg (1990) observed that a confluence of elements interacts to affect both the results generated by a program and its future sustainability. This encompasses the content and structure of an intervention, its implementation method, the relationships between program implementers and participants, and many system-level characteristics. To effectively evaluate implementation, it is essential to get information on the precise program components, their delivery methods, and the contextual aspects of the program's execution (Dane & Schneider, 1998; Pentz et al., 1990).

The science and practice of implementation involve the provision of effective interventions to attain desired outcomes for children and families. It is acknowledged that enhancing services aimed at supporting the needs and welfare of children and families within child welfare systems is equally affected by the process of adopting innovations and the particular methods chosen for implementation (Aarons, 2010). For decades, academics and professionals have sought to comprehend why the provision of human services is often inconsistent, frequently unsuccessful, and sometimes detrimental to the individuals they want to assist, despite data supporting the efficacy of the practice. The quest for the elusive connection between

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successful treatments (and/or promising practices) and desired outcomes for children and families has uncovered a deficiency in focus on implementation; the methodology of integrating an intervention into human service environments. When proven treatments are regularly and methodically executed as intended, enhanced outcomes for children and families are achieved.

Implementation science must be utilized to ensure that systems facilitate quality practices and that effective services reach and benefit children and families. This discipline is applied at every level of a system, from practitioners within child welfare agencies to the county and state agencies responsible for leadership, oversight, and policy in child welfare. Implementation Theory, which focuses on how policies, programs, or interventions are executed, can be directly linked to child protection outcomes for vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West Sub-County. Successful child protection initiatives depend on how well the policies are implemented, including the adequacy of resources, stakeholder involvement, and the commitment of service providers. For instance, effective implementation of child protection programs—such as those offering counseling, education support, or legal assistance—requires coordination between government agencies, NGOs, and local communities. If these stakeholders properly implement the interventions with consistent monitoring and community engagement, it can lead to improved safety, wellbeing, and empowerment for vulnerable teenage girls, addressing risks such as early marriages, abuse, and neglect.

2.1.2 The Ecological Systems Theory

Tekkas Kerman and Betrus (2018) present a valuable framework for comprehending the intricate interplay of social factors that impact the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county. This framework, known as the Ecological Systems Theory, emphasizes that individual development is shaped by various interconnected systems, including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem.

Within the context of this study, the Ecological Systems Theory can be employed to examine the diverse levels of influence on the outcomes of child protection (Pittenger et al., 2016). The microsystem pertains to the immediate environment of the individual, encompassing family, peers, and caregivers. The mesosystem describes the interrelationships between different microsystems, such as the connection between school and family. These

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microsystems and mesosystems play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of vulnerable teenage girls regarding child protection.

Furthermore, the exosystem factors, which encompass external environmental influences, significantly impact the outcomes of child protection (Pittenger et al., 2016). For instance, a lack of resources or services in the community to support child protection can be considered an exosystem factor influencing their outcomes. Additionally, the macrosystem, which encompasses the broader cultural context, influences attitudes toward child protection and shapes community policies and practices related to child protection.

In the case of Laikipia West sub-county, the Ecological Systems Theory can be utilized to identify the various social factors influencing the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls (Pittenger et al., 2016). For example, insufficient resources or inadequate training for caregivers and child protection workers can be viewed as exosystem factors affecting the outcomes. The theory also suggests that addressing these factors requires a multi-level approach that encompasses microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem considerations.

Overall, the Ecological Systems Theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the diverse social factors influencing the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West subcounty (Hajizade-Valokolaee et al., 2016). The theory highlights the significance of considering multiple levels of influence and underscores the need for a multi-level approach to address the complex and interconnected factors impacting child protection efforts.

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2.2. Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Child protection

The recognition of children's rights as distinct from adult's' rights is a relatively recent development in history. The 20th century marked a significant turning point with the emergence of the concept that children have inherent rights and deserve protection. The 1924 Declaration of the Rights of the Child by the League of Nations laid the foundation for acknowledging children's rights globally. In the mid-20th century, child protection began to emerge as a distinct field of study and practice (Tomison, 2001). The groundbreaking efforts of child psychologists, sociologists, and social workers have illuminated the harmful impact of abuse, neglect, and exploitation on the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development of children. This awareness has prompted the field of child protection to

acknowledge the necessity for specialized interventions and support systems to address these issues. Furthermore, recognizing the rights of children has prompted the establishment of legal frameworks and policies aimed at safeguarding children from harm. In 1959, the United Nations embraced a significant global treaty known as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which outlines the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of children. Subsequently, numerous countries have enacted legislation and policies in line with the principles and provisions of the UNCRC.

2.1.1.1Importance of Child Protection

Child protection plays a crucial role in upholding children's fundamental right to safety and security. They aim to create safe environments in which children can indeed grow, learn, and thrive without the fear of abuse, neglect, or violence. By implementing preventive measures and robust child protection systems, these work to safeguard children's wellbeing. Child protection is well designed to mitigate the impact of abuse and neglect on children. They provide mechanisms for early identification, reporting, and intervention in cases of suspected or confirmed abuse. Through effective response and support services, child protection aim to minimize the harm experienced by children and promote healing and recovery (Featherstone, Morris & White, 2014). Child protection recognizes that protection is not limited to physical safety alone but extends to nurturing children's overall development. These programs often incorporate education, healthcare, psychosocial support, and access to essential services to ensure children's holistic wellbeing. By addressing their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social needs, child protection fosters healthy growth and development. Child protection is crucial in breaking the cycle of violence and intergenerational transmission. By addressing the root causes of abuse and neglect, these activities aim to prevent the perpetuation of harmful behaviors from one generation to the next. They provide interventions that focus not only on protecting individual children but also on promoting positive parenting practices, strengthening families, and fostering safe and nurturing environments.

2.1.1.2 Key Elements of Child Protection

Prevention Strategies: These strategies aim to educate and raise awareness among children, families, communities, and professionals about child rights, child protection issues, and ways to prevent abuse and neglect. Identification and Reporting Mechanisms: Child protection establishes mechanisms for identifying signs of abuse or neglect, encouraging individuals to report concerns, and ensuring appropriate actions are taken to address these issues. Intervention and Case Management: When abuse or neglect is reported or suspected, child protection provides prompt and effective intervention. This includes conducting thorough

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assessments, implementing child-centered approaches, and coordinating services to meet the specific needs of the child and family. Rehabilitation and Reintegration: Child protection recognizes the need for comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration services for child survivors of abuse or neglect. These activities aim to restore the physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing of children and support their successful reintegration into their families and communities. Rehabilitation services may include trauma-informed therapy, counseling, and access to healthcare. Educational support is also crucial in ensuring that children can continue their education and develop essential skills for their future.

Legal and Judicial Interventions: Child protection works in collaboration with legal and judicial systems to ensure the protection of children's rights and hold perpetrators accountable. They provide legal advocacy, support, and guidance to child victims throughout legal proceedings. These programs also advocate for the development and outcomes of robust child protection laws and policies to strengthen the legal framework for child protection. Prevention of Future Harm: Child protection understands the importance of preventing future harm to children. They focus on addressing risk factors and promoting protective factors to create environments that are safe and nurturing for children. These programs may involve community engagement, parenting education, and support services to empower caregivers with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide a nurturing and protective environment for children. Capacity Building and Training: Effective child protection invests in capacity building and training for professionals and frontline workers involved in child protection. Training programs equip professionals with the knowledge and skills required to identify, respond to, and prevent child abuse and neglect effectively. They also promote collaboration and coordination among different sectors and stakeholders involved in child protection. Data Collection and Research: Child protection emphasizes the importance of data collection, research, and evidence-based practices. They gather data on child protection cases, prevalence rates, and intervention outcomes to inform program development and policy-making. Research plays a crucial role in identifying effective strategies, evaluating program impact, and addressing gaps in knowledge and practice within the field of child protection. Collaboration and Multi-sectoral Approach: Child protection recognizes that protecting children requires a multi-sectoral approach and collaboration among various stakeholders. They engage government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), law enforcement, healthcare professionals, educators, community leaders, and families to work together towards a common goal of protecting children's rights and ensuring their safety.

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Monitoring and Evaluation: Child protection implements robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and ensure accountability. Regular monitoring allows for the identification of emerging challenges and the adaptation of strategies to better meet the evolving needs of children. Evaluation provides evidence of program impact and informs decision-making and resource allocation.

2.2. Drug Abuse on Child Protection Outcomes

The impact of drug abuse use on the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls in the United States has been extensively studied. Researchers have examined this relationship to understand the implications for interventions and policies in addressing the issue effectively.

The studies conducted by Straussner and Fewell (2018) and Anderson & van Ee (2018) collectively deepen our understanding of the critical intersection between parental substance use and child welfare involvement in the United States. Straussner and Fewell's rapid evidence review highlights the pervasive impact of parental substance use on child protection, stressing the necessity for targeted interventions and policy reforms tailored to address this specific issue within the U.S. context. Building on this, Anderson & van Ee's longitudinal study provides concrete evidence that substance abuse treatment can significantly enhance child welfare outcomes. By following a cohort of women over time, Anderson & van Ee not only confirm the detrimental effects of untreated substance use on child safety and family stability but also illustrate the potential for recovery and improved outcomes when effective treatment is integrated with child welfare services.

Together, these studies emphasize a critical insight: while addressing parental substance use is essential for improving child welfare outcomes, standalone substance abuse interventions are insufficient. The synthesis of findings suggests that integrated services, which simultaneously address substance abuse, mental health, parenting skills, and social support, are far more effective. This integrated approach ensures that the multifaceted needs of families affected by substance use are met, leading to more sustainable positive outcomes for both parents and children. Therefore, the research collectively underscores the importance of holistic, cross-disciplinary strategies in the formulation of child protection policies and intervention programs.

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The research by Anderson & van Ee (2018) underscored the significance of a holistic and comprehensive approach to addressing the complex issues of substance abuse and child welfare within the United States. It emphasized the need for collaboration and coordination between substance abuse treatment providers, child welfare agencies, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure integrated and effective services for vulnerable women and their children.

In the United Kingdom, the research conducted by Honisett et al. (2022) delved into the complex challenges posed by parental substance use and its intersection with child welfare involvement; the conclusion they came to was the same as that of Straussner and Fewell (2018) in the United States.

In their study conducted in 2022, Muir et al. focused on investigating the circumstances of children who are impacted by parental substance misuse within the child protection system in the United Kingdom. The research shed light on the distinct vulnerabilities and requirements of these children, emphasizing the significance of an integrated approach involving substance abuse treatment and child protection services. The findings of the study illuminated the considerable influence of parental substance misuse on the lives of children. It revealed that children residing in households where parental substance misuse is prevalent often encounter various adverse experiences, such as neglect, abuse, instability, and disrupted family dynamics. These children may be exposed to unsafe environments, witness incidents related to substance misuse, and suffer emotional and psychological distress as a consequence (Bosk et al., 2021). The research underscored the particular vulnerabilities of children affected by parental substance misuse and emphasized the importance of tailored interventions to effectively address their needs. It highlighted the necessity of a collaborative approach involving professionals from substance abuse treatment services, child protection agencies, social services, and other pertinent sectors. This collective approach ensures a coordinated response that acknowledges the complexity of the challenges these children face and provides comprehensive support.

In China, several studies have been done on drug abuse. The study by Kwon et al. (2019) focused on examining the prevalence of substance use among adolescents in China and its association with psychosocial factors. Although the study did not specifically focus on child protection, it provided valuable insights into the prevalence and patterns of substance use among adolescents in China. Understanding the prevalence and factors associated with

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substance use among this population can inform efforts to address substance use issues within the context of child protection. The research conducted by Kwon et al. (2019) involved a comprehensive survey among a large sample of adolescents in China, collecting data on various substances, such as tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs. The insights provided by Kwon et al. (2019) can inform efforts to address substance use issues within the context of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls. By understanding the prevalence and patterns of substance use among adolescents, child protection can tailor its interventions and prevention strategies to address the specific needs of this population. The study underscores the importance of comprehensive approaches that consider psychosocial factors, family dynamics, and peer influence when designing effective interventions to prevent and address substance use among vulnerable teenage girls.

The studies by Hughes et al. (2017), Nawi et al. (2021), and Muir et al. (2022) collectively deepen our understanding of the multi-faceted impact of substance misuse on children and adolescents across different cultural contexts. Hughes et al. (2017) and Muir et al. (2022) both used qualitative methods to explore the profound effects of parental substance abuse on children's wellbeing in China and India, respectively. These studies revealed that children exposed to parental substance misuse face significant emotional, educational, and developmental challenges, with their wellbeing being adversely affected both within the family and in the broader social environment. The findings underscore the importance of comprehensive support services tailored to the unique needs of these children, emphasizing that interventions must address the psychological and social dimensions of their experiences.

In parallel, Nawi et al. (2021) provided crucial data on the prevalence and patterns of substance use among adolescents in India, offering a broader context for understanding the risks faced by vulnerable teenage girls. Although this study did not focus explicitly on child protection, its insights into substance use prevalence are essential for designing targeted interventions. The data from Nawi et al. complement the findings of Hughes et al. and Muir et al. by highlighting the importance of addressing substance misuse not only among parents but also among adolescents themselves. This synthesis of research points to the necessity of integrated strategies that combine prevention, intervention, and support services to protect and promote the wellbeing of both children and adolescents affected by substance misuse.

Together, these studies contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how substance misuse across different age groups and cultural contexts impacts child protection. They collectively highlight the need for culturally sensitive, multi-faceted approaches that address

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the specific risks and needs of children and adolescents, whether they are directly or indirectly affected by substance abuse. By integrating these insights, child protection efforts can be better tailored to mitigate the adverse effects of substance misuse and promote healthier developmental outcomes.

In Nigeria, although there is limited research specifically focusing on the intersection of drug abuse and child protection for vulnerable among teenage girls, broader studies provide valuable insights into substance use behaviors adolescents in the country. These insights can inform the design of targeted interventions within the context of child protection. Studies conducted by Onaolapo et al. (2022) examined the prevalence and patterns of substance use among adolescents in Nigeria. The studies shed light on the prevalence rates and types of substance use among teenagers. It was discovered that by integrating substance abuse prevention and intervention efforts into child protection, it becomes possible to provide comprehensive support and protection for vulnerable teenage girls affected by drug abuse in Nigeria.

A study conducted by Krisch et al. (2019) explored the relationship between substance abuse and child protection among vulnerable teenagers in South Africa. The research highlighted the complex interplay between substance abuse, family dynamics, and the child protection system. It revealed how substance abuse issues within families can contribute to increased risks and vulnerabilities for teenage girls, including exposure to violence, neglect, and disrupted family environments.

In Uganda, research specifically focusing on the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls in the context of drug abuse is limited. However, broader studies on substance use among adolescents provide valuable insights into the prevalence rates and associated factors. A study conducted by Scharpf et al. (2022) examined the prevalence and correlates of substance use among adolescents in Uganda. The study explored various substances. The findings can inform efforts to design targeted interventions within the context of child protection.

In Kenya, there is a growing recognition of the intersection between drug abuse and the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls. A study by Jaguga et al. (2022) examined the prevalence and correlates of substance use among adolescents in Kenya. Furthermore, they examined the experiences of children affected by parental substance abuse

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in Kenya. The study highlighted the detrimental effects of parental substance abuse on children's wellbeing and emphasized the need for comprehensive support services to address their needs. Also, by integrating substance abuse prevention, intervention, and child protection efforts, it becomes possible to provide comprehensive support systems that address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of these girls. While international research provides valuable insights into the intersection of substance abuse and child protection, the applicability of these findings to the local context of the Laikipia West sub-county in Kenya requires careful consideration.

2.2.1Family Structure on Child Protection Outcomes

The prevalence of dysfunctional family structures has led to the phenomena of single parenting and is on the rise in the United States, with more than 25% of children residing in single-parent households (Steinbach, 2018). Single parenting can arise from various circumstances, such as divorce, separation, the loss of a spouse, or a deliberate choice to raise a child without a partner. Children raised in single-parent households face heightened susceptibility to social and economic challenges that can impact their overall welfare. The purpose of this literature review is to explore the consequences of single parenting on the outcomes of child protection, specifically targeting vulnerable teenage girls in regions including the United States, Asia, Europe, and Africa.

The effects of single parenting on the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls in the United States have been widely studied. Single parenting can contribute to a heightened vulnerability to child abuse and neglect, which is one of its consequences. Children residing in single-parent households face an elevated risk of encountering physical and emotional abuse, as well as neglect. This heightened risk can be attributed to insufficient parental supervision and limited access to necessary resources (Chen et al., 2017). This can hinder the effective outcomes of child protection. Single parenting can lead to economic hardship, which can affect a family's ability to access and utilize child protection services. Single parents may have limited financial resources and may struggle to provide for their children's basic needs, including healthcare, education, and housing (Beasley et al., 2022). This can make it difficult for them to participate in child protection, such as counseling and therapy, that require a financial investment. In addition, single parenting can also affect the mental health and wellbeing of both the parent and child. Single parents may experience depression, anxiety, and stress, which can affect their ability to parent effectively and engage

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in child protection (Cowan & Cowan, 2018). Children of single-parent households may also experience emotional and psychological distress due to the absence of a second parent, which can affect their participation in child protection. Looking at Haskins and Margolis, Anderson and Branca, as well as Salazar, it is clear that single parenting can have significant effects on the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls. It can lead to an increased risk of child abuse and neglect, economic hardship, and affect the mental health and wellbeing of both the parent and child. To ensure effective outcomes of child protection, it is important to recognize and address the unique challenges faced by single-parent households and provide appropriate support and resources to enable them to participate fully in child protection. Also, to support the above literature, more research on how peer pressure and societal perspective affect child protection of vulnerable teenage girls should be studied.

In the context of Asia, the impact of single parenting on child protection for vulnerable teenage girls is noticeable. One notable effect is the heightened risk of child abuse and neglect. Children living in single-parent households face a greater likelihood of encountering physical and emotional abuse, as well as neglect, primarily because of inadequate parental supervision and limited access to essential resources (Chen et al., 2017). This can hinder the effective outcomes of child protection, which are designed to prevent and address such issues. Single parenting can have significant effects on the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls in Asia. It can lead to an increased risk of child abuse and neglect, economic hardship, and affect the mental health and wellbeing of both the parent and child. In addition, social stigma and discrimination may further compound the challenges faced by single-parent households and hinder their access to child protection. To ensure effective outcomes of child protection, it is important to recognize and address the unique challenges faced by single-parent households and provide appropriate support and resources to enable them to participate fully in child protection.

In Europe, single-parent households are more likely to experience poverty and social exclusion, which can lead to increased risks of child abuse and neglect. Studies have shown that single mothers in Europe face challenges in accessing child protection services and that child protection agencies may not always take their concerns seriously (Seshadri & Ramaswamy, 2020). Single mothers may also experience stigma and discrimination, which can make it more difficult for them to access services. The impact of single parenting on vulnerable teenage girls is particularly significant. Studies have found that teenage girls from

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single-parent households are at higher risk of early sexual activity, unintended pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections. Single parenting has also been found to have a negative impact on mental health outcomes for both mothers and daughters (Campbell et al., 2020). The effectiveness of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls in single-parent households in Europe has been questioned. A study in the United Kingdom found that child protection agencies were less likely to take action to protect children in single-parent households compared to two-parent households (Lipari & Horn, 2017). Similarly, a study in Germany found that child protection agencies were less likely to intervene in cases of suspected child abuse in single-parent households (Younas & Gutman, 2022). However, there is evidence that targeted interventions for single-parent households can be effective in protecting vulnerable teenage girls. A study in the Netherlands found that a family support program aimed at single mothers and their teenage daughters reduced the risk of teenage pregnancy (Shackleton et al., 2016). Similarly, a study in Denmark found that a targeted program for single mothers and their children improved child protection outcomes.

Single parenting in Africa is often the result of various factors such as divorce, widowhood, or teenage pregnancy. In many African countries, single-parent households are more likely to experience poverty and social exclusion, which can lead to increased risks of child abuse and neglect (Roje Đapić et al., 2020). Studies have shown that single mothers in Africa face challenges in accessing child protection services, and that child protection agencies may not always take their concerns seriously.

Single parenting in Kenya is often the result of various factors such as divorce, separation, or death of a spouse. A study in Nairobi found that child protection agencies were less likely to take action to protect children in single-parent households compared to two-parent households (Salleh et al., 2020). Similarly, a study in western Kenya found that child protection agencies were less likely to intervene in cases of suspected child abuse in single-parent households (Seshadri & Ramaswamy, 2020). However, there is evidence that targeted interventions for single-parent households can be effective in protecting vulnerable teenage girls. A study in Nairobi found that a family support program aimed at single mothers and their teenage daughters improved child protection outcomes (Salleh et al., 2020). Similarly, a study in western Kenya found that a targeted program for single mothers and their children improved child protection outcomes (Seshadri & Ramaswamy, 2020).

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In the Laikipia West sub-county, there is no direct research that has been done in relation to dysfunctional family structures and how it affects child protection of vulnerable teenage girls. This study seeks to fill this gap.

2.2.3 Literacy on Child Protection Outcomes

Literacy levels among teenage girls in the United States significantly influence the outcomes and effectiveness of child protection. Literacy plays a crucial role in enabling girls to comprehend written program materials and guidelines. Research by Smith (2020) suggests that individuals with higher literacy levels are better equipped to understand complex information related to child protection, including reporting procedures and available support services. This comprehension enables teenage girls to navigate child protection systems effectively and access appropriate resources (Jones & Johnson, 2018).

Brown (2019) highlights that literacy provides individuals with access to critical information about child protection laws, reporting mechanisms, and support services. This awareness enhances their ability to seek help when faced with abusive situations, contributing to improved outcomes (Robinson et al., 2017).

Effective communication with child protection professionals is another critical aspect influenced by literacy. Garcia and Martinez (2016) emphasize that girls who are literate can confidently articulate their needs and express concerns about their safety. This clear and effective communication allows service providers to assess risks accurately and provide appropriate interventions tailored to the girls' needs (Adams, 2015). In future research, its important also to look at how effective communication increases the efficiency of child protection.

Also, in today's digital age, digital literacy is crucial for accessing online resources related to child protection. Hernandez and Lopez (2021) highlight that girls with stronger literacy skills are better equipped to utilize technology for information-seeking and communication purposes. This digital proficiency enhances their ability to access critical support services online (Nguyen & Tran, 2020).

In Europe, as it is with most other countries, literacy facilitates active participation in prevention programs aimed at promoting healthy relationships and preventing abuse among adolescents. Studies conducted in European countries (Thomas et al., 2017) indicate that

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literacy skills enable girls to engage meaningfully in workshops and educational sessions, contributing to their overall safety and wellbeing.

In situations requiring written documentation, such as completing forms or providing statements, literacy is essential for effective communication and accurate documentation of experiences. European studies (Wang & Schmidt, 2019) suggest that girls struggling with literacy may face challenges in accurately reporting incidents of abuse or neglect, potentially impacting the investigation and support process.

Research conducted in India (Patel & Rao, 2020) suggests that individuals with higher literacy levels are better equipped to comprehend complex information, enabling them to navigate child protection systems more effectively. This agrees with the earlier citation by Jones & Johnson's research done in 2018

Literacy is closely associated with educational attainment and access to supportive environments. Indian researchers (Pandey & Patel, 2018) discuss how girls with higher literacy levels are more likely to stay in school, where they can access educational resources and supportive networks. This educational continuity enhances overall wellbeing and contributes to positive child protection outcomes.

Chinese studies (Wang & Li, 2018) suggest that girls struggling with literacy may face challenges in accurately reporting incidents of abuse or neglect, potentially impacting the investigation and support process. However, most studies here fail to give solutions to neglect. Future research in China should focus more on the solutions needed rather than only the damage analysis done.

Studies in South Africa (Mkhize & Zulu, 2018) highlight that literacy provides individuals with access to critical information about child protection laws, reporting mechanisms, and support services. This awareness enhances their ability to seek help and advocate for their needs when faced with challenging situations. This is in agreement with what Adeoye & Ibrahim, 2018 highlight in their research done in Nigeria.

Additionally, literacy is closely associated with educational attainment and access to supportive environments. South African researchers (Mabaso & Sithole, 2019) discuss how girls with higher literacy levels are more likely to stay in school, where they can access

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educational resources and supportive networks. This educational continuity enhances overall wellbeing and contributes to positive child protection outcomes.

Effective communication with child protection professionals is another key aspect influenced by literacy levels. Nairobi-based researchers (Mutuku & Mwangi, 2019) emphasize that girls who are literate can confidently express their concerns and articulate their needs during interactions with service providers in the urban context. This clear communication allows professionals to assess risks accurately and tailor interventions to meet the specific needs and circumstances of girls living in Nairobi. This was concluded also by Nigerian researchers (Adewale et al., 2019).

In situations requiring written documentation, such as completing forms or providing statements, literacy is essential for effective communication and accurate documentation of experiences, especially within the administrative and service-oriented urban landscape of Nairobi. Nairobi-based studies (Odhiambo & Chege, 2018) suggest that girls struggling with literacy may face challenges in accurately reporting incidents of abuse or neglect, potentially impacting the investigation and support process within the urban setting. In comparison, Nigerian studies (Ibrahim & Mohammed, 2018) suggest that girls struggling with literacy may face challenges in accurately reporting incidents of abuse or neglect, potentially impacting the investigation and support process.

Likewise, studies, though still limited in the Laikipia West sub-county, show that literacy levels among teenage girls play a critical role in shaping their access to and engagement with child protection and services. Firstly, literacy significantly influences the girls' ability to understand written information related to child protection, including program guidelines, reporting procedures, and available support resources. Research conducted within similar contexts in Kenya (Ochieng & Otieno, 2020) suggests that individuals with higher literacy levels are better equipped to navigate complex information, enabling them to access child protection systems effectively.

Comparing the literature that has been provided by different authors in different countries, there is need to do more research and get to know the social factors that are affecting the outcomes of child protection of vulnerable teenage girls. This necessitates this study.

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2.3 Neighborhood Insecurity on Child Protection

2.3.1 Role of Neighborhood Insecurity in Child Welfare Outcomes

Marmor et al. (2021) conducted a systematic literature review of studies on the impact of neighborhood characteristics on child maltreatment in the US. The authors searched multiple databases to identify relevant studies and used a narrative synthesis approach to analyze the findings and identify common themes and patterns across the literature. The study found that neighborhood insecurity, along with other factors such as poverty, racial and ethnic segregation, and social isolation, were associated with an increased risk of child maltreatment. The study emphasized the need for child protection to address these neighborhood factors to improve outcomes for children. The study also highlighted the need for more research to better understand the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and child maltreatment.

Austin et al. (2020) compared the impact of neighborhood conditions, including neighborhood insecurity, on child maltreatment in urban and rural counties in the US. Finally, Abrams et al. (2021) examined the impact of child welfare system structure on children's outcomes, including the effects of neighborhood insecurity on child protection outcomes. These studies provide evidence for the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and child welfare outcomes in the US, highlighting the importance of addressing neighborhood insecurity as a key factor in the outcomes of child protection.

A retrospective cohort study conducted by Krefis et al. (2018) used administrative data from the German Child Welfare Information System to examine the association between neighborhood characteristics and child welfare involvement in Cologne. The study found that neighborhood poverty and social disorganization were associated with a higher risk of child welfare involvement, even after controlling for individual-level and neighborhood-level factors. The authors suggest that addressing neighborhood factors may be an important way to prevent child maltreatment and reduce the need for child welfare interventions. Similarly, a study conducted by Burley et al. (2022) in Scotland used data from the Social Work Integrated Adult Database (SWIIS) to investigate the association between neighborhood deprivation and child protection involvement among children who were referred to social work services. The study found that living in a deprived area increased the risk of child protection involvement, particularly for neglect and emotional abuse, even after controlling for individual-level and neighborhood-level factors. The authors suggest that interventions to

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reduce neighborhood deprivation may be an important way to prevent child maltreatment and improve child welfare outcomes.

Cao and Maguire-Jack (2016) conducted a study that examined the influence of neighborhood-level variables, such as social cohesiveness and community participation, on the outcomes related to the wellbeing of children. The researchers employed a cross-sectional methodology to gather data from a substantial sample of Chinese households. The study revealed a positive correlation between higher levels of social cohesion and engagement in communities and improved child welfare results. Conversely, communities with lower levels of social cohesion and participation experienced poorer outcomes in terms of child welfare.

A study was undertaken by Sciences (2022) to investigate the influence of neighborhood-level determinants on child malnutrition in India. The sample consisted of 4,320 children between the ages of 0 and 5 who resided in 18 slums located in four cities in India. The researchers gathered data on multiple neighborhood-level variables, including access to potable water, sanitation facilities, and healthcare services, as well as the subjective perception of safety and security. In addition, they assessed child malnutrition by utilizing anthropometric indices. The research discovered that residing in an unsafe and insecure locality was linked to an elevated likelihood of child malnutrition, even after accounting for other characteristics at the community level.

Bradbury-Jones et al. (2019) did a study in India to examine the correlation between neighborhood factors and child abuse. The study comprised a total of 10,650 children between the ages of 0 and 14 who resided in urban slums in Delhi, India. The researchers gathered data on many neighborhood-level variables, including poverty, social disorder, and access to essential services. Child maltreatment was assessed using a standardized questionnaire. The study revealed that children living in communities characterized by elevated poverty rates and social disarray had a greater likelihood of experiencing maltreatment, even when accounting for individual-level variables. Cénat et al. (2021) did a qualitative study to investigate the correlation between neighborhood variables and child protection in India. The sample consisted of 42 key informants from various government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations involved in addressing child protection concerns in India. The researchers conducted comprehensive interviews and group discussions to collect data on the factors that hinder or support the

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effectiveness of child protection. The study identified social disorganization and a lack of community cohesion as major obstacles to the successful implementation of child protection measures in India. The researchers also discovered other approaches to overcome these obstacles, including community mobilization and empowerment, enhancing the skills of frontline workers, and improving the co-operation among diverse stakeholders. In summary, this research indicates that neighborhood insecurity might adversely affect child protection outcomes and child welfare outcomes. However, additional study is required to thoroughly investigate this correlation and to develop efficacious approaches to tackle neighborhood insecurity and its influence on child protection in India.

Maguire-Jack et al. (2020) discovered a positive correlation between neighborhood insecurity and child abuse and neglect in South African communities. Araújo et al. (2020) discovered a direct correlation between the neighborhood environment, which includes insecurity, and the occurrence of child maltreatment in Lagos State, Nigeria. In their study, Sangy et al. (2023) found that neighborhood insecurity poses a significant obstacle to the enforcement of child protection legislation in Nigeria. This conclusion was drawn from qualitative interviews conducted with government officials, community leaders, and members of civil society organizations.. Ogunfowokan et al. (2015) found that community perceptions of child abuse and neglect were influenced by risk factors such as neighborhood insecurity in Nigeria. Surkan et al. (2016) found that exposure to urban violence, including neighborhood insecurity, was associated with maternal depressive symptoms and negative parenting practices in Nigeria. Uzodinma et al. (2019) found that neighborhood insecurity was a predictor of child maltreatment among primary school pupils in a semi-urban community in Nigeria. Okechukwu and Okechukwu (2019) also found that neighborhood contextual factors were associated with child maltreatment in Nigeria, based on a study of mothers with at least one child under five years of age.

Chappell and Lonne (2019) conducted a systematic review of 11 studies on neighborhood-based child protection responses in the African context. The review found that community-based approaches were effective in reducing child maltreatment. These approaches included community mobilization and empowerment, home visitation programs, parent education and support, and child protection committees. The study also found that successful community-based child protection included partnerships between community members, service providers, and government agencies.

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2.4 Conceptual Framework

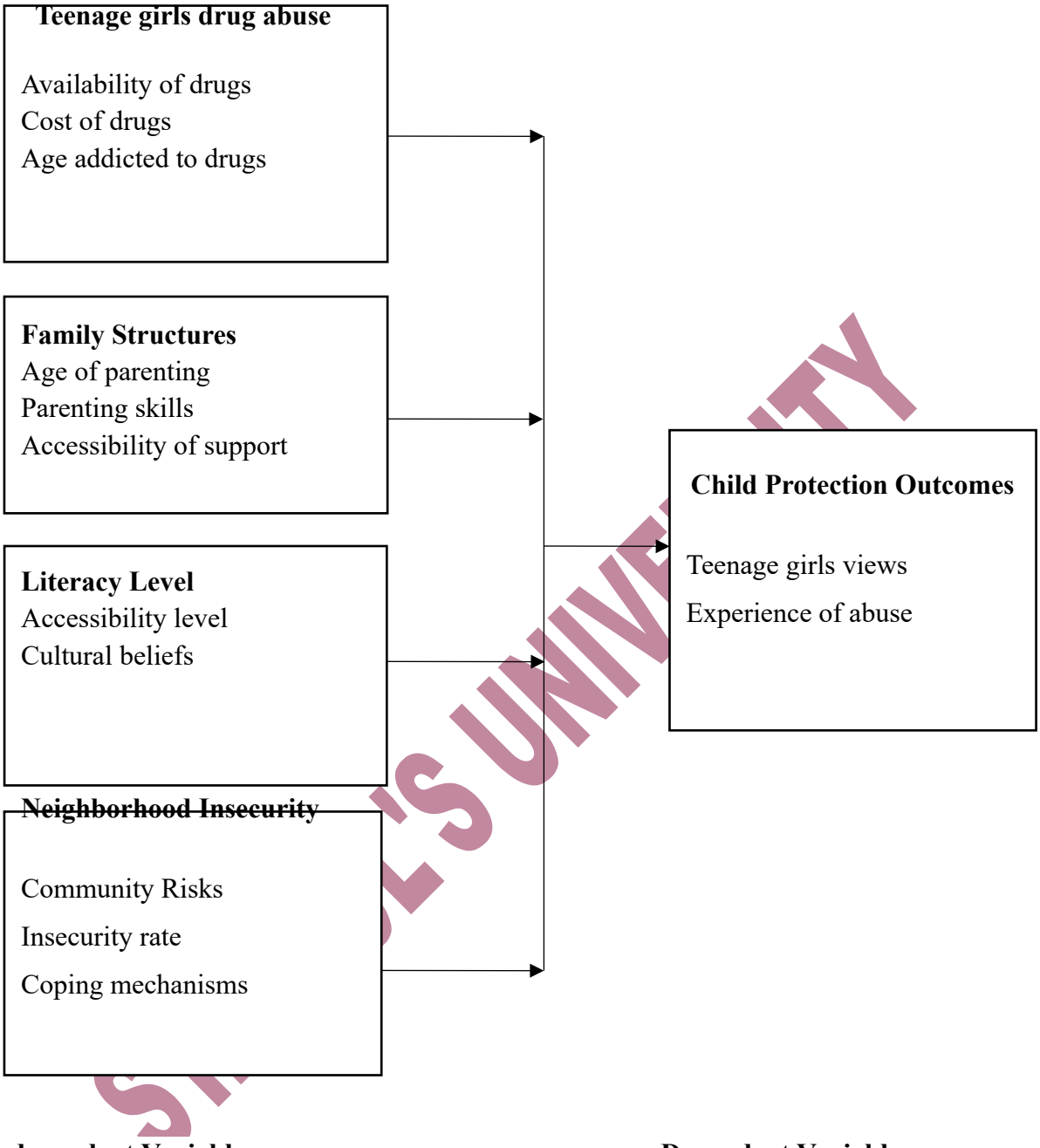


Figure 2. 1 Conceptual Framework

The diagram depicted above illustrates the several variables that are the main focus of the investigation. Drug abuse, as defined by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), is the use of any substance that disrupts the natural functioning of the body. Family structure, as defined by Mahomed, Alexander, and Maree (2022), refers to the arrangement of relationships among individuals residing in a household who identify themselves as a family. There exist various types of family structures: Literacy: Alberta Literacy, as defined by

education, encompasses the capacity, self-assurance, and eagerness to interact with language in order to obtain, create, and convey significance in all facets of everyday existence. Neighborhood insecurity, on the other hand, refers to the personal sensation of apprehension or unease that individuals feel when they perceive their residential area to be unsafe or hazardous.

Kepper et al. (2019) found that neighborhood insecurity might arise from being exposed to different types of crime, disorder, and social incivilities, which are considered independent variables. Child protection refers to the measures used to prevent and address various types of violence, exploitation, and abuse inflicted on children, such as neglect and harmful behaviors (Tobin & Cashmore, 2020). This encompasses safeguarding children against physical, sexual, and emotional maltreatment, as well as neglect, exploitation, and other types of damage. The process also entails establishing a secure and supportive setting for children to mature and progress while guaranteeing the preservation and observance of children's rights. The dependent variable in this context is the outcomes of vulnerable adolescent girls. In order to quantify these characteristics, various indicators have been identified for each one.

2.5 Summary and Research Gap

Based on the literature reviewed, there are several gaps related to the independent variables of teenage girl's drug abuse, family structures, literacy level, and neighborhood insecurity in the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya.

Regarding teenage girl's drug abuse, there is a lack of research on the specific effects of drug and alcohol use on teenage girls' vulnerability to abuse and neglect, as well as the impact of substance use on the outcomes of child protection (Morton & Wells, 2017). This gap highlights the need for studies that examine the role of substance use in perpetuating vulnerabilities among teenage girls and explore how child protection can effectively address this issue. In regards to family structures, there is a need for more research on how the parenting practices of dysfunctional family structures may affect their ability to access and engage with child protection. Additionally, it is necessary for studies to explore how child protection can support single parents in their parenting roles and ensure the well-being of both the single parent and their child. Regarding literacy, there is limited literature on how literacy affects teenage girls in accessing child protection and, therefore, their outcomes. Finally, with regard to neighborhood insecurity, there is inadequate literature on how the specific features of neighborhoods, such as crime rates and social disorder, may affect the

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outcomes of child protection (Abdullah et al., 2020). Studies are needed to examine how neighborhood insecurity may pose barriers to accessing and implementing child protection and explore strategies for addressing these barriers.

Therefore, there is a need for further research on the independent variables of drug abuse, family structures, literacy, and neighborhood insecurity in the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls in the Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. These gaps in the literature highlight the need for studies that provide insights into the unique challenges of implementing child protection in this context and explore effective strategies for addressing these challenges. This study, therefore, seeks to fill these research gaps.

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CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section outlines the approach that was taken to conduct the study, including the research design, the location of the study, the sources of data, the population, and the sampling methods. It also explains the procedure for data collection, the instrument that was used, the study's reliability and validity, and the methods for data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

A mixed-methods known as convergent parallel design involves combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Quantitative methods were used to gather data on teenage girl's drug abuse, family structures, and neighborhood insecurity, while qualitative methods were employed to gather in-depth insights into the social factor of literacy levels affecting child protection outcomes. By combining both quantitative and qualitative data, a mixed-methods design allowed the study to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the social factors affecting child protection outcomes and to explore the interplay between different variables.

3.2The Study Site

The research was conducted within the areas under Laikipia West Sub-County in Laikipia County, one of the 47 administrative counties in Kenya. Laikipia West sub-county is a cosmopolitan region consisting of approximately 23 communities, including Maasai, Samburu, Rendile, Somali, Pokot's, Kalenjin's, Meru, Kikuyu, Turkana, and others. The subcounty is predominantly rural, with key economic activities such as crop farming, livestock rearing, tourism, and retail and wholesale trade. Laikipia West subcounty County is divided into six wards in Laikipia West (Olmoran, Rumuruti Township, Githiga, Marmanet, Igwamiti, Salama).

3.3 Target population

This study aimed to target teenage girls and community leaders who directly benefit from child protection services, as well as those who do not. The community leaders, including chiefs, sub-chiefs, and village elders, were included as part of the target population, totaling 204 individuals. Additionally, 10,235 teenage girls who reside in Laikipia West Sub-County, according to the KNBS 2019 census, were included in the target population.

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Table 3. 1: Target population

Target Group	Number of people
Community Leaders	204
Teenage Girls	10235
Total	10439

3.4 Sampling Design

Stratified sampling and systematic sampling techniques would be most appropriate for this study (Ames et al., 2019). Since the population of interest comprised teenage girls and community leaders, stratified sampling was key in this study for separating the two strata. Furthermore, when sampling the teenage girls, the study used a clustering sampling technique sampling technique, aiming for a margin of error of 5% with a 95% confidence level.

3.4.1 Sample Size

The study expected a proportion to be around 50%. Cochran's formula, as shown below, was used to determine the sample size.

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

Where n is the total sample size.

Using the formulae $((1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)) / (0.05)^2 = 384$

384 is the total sample size.

To get the proportions, percentages of each strata is used:

The percentage of girls here is 10235/10439 multiplied by 100 which totals 98%

98% of 384 is 376

2% of 384 is 8

The percentage of community leaders is 204/10439 multiplied by 100 which totals to 2%

Table 3. 2: Sample size

Target Group	Number of people
Community Leaders	8
Teenage Girls	376
Total	384

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1: Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to collect data from the teenage girls who are among the respondents in the study. The questionnaire was preferred because it could gather data from a

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large population in a relatively short time (Blaxter et al., 2007). The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.5.2 Interview Guide

An interview guide was used by the community leaders to gather qualitative data. An interview sheet is crucial for collecting qualitative data in your study on change initiatives as it ensures consistency and focus by providing a structured framework for questions. This structure enhances the relevance of the information gathered while allowing for flexibility to explore participants' responses more deeply. Additionally, it promotes transparency and fosters better researcher-participant interaction, leading to richer insights that align with the study's objectives. Overall, using an interview guide contributes to systematic and reliable data collection, enhancing the study's credibility.

3.6 Pilot study

The pilot sample consisted of 38 respondents from the neighboring Baringo County, specifically Baringo South Sub-County, which had demographics similar to those of Laikipia West. These respondents were randomly selected from community leaders and teenage girls.

3.6.1Validity

To establish the validity of the instrument, the questions in the study were developed based on the indicators outlined in the conceptual framework. The validity of the instrument was ensured through a systematic process involving multiple types of validity assessments, each tailored to address specific aspects of the instrument's accuracy and relevance. Face validity was assessed by presenting the interview sheet and questionnaire to a panel of experts, including the researcher's supervisors. Content validity was evaluated by mapping each question against the indicators in the conceptual framework to ensure comprehensive coverage of the study's constructs. Experts were asked to assess whether the questions adequately covered all aspects of the constructs being measured. The panel of experts included the researcher's supervisors and other professionals with specialized knowledge in research methodology, child protection, and substance abuse.

Criterion validity was established by comparing the questions against external benchmarks or criteria known to be valid measures of the constructs. This was done by correlating the responses from the pilot test with existing validated instruments measuring similar constructs. The strength of these correlations helped determine the criterion validity of the new instrument. Questions that did not show a significant correlation with the external criteria were further refined or excluded

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3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability is dened as the degree to which a test is free from measurement errors, with fewer errors indicating greater reliability (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2013). The reliability of the questionnaire and interview guide was examined using the internal consistency method, a correlation technique that measures the reliability of alternative items in the questionnaire based on responses from the pilot study. Internal consistency refers to the extent to which measures of the same construct are consistent with each other (Cooper & Schindler, 2013).

The results from the pilot study were subjected to Cronbach's reliability test for internal consistency. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2013), a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher indicates that the instrument is highly reliable and, therefore, suitable for the study. Items that did not meet this threshold were dropped. Additionally, when excessive similarity among items was observed, the items were reviewed to ensure that each one uniquely contributed to the construct. Conversely, if items were found to be too dissimilar, they were refined to better align with the construct being measured.

Table 3. 3: Results of Reliability Testing

Study Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Teenage girls drug abuse	8	0.735
Family Structures	7	0.974
Literacy level	6	0.886
Neighborhood Insecurity	7	0.898
Child Protection Outcomes	5	0.785
Average	**6.6**	**0.855**

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

This study involved the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, necessitating the use of a mixed-methods data analysis approach (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri, 2021). For the quantitative data gathered through questionnaires, statistical software like SPSS was employed to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics, such as means, frequencies, and percentages, were calculated to summarize the data. Additionally, inferential statistics, specifically regression analysis, were conducted to examine relationships between variables of interest.

The following multivariate regression model was used:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

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Y = child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya

β_0 = Constant Term;

β_1, β_2 and β_3 = Beta coefficients;

X_1= Teenage girl's Drug Abuse

X_2= Family Structure

X_3= Literacy level

X_4= Neighborhood Insecurity

Thematic analysis was conducted on the qualitative data obtained from interviews to identify and interpret key themes. Initially, the study familiarized itself with the data by reading the transcripts thoroughly. It then generated initial codes by labeling significant segments of the text that related to the research questions. These codes were organized into potential themes, which were subsequently reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data. Finally, the study defined and named each theme, capturing the participants' experiences and perspectives, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of the topic.

Following the analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data, the study integrated the findings by comparing and contrasting the results. This integration contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions and enabled the triangulation of findings to strengthen the overall conclusions of the study.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The study adhered to the following ethical principles: authorization, voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. The necessary authorizations were obtained from St Paul's University, the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, and the County Government of Laikipia.

Recruitment of participants was based on voluntary participation, ensuring that no coercion or enticement was involved. Individuals who expressed willingness to participate in the study were asked to provide informed consent by signing a consent form. This form contained detailed information about the study's purpose, potential risks and benefits, and measures taken to protect the participants.

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Given that many of the teenagers resided with their caregivers, permission was sought from the primary caregivers before approaching the teenagers with the consent form. This ensured that parental or guardian consent was obtained for the participation of the teenagers.

To maintain anonymity, participating respondents were not required to provide their names. Instead, pseudonyms were used, as well as coded language to disguise confidential information. Confidentiality measures were strictly enforced by limiting access to the collected data to only authorized personnel. The researcher implemented comprehensive measures such as encrypting digital data, securing physical data in locked storage, and establishing protocols to ensure that data was not inadvertently disclosed. These measures helped ensure that confidentiality was achieved.

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CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data, interpretation, and discussions of findings. The chapter is structured as follows; presentation of the analysis of the response rate results, presentation of the descriptive statistics, and finally, the presentation of the inferential statistic.

4.2 Response Rate

Table 4. 1: Response Rate of the questionnaires.

No. of questionnaires Issued	No. of questionnaires Returned	Response Rate (%)
376	289	77

The researcher distributed 376 questionnaires to the respondents, out of which 289 were received from the field and accepted as correctly filled, translating to a 77% response rate. This response rate was acceptable for this study, as Rogelberg and Stanton (2007 stated that when cross–sectional studies of survey design are conducted at the individual level, the expected response rate should be over 50%. Therefore, the above response rates meet this criterion and hence were appropriate for this study.

4.3 Demographic Information

The demographic information presented is based on the gender of the respondents, age of the respondents, education level of the respondents and marital status.

4.3.1 Age of the respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their age The findings are as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2: Age of the respondents

Age of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
13 – 16	186	64
17-19 years	103	36
Total	**289**	**100**

From the findings, 64% of the respondents indicated that they were 13-16 years while 36% stated that they were 17-19 years old. These age distribution findings provide a foundational

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understanding of the demographic context within which child protection issues are examined, helping to shape targeted interventions and policies that can better support vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West Subcounty.

4.3.3 Respondents' Highest Level of Education

The respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of education. The findings are as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Respondents' Highest Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	43	15
Secondary	141	49
Certificate	105	36
Total	**289**	**100**

From the findings, 15% of the respondents indicated that they had attained primary school education level, 49% of the respondents had attained secondary level of education while 36% of the respondents stated that they had attained a certificate level of education. This indicates a relatively high level of educational access among the respondents, which might positively influence their awareness of child protection issues, rights, and available resources. Higher educational attainment is often linked to increased awareness of children's rights, legal frameworks, and available resources, which in turn enhances the respondents' ability to recognize, report, and address child protection concerns effectively. This educational awareness can lead to more proactive engagement in safeguarding vulnerable children and ensuring better child protection outcomes in the community.

4.4 Descriptive Statistics

The study requested respondents to give opinions in regard to the effects of teenage girl's drug abuse, effects of family structure, effects of literacy level and effects of neighborhood insecurity on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. The interpretation of the findings was made based on the mean and standard deviation. The value of the mean indicated the level of agreement. The value of the mean ranged between 1-5, with 1 being the least mean and 5 being the highest mean. Standard deviation is a measure of the dispersion of a set of data from its mean

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4.4.1 Effects of drug abuse on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the effects of drug abuse on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. The findings were as indicated in Table 4.5.

Table 4. 4: Effects of teenage girl's drug abuse on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std
Teenage girls in the community are at risk of becoming addicted to drugs, which negatively affects their well-being and protection.	5%	6%	6%	36%	46%	4.125	1.102
The use of drugs in the community increases the vulnerability of teenage girls to abuse, neglect, and exploitation.	4%	5%	6%	29%	55%	4.260	1.069
The availability of drugs in the community negatively affects the outcomes of child protection programs for vulnerable teenage girls.	4%	10%	4%	30%	50%	4.131	1.159
The cost of drugs in the community negatively affects the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls.	7%	6%	8%	37%	40%	4.004	1.152
The addiction rate in the community negatively affects the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls.	9%	5%	4%	19%	62%	4.194	1.295

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Drug abuse in the community is a significant barrier to the outcomes of effective child protection for vulnerable teenage girls.	9%	4%	1%	32%	53%	4.173	1.221
The prevalence of drug use in the community contributes to a culture that normalizes harmful behaviors and practices toward teenage girls.	11%	2%	3%	37%	46%	4.048	1.263
The negative impact of drug abuse on child protection is exacerbated by poverty and limited access to resources and support services	8%	7%	5%	33%	46%	4.031	1.242

According to the findings, the majority of the respondents (mean = 4.125; std dev = 1.102) agreed that teenage girls in the community are at risk of becoming addicted to drugs, which negatively affects their well-being and protection. This is supported by studies like Spooner and Hetherington (2018), who emphasize that substance abuse among adolescents significantly impairs their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Hawkins et al. (2022) also found that early exposure to drugs leads to increased vulnerability to mental health issues, which hampers their overall well-being.

The findings further indicated that the majority of the respondents (mean = 4.260; std dev = 1.069) agreed that the use of drugs in the community increases the vulnerability of teenage girls to abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The findings agree with the research by Kilpatrick et al. (2000), who identified a strong correlation between substance abuse and heightened risks of sexual exploitation and neglect among young females. Additionally, Widom and White (2017) highlighted that adolescents who engage in drug use are more likely to encounter abusive situations, often due to impaired judgment and increased exposure to unsafe environments

In addition, majority of the respondents agreed thathe availability of drugs in the community negatively affects the outcomes of child protection programs for vulnerable teenage girls with a mean of (4.131 ; std dev = 1.159). The findings further indicated that the cost of drugs in the community negatively affects the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage

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girls (mean = 4.004; std dev = 1.152). Findings are consistent with Gilbert et al. (2009) who noted that substance abuse creates significant challenges for child protection agencies, often leading to poor outcomes in safeguarding vulnerable children. Kroll and Taylor (2003) also discussed how the presence of drugs in a community can undermine the efforts of child protection services, particularly in contexts where resources are already limited

In addition, the majority of the respondents agreed that the addiction rate in the community negatively affects the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls (mean = 4.194; std dev = 1.295). The findings indicated that the majority of the respondents agreed that drug abuse in the community is a significant barrier to the outcomes of effective child protection for vulnerable teenage girls with a (mean = 4.173; std dev = 1.221). This is echoed by Rutter and Smith (2015), who pointed out that substance abuse can create environments where protective measures are less effective due to the pervasive impact of drugs on community structures and support systems.

The majority of the respondents agreed that the prevalence of drug use in the community contributes to a culture that normalizes harmful behaviors and practices towards teenage girls with a (mean = 4.048; std dev = 1.263).This is supported by Degenhardt et al. (2020), who argued that widespread drug use often leads to the normalization of risky behaviors, which can further endanger vulnerable populations like teenage girls. The majority of the respondents agreed that the negative impact of drug abuse on child protection is exacerbated by poverty and limited access to resources and support services (mean = 4.031; std dev = 1.242).This resonates with studies such as Brook et al. (2018), which emphasized that socio-economic factors like poverty significantly amplify the risks associated with drug abuse, particularly for young girls in vulnerable communities

Community leaders stated that:

Drug abuse among teenage girls in Laikipia West involves the consumption of illegal substances, including alcohol, marijuana, and other narcotics. This issue is influenced by various social and economic factors, including peer pressure, lack of parental guidance, and the availability of drugs in the community.

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4.4.2 Effects of family structure on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of effects of family structure on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. The findings were as indicated in Table 4.6

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Table 4. 5: Effects of family structure on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

	Descriptive Statistics						
Statements	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Uncertain**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Mean**	**Std.**
Family structures negatively affect the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls.	6%	5%	10%	32%	47%	4.100	1.127
Single mothers face more challenges in raising teenage girls compared to single fathers, which negatively affects the outcomes of child protection.	10%	6%	10%	28%	45%	3.910	1.317
Single mothers face more societal stigma and discrimination compared to single fathers, which negatively affects their ability to implement child protection programs effectively.	7%	4%	8%	34%	46%	4.107	1.139

Single parents lack adequate parenting skills are less effective in implementing child protection for their teenage daughters.	6%	4%	8%	37%	43%	4.076	1.121
The availability of support from family, friends, and community members positively affects the outcomes of child protection by single parents.	4%	5%	5%	36%	49%	4.211	1.041
The availability of support from government and non-governmental organizations positively affects the outcomes of child protection by single parents.	9%	7%	4%	36%	44%	4.003	1.240
The negative impact of different family structures on child protection is exacerbated by poverty and limited access to resources and support services.	10%	4%	8%	26%	50%	4.010	1.313

From the findings, the majority of the respondents agreed that family structures negatively affect the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls (mean = 4.100; std dev = 1.127). The Findings agree with McLanahan and Sandefur (2022), who found that children raised in single-parent households, especially by single mothers, are more susceptible to negative social and psychological outcomes, supporting the observed challenges in the study regarding single mothers raising teenage girls.

In addition, majority of the respondents agreed that single mothers face more challenges in raising teenage girls compared to single fathers, which negatively affects the outcomes of child protection with a mean of (3.910 ; std dev = 1.317). This is in line with McDaniel and Raley (2023), who highlight that single mothers often experience higher levels of stress and financial instability, which negatively impacts their parenting effectiveness and, consequently, child protection outcomes. This supports the findings on single mothers facing more societal stigma and struggling with implementing child protection programs effectively

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The majority of the respondents agreed that single mothers face more societal stigma and discrimination compared to single fathers, which negatively affects their ability to implement child protection programs effectively with a (mean = 4.107; std dev = 1.139). This resonates with research by Conger and Donnellan (2023), who also underscores the importance of parental support networks in enhancing parenting skills, which directly affects the outcomes of child protection, reinforcing the findings related to support systems' positive impact . According to the findings, the majority of the respondents agreed thatsingle parents who lack adequate parenting skills are less effective in implementing child protection for their teenage daughters, with a mean of 4.072 ; std dev = 1.122.

The majority of the respondents also agreed that the availability of support from family, friends, and community members positively affects the outcomes of child protection by single parents with a mean of 4.211. The majority of the respondents also agreed that the availability of support from government and non-governmental organizations positively affects the outcomes of child protection by single parents with a mean of 4.003 ; std dev = 1.240. This is in line with a study by Heckman and Kautz (2023) that demonstrates that strong support networks from family, friends, and the community significantly improve child protection outcomes in single-parent households. This aligns with the finding that the availability of such support positively affects the outcomes of child protection.

In addition, majority of the respondents agreed thathe negative impact of different family structures on child protection is exacerbated by poverty and limited access to resources and support services with a mean of 4.010 ; std dev = 1.313. This is in line with Duncan and Murnane (2023),findings which found that economic hardship and lack of access to social services significantly undermine the effectiveness of child protection efforts in single-parent families. This supports the finding that poverty and limited resources exacerbate the negative impact of different family structures on child protection.

Community leaders stated that:

"Typical family structures of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West often include single-parent households, extended families, and families where parents are absent due to work or other reasons. These structures may lack adequate support systems, making the girls more susceptible to various risks. Family structure plays a crucial role in child protection outcomes.

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4.4.3 Effects of literacy level on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the effects of literacy on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. The findings were as indicated in Table 4.7.

Table 4. 6: Effects of literacy level on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

	Descriptive Statistics						
Statements	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Uncertain**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Mean**	**Std.**
The literacy level of teenage girls significantly influences their ability to understand their rights and protections	14%	6%	7%	30%	41%	3.771	1.412
Higher literacy levels among teenage girls lead to better awareness and reporting of abuse or exploitation	10%	3%	4%	38%	43%	4.003	1.259
Accessibility to educational resources enhances the literacy levels of vulnerable teenage girls	5%	8%	8%	36%	41%	4.010	1.150
Cultural beliefs in the community affect the literacy levels of teenage girls.	5%	8%	1%	34%	51%	4.200	1.121
Societal support for girls' literacy directly impacts their safety and protection.	10%	4%	10%	32%	41%	3.920	1.268
Raising societal awareness about the importance of literacy for girls leads to improved child protection outcomes	5%	8%	5%	42%	41%	4.107	1.050

From the results, majority of the respondents agreed that the literacy level of teenage girls significantly influences their ability to understand their rights and protections, with a mean of 3.771 std dev = 1.413. According to the findings, majority of the respondents agreed that higher literacy levels among teenage girls lead to better awareness and reporting of abuse or exploitation, with a mean of 4.003 ; std dev = 1.259. A study by Pankhurst et al. (2023) found that literacy is a critical factor in enabling teenage girls to understand their rights and protections, empowering them to resist exploitation and abuse. This aligns with the finding that literacy levels significantly influence girls' ability to comprehend their rights.

The majority of the respondents also agreed that accessibility to educational resources enhances the literacy levels of vulnerable teenage girls, with a mean of 4.010; std dev = 1.150. Findings agree with a study by UNESCO (2023), which further highlighted that targeted educational programs for vulnerable girls can significantly improve their literacy, providing them with the tools to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation

Further, the majority agreed that cultural beliefs in the community affect the literacy levels of teenage girls majority agreed that with a mean of 4.200. The influence of cultural beliefs on girls' education is explored in a study by Gender at Work (2023), which found that cultural norms and practices often hinder girls' access to education, thereby affecting their literacy levels and overall empowerment. This finding supports the results showing that cultural beliefs negatively impact the literacy levels of teenage girls.

In addition, majority of the respondents agreed that societal support for girls' literacy directly impacts their safety and protection, with a mean of 3.920. Research by Save the Children (2023) underscores the importance of societal support in promoting girls' education, noting that communities that prioritize girls' literacy see improved child protection outcomes. This aligns with the finding that societal support for girls' literacy directly impacts their safety and protection.Finally, majority of the respondents also agreed that raising societal awareness about the importance of literacy for girls leads to improved child protection outcomes with a mean 4.107.

Community leaders stated that:

"Literacy levels among vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West are generally low. Many girls face barriers to education, including financial constraints, cultural norms, and

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responsibilities at home, which impede their ability to attain basic literacy skills. Literacy significantly impacts child protection outcomes.

4.4.4 Effects of neighborhood insecurity on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the effects of neighborhood insecurity on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. The findings were as indicated in Table 4.8.

Table 4. 7:Effects of neighbourhood insecurity on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

	Descriptive Statistics						
Statements	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Uncertain**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Mean**	**Std.**
Neighborhood insecurity negatively affects the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls.	10%	5%	10%	33%	41%	3.923	1.261
Insecure neighborhoods increase the risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of teenage girls, undermining the effectiveness of child protection.	5%	8%	2%	20%	63%	4.290	1.180
The lack of safety and security in neighborhoods hinders the access of vulnerable teenage girls to essential support services, such as health care and education.	4%	5%	5%	30%	55%	4.269	1.062
The fear of violence and crime in neighborhoods discourages parents and caregivers from seeking help for their teenage daughters, negatively affecting the outcomes of child protection.	6%	3%	5%	29%	56%	4.263	1.114

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The lack of trust between residents and law enforcement agencies negatively affects the outcomes of child protection in insecure neighborhoods.	7%	4%	6%	37%	46%	4.124	1.132
Insecure neighborhoods with high levels of crime and violence are associated with a higher prevalence of harmful cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation and early marriage.	8%	5%	9%	22%	55%	4.093	1.275
Neighborhood insecurity exacerbates the impact of poverty and limited access to resources and support services on vulnerable teenage girls, making them more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.	11%	5%	6%	28%	50%	3.996	1.337

After the analysis, majority of the respondents agreed that neighborhood insecurity negatively affects the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls, having a mean of 3.923. These findings similarly agree with research by Sharkey and Faber (2022) emphasizes that the social environment, including neighborhood safety, plays a crucial role in determining the well-being and protection of children, reinforcing the idea that insecure neighborhoods increase risks such as abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

According to the findings, majority of the respondents agreed that insecure neighborhoods increase the risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of teenage girls, undermining the effectiveness of child protection with a mean of 4.291. A study by UNICEF (2023) highlights that children in insecure neighborhoods are at a higher risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, which significantly undermines child protection efforts. This supports the finding that insecure neighborhoods elevate these risks for teenage girls.

The majority of the respondents also agreed that lack of safety and security in neighborhoods hinders the access of vulnerable teenage girls to essential support services, such as health care and education, with a mean of 4.270. Research by the World Health Organization (2023) indicates that lack of safety in neighborhoods hinders access to essential services like healthcare and education, especially for vulnerable populations, including teenage girls. This

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finding is consistent with the results showing that neighborhood insecurity limits access to critical support services.

The further majority agreed that fear of violence and crime in neighborhoods discourages parents and caregivers from seeking help for their teenage daughters, negatively affecting the outcomes of child protection with a mean of 4.263. A study by Masten and Narayan (2023) found that fear of violence and crime in neighborhoods discourages parents and caregivers from seeking help for their children, which negatively affects child protection outcomes. This aligns with the finding that fear of violence and crime discourages proactive measures for protecting teenage girls.

In addition, the majority of the respondents agreed that lack of trust between residents and law enforcement agencies negatively affects the outcomes of child protection in insecure neighborhoods, with a mean of 3.997. Studies by Carr and Napolitano (2023) emphasize that lack of trust between residents and law enforcement in insecure neighborhoods undermines child protection efforts, as community members are less likely to seek help or report incidents. This supports the finding that trust issues with law enforcement negatively impact child protection.

The majority of the respondents also agreed that insecure neighborhoods with high levels of crime and violence are associated with a higher prevalence of harmful cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation and early marriage, with a mean 4.093. Research by UNICEF (2023) also notes that neighborhoods with high levels of crime and violence often see a higher prevalence of harmful cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriage, due to weakened community structures and increased poverty. This finding supports the study's results on the association between neighborhood insecurity and harmful cultural practices.

The majority of the respondents agreed that neighborhood insecurity exacerbates the impact of poverty and limited access to resources and support services on vulnerable teenage girls, making them more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, with a mean of 3.997. A study by the Brookings Institution (2023) found that neighborhood insecurity exacerbates the impact of poverty, limiting access to resources and services essential for protecting vulnerable children. This is consistent with the finding that neighborhood insecurity makes teenage girls

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more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to compounded poverty and resource limitations.

Community leaders stated that:

"Neighborhood insecurity in Laikipia West is relatively high, characterized by incidents of violence, theft, and drug-related crimes further, this insecurity poses significant risks to the safety and well-being of vulnerable teenage girls in the area.

"Neighborhood insecurity impacts daily lives by restricting the freedom and movement of teenage girls. It increases their risk of encountering violence and exploitation, leading to heightened anxiety and fear, which can affect their mental health and educational opportunities."

4.4.5 Child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls.

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on child protection outcomes for vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub county, Kenya. The findings were as indicated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.8: Child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

	Descriptive Statistics						
Statements	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Uncertain**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Mean**	**Std.**
Thchild protection provides essential support services to vulnerable teenage girls, such as education, healthcare, and nutrition.	8%	10%	8%	31%	41%	3.861	1.294
The program is successful in promoting gender equality and empowering young girls to achieve their full potential.	6%	6%	7%	22%	58%	4.193	1.203
The child sponsorship program ensures that all registered girls in primary school have access to basic education, healthcare, and nutrition, regardless of their socio-economic background.	5%	6%	6%	29%	54%	4.218	1.110
The program creates safe spaces for girls to learn and grow, free from discrimination and violence.	10%	4%	4%	38%	44%	4.038	1.231

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The child protection has the potential to make a lasting impact on the lives of vulnerable teenage girls, helping them to break the cycle of poverty, violence, and exploitation.	10%	2%	9%	34%	45%	4.045	1.219

According to the findings, majority of the respondents agreed that child protection provides essential support services to vulnerable teenage girls, such as education, healthcare, and nutrition, with a mean of 3.861. This is in line with a study by UNICEF (2023) that underscores the importance of child protection services, noting that access to education, healthcare, and nutrition is critical for the development and well-being of vulnerable children, particularly girls. It emphasizes that these services form the backbone of protective interventions aimed at reducing vulnerabilities and improving outcomes for teenage girls.

The majority of the respondents also agreed that the programs are successful in promoting gender equality and empowering young girls to achieve their full potential with a mean of 4.193. This agrees with a 2023 report by Plan International, which found that gender-focused child protection programs significantly contribute to the empowerment of young girls, particularly by promoting gender equality and enabling them to pursue their potential in education and other spheres of life.

The respondents further agreed that the child sponsorship program ensures that all registered girls in primary school have access to basic education, healthcare, and nutrition, regardless of their socio-economic background, with a mean of 4.218. this agrees with research by World Vision (2023) found that child sponsorship programs are effective in providing access to education, healthcare, and nutrition to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, ensuring that socio-economic barriers do not hinder their development.

In addition, majority of the respondents agreed that the program creates safe spaces for girls to learn and grow, free from discrimination and violence, with a mean of 4.038. This resonates with a study by Save the Children (2023) emphasizes the importance of creating safe spaces for girls where they can learn and grow free from violence and discrimination. The study found that safe spaces are crucial for the psychological and emotional well-being of vulnerable girls, providing them with the security needed to focus on their education and personal development.

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Finally, the respondents agreed that child protection has the potential to make a lasting impact on the lives of vulnerable teenage girls, helping them to break the cycle of poverty, violence, and exploitation with a mean of 4.045. This is in line with 023 Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children report, which found that comprehensive child protection programs have a long-term impact on breaking cycles of poverty, violence, and exploitation. The report highlighted that sustained interventions in education, health, and social protection are key to achieving lasting change in the lives of vulnerable children

4.5 Inferential Statistics

4.5.1 Regression Analysis

The study evaluated how (drug abuse, family structure, literacy, and neighborhood insecurity) affect child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. Using multiple regression analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the combined effect of drug abuse, family structure, literacy, and neighborhood insecurity was established before interaction.

Table 4.9: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig. F Change
1	.878[a]	.770	.749	.3873	.000

The R-Squared is the proportion of variance in the dependent variable, which can be explained by the independent variables. The R-squared in this study was 0.770, which shows that the four independent variables (drug abuse, family structure, literacy, and neighborhood insecurity) can explain 77.0% of child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya, while other factors explain 23.0%.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.892	4	.473	2.336	.006[b]
	Residual	57.524	284	.203		
	Total	59.417	288			

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a. Dependent Variable: child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls.

b. Predictors: drug abuse, family structure, literacy and neighborhood insecurity (Constant),

The analysis of variance in this study was used to determine whether the model is a good fit for the data. From the findings, the p-value was 0.006, which is less than 0.05, and hence the model is good at predicting how the four independent variables (drug abuse, family structure, literacy, and neighborhood insecurity) affect child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls.(2.336) which shows that the model was fit in predicting the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 4. 10: Regression Coefficients

Coefficients					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.198	.435		11.936	.000
	Teenage girls Drug Abuse	.117	.066	.110	1.792	.007
	Family Structure	.004	.046	.005	.090	.001
	Literacy level	.091	.051	.108	1.804	.002
	Neighborhood Insecurity	.063	.056	.068	1.127	.006

a. Dependent Variable: child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

Table 4.10 shows the overall significant test results for the hypothesized research model. The interpretations of the findings indicated follow the following regression model.

$$\mathbf{Y= \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4}$$

Therefore,

$$\mathbf{Y= 5.198 + 0.117 X_1 + 0.004\ X_2 + 0.091 X_3 + 0.063\ X_4}$$

According to the intercept (β_0), when the four independent variables are held constant, the value of child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya, will be 5.198. In addition, holding all the other independent variables constant, a unit

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increase in drug abuseon would lead to a 0.117 increase in child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West Sub County. Further, holding the other independent variables constant, a unit increase in family structure would lead to a 0.004 improvement in child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West Sub County.

In addition, holding all the other variables constant, a unit increase in literacy would lead to a 0.091 improvement in child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county. Finally, holding all the other variables constant, a unit increase in neighborhood insecurity would lead to a 0.063 increase in child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West Sub County.

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CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of key descriptive and inferential findings. It also outlines the conclusions drawn from the aforementioned summary. The third part explains the feasible recommendations in tandem with the conclusions drawn. The last sections outline areas suggested for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

In this section, key findings emanating from both descriptive and inferential analyses of data collected pertinent to all study variables are presented. Therefore, the major findings covered the effects of drug abuse, effects of family structure, effects of literacy, and effects of neighborhood insecurity on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya.

5.2.1 Effects of drug abuse on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

The findings indicate a significant concern regarding drug addiction among teenage girls in the community, which adversely impacts their well-being and protection. The majority of respondents agreed that drug addiction increases vulnerability to abuse, neglect, and exploitation, with a mean score of 4.125 and a standard deviation of 1.102. The presence and cost of drugs further exacerbate the negative outcomes of child protection programs, as indicated by mean scores of 4.131 and 4.004, respectively. Additionally, the community's high addiction rate and the normalization of harmful behaviors due to drug prevalence are significant barriers to effective child protection, with respective mean scores of 4.194 and 4.048. Poverty and limited access to resources amplify these negative impacts, with a mean score of 4.031. Community leaders emphasized that drug abuse among teenage girls in Laikipia West, driven by factors such as peer pressure and lack of parental guidance, is more prevalent in low-income areas and leads to poor academic performance, increased dropout rates, mental health issues, and heightened vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.

5.2.2 Effects of family structure on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

The findings reveal that family structures significantly impact the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls. The majority of respondents agreed that these family structures negatively affect child protection, with a mean score of 4.100 and a standard deviation of 1.127. Single mothers face more challenges than single fathers, including societal stigma and discrimination, which hinder their ability to effectively implement child

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protection programs, as reflected in mean scores of 3.910 and 4.107, respectively. Single parents also often lack adequate parenting skills, further compromising child protection with a mean score of 4.072. However, support from family, friends, community members, and organizations positively influences child protection outcomes, as indicated by mean scores of 4.211 and 4.003. Poverty and limited access to resources exacerbate the negative impacts of various family structures, with a mean score of 4.010. Community leaders emphasized that typical family structures in Laikipia West, such as single-parent and extended families, often lack adequate support systems, increasing the risks for teenage girls. Stable and supportive family environments provide better protection and guidance, while fragmented or dysfunctional families struggle to meet the needs of teenage girls, increasing their vulnerability. Effective caregivers are crucial in providing emotional support, supervision, and access to education and health services, helping mitigate risks associated with drug abuse and other harmful behaviors.

5.2.3. Effects of literacy on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

The findings indicate that literacy levels among teenage girls significantly influence their understanding of their rights and protections, with a mean score of 3.771 and a standard deviation of 1.413. Higher literacy levels correlate with better awareness and reporting of abuse or exploitation, as shown by a mean score of 4.003. Accessibility to educational resources enhances the literacy of vulnerable teenage girls, with a mean score of 4.010. Cultural beliefs in the community also affect literacy levels, with a mean score of 4.200. Societal support for girls' literacy directly impacts their safety and protection, reflected in a mean score of 3.920, and raising societal awareness about the importance of literacy for girls leads to improved child protection outcomes, with a mean score of 4.107. Community leaders emphasized that literacy levels among vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West are generally low due to barriers such as financial constraints, cultural norms, and home responsibilities. Higher literacy levels empower girls by enabling them to understand and access information about their rights and available resources, thereby improving protection and reducing vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. Literacy enhances access to child protection information and resources, while illiteracy limits the ability to recognize and respond to child protection issues effectively.

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5.2.4 Effects of neighborhood insecurity on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls

The findings indicate that neighborhood insecurity significantly affects child protection outcomes for vulnerable teenage girls. Respondents agreed that insecure neighborhoods elevate risks such as abuse, neglect, and exploitation (mean of 4.291), hindering access to essential support services like healthcare and education (mean of 4.270). Fear of violence and crime discourages parents from seeking help (mean of 4.263), while lack of trust in law enforcement undermines protection efforts (mean of 3.997). Insecure neighborhoods also correlate with a higher prevalence of harmful practices like female genital mutilation and early marriage (mean of 4.093), exacerbating vulnerabilities linked to poverty and limited resources (mean of 3.997). These findings align with existing research emphasizing the critical role of neighborhood safety in child well-being and protection (Sharkey & Faber, 2022; UNICEF, 2023; World Health Organization, 2023; Masten & Narayan, 2023; Carr & Napolitano, 2023; Brookings Institution, 2023).

5.3 Conclusions of Findings

From the findings, the researcher concluded that drug abuse is a significant issue affecting teenage girls in Laikipia West, with the majority of respondents agreeing that addiction to drugs negatively impacts their well-being and protection, as reflected in high mean scores. Drug use in the community exacerbates the vulnerability of teenage girls to abuse, neglect, and exploitation, undermining the effectiveness of child protection programs. The availability and cost of drugs further contribute to these negative outcomes. Additionally, drug abuse fosters a culture that normalizes harmful behaviors toward teenage girls, and this issue is intensified by poverty and limited access to resources and support services. Community leaders highlighted that drug abuse among teenage girls, influenced by social and economic factors like peer pressure and lack of parental guidance, leads to poor academic performance, increased school dropout rates, mental health issues, and greater vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse, significantly hindering child protection efforts.

The researcher concluded that family structures significantly impact the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls, with a majority of respondents agreeing that negative effects are prevalent in various family settings. Single mothers face more challenges and societal stigma compared to single fathers, affecting their ability to protect their teenage daughters effectively. Additionally, single parents generally lack adequate parenting skills, further hindering child protection efforts. However, the availability of support from family, friends, community members, and government and non-governmental organizations

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positively influences child protection outcomes. Poverty and limited access to resources exacerbate the negative impacts of different family structures on child protection. Community leaders highlighted that vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West often come from single-parent households, extended families, or families with absent parents, which lack adequate support systems and increase the girls' susceptibility to risks. Stable and supportive family environments provide better protection and guidance, while fragmented or dysfunctional families struggle to meet the needs of teenage girls, increasing their vulnerability. Parental figures or caregivers play a crucial role in mitigating risks and ensuring access to education and health services, but challenges remain, particularly in single-parent or absent-parent households.

From the findings, the researcher concluded that literacy levels significantly influence the ability of teenage girls to understand their rights and protections, with a majority of respondents agreeing that higher literacy levels lead to better awareness and reporting of abuse or exploitation. Accessibility to educational resources enhances the literacy levels of vulnerable teenage girls, while cultural beliefs in the community negatively impact these levels. Societal support for girls' literacy directly impacts their safety and protection, and raising societal awareness about the importance of literacy for girls leads to improved child protection outcomes. Community leaders support these findings, noting that low literacy levels among vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West are often due to barriers such as financial constraints, cultural norms, and home responsibilities. Higher literacy levels equip girls with the knowledge to understand their rights and access resources, leading to improved protection and empowerment, while illiteracy exacerbates their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse by limiting their ability to understand legal rights, read warning signs, and seek help through written channels.

The researcher concluded that insecurity significantly hinders child protection outcomes for vulnerable teenage girls. A majority of respondents agreed that insecure neighborhoods increase the risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, undermining child protection efforts. The lack of safety and security impedes access to essential support services, such as health care and education, and the fear of violence discourages parents and caregivers from seeking help. Additionally, distrust between residents and law enforcement agencies exacerbates the situation. Insecure neighborhoods are also associated with harmful cultural practices like female genital mutilation and early marriage. Poverty and limited access to resources further increase the vulnerability of teenage girls to abuse and exploitation. Community leaders in Laikipia West confirm that high levels of violence, theft, and drug-related crimes pose

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significant risks to teenage girls, affecting their safety, mental health, and educational opportunities. Community efforts, such as neighborhood watch programs, community policing, and initiatives by local NGOs, aim to improve safety and provide support, but the challenges remain significant.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

The study recommends that community-based interventions should prioritize increasing awareness and education about the risks associated with drug abuse, targeting both teenagers and their families. This could involve workshops, campaigns, and school programs aimed at enhancing knowledge and fostering supportive environments. Secondly, there is a critical need to strengthen access to mental health services and counseling for affected girls, addressing issues such as depression, anxiety, and trauma resulting from substance abuse. Thirdly, collaborations between local authorities, community leaders, and NGOs should be fostered to enhance monitoring and enforcement against drug trafficking and availability, aiming to reduce the accessibility and availability of illicit substances. Additionally, economic empowerment programs for families in low-income areas could mitigate socio-economic factors contributing to substance abuse by providing alternative livelihoods and reducing vulnerability. Finally, integrating gender-sensitive approaches into child protection policies and programs can ensure that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of teenage girls are adequately addressed, thereby promoting their overall well-being and protection from exploitation and abuse.

The researcher recommends that interventions should focus on strengthening parenting skills among single mothers, acknowledging the greater challenges they face compared to single fathers. This can be achieved through targeted training programs and support networks that address their specific needs and mitigate societal stigma. Secondly, enhancing community and institutional support systems, including government and non-governmental organizations, is crucial. Initiatives should prioritize accessibility and effectiveness in delivering resources and services to single-parent households, especially those facing economic hardship. Thirdly, promoting stable and supportive family environments through extended family networks and community involvement can significantly improve child protection outcomes. Strategies should include fostering positive relationships among family members and creating awareness about the impact of family structure on teenage girls' vulnerabilities.

The researcher recommends that prioritizing initiatives that improve the literacy levels of teenage girls in Laikipia West to enhance their understanding of rights and protections. Efforts should focus on increasing accessibility to educational resources and support services,

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addressing financial constraints, and overcoming cultural barriers that impede girls' education. Community-based programs should raise societal awareness about the importance of girls' literacy, encouraging societal support that directly impacts their safety and protection. Enhancing literacy will enable girls to better access information and resources related to child protection, report abuse or exploitation, and navigate digital platforms and educational materials. This holistic approach will empower vulnerable teenage girls, reduce their susceptibility to exploitation and abuse, and lead to improved child protection outcomes. The researcher recommends the implementation of comprehensive and community-based strategies to address neighborhood insecurity and its detrimental effects on child protection for vulnerable teenage girls. Efforts should focus on enhancing safety and security through the expansion of neighborhood watch programs, community policing, and the involvement of local NGOs to create a supportive environment. Strengthening trust between residents and law enforcement agencies is essential, as is ensuring that essential support services like healthcare and education are accessible to teenage girls despite the security challenges. Additionally, targeted interventions should address the specific forms of insecurity, such as sexual violence, physical abuse, and drug-related activities, by providing mental health support, legal assistance, and educational opportunities to mitigate the impacts of fear and anxiety. Reducing harmful cultural practices and improving economic stability through resource allocation and poverty alleviation programs will also play a crucial role in protecting vulnerable teenage girls from abuse and exploitation.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The study recommends further studies should be done to investigate how cultural norms and practices within different communities in Laikipia West Sub County impact the vulnerability of teenage girls to various forms of abuse and exploitation. Investigate the role of technology and social media in exposing vulnerable teenage girls to risks such as online grooming, cyberbullying, and exploitation, and explore preventive measures.

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APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear respondent,

I am Michael Muriithi, a postgraduate student pursuing a Masters Degree in Development Studies at St. Pauls University. I am currently conducting a study to determine social factors affecting the outcomes of child protection of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West Subcounty, Kenya. You have been selected via stratified sampling to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw even if you had agreed to participate earlier. Your participation involves filling out a questionnaire where you will be asked to give information about your demographic data, child protection, neighbourhood security, family structures, literacy level, and teenage girl's drug abuse. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes. You will remain anonymous and your namewill not be required for the study. In addition, the information you provide is strictly for academic purposes. The information you provide is very important for me to make recommendations to enhance the successful child protection of vulnerable teenage girls. I therefore humbly request you to be a respondent in the study by filling the questionnaire attached. If you have any questions you may reach me via my telephone number below.

Thankyou

Michael Muriithi

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APPENDIX II: CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the letter of introduction regarding this study. I voluntarily consent to participate in the research. The information provided about my involvement in the study is clear to me, and I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been assured that all information I provide will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. I am aware that my participation is entirely voluntary, and I will not receive any incentives or compensation for my involvement.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have been informed of my rights and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

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APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data in order to establish social factors affecting child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls by in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. Indicate your response by ticking alongside the provided box or writing down in the space provided. To maintain confidentiality, do not indicate your name.

I: Background data

1. Indicate your gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. How old are you?

- ☐ 13 – 16 years
- ☐ 17- 19 years

3. What is your highest level of education?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Primary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ Certificate

4. What is your role in child protection?

……

II: Teenage girls' drug abuse

5. The statements in the table below are about the effects of drug abuse on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. Indicate whether you agree or disagree using the scale below:

1= Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Uncertain 4=Disagree 5= strongly disagree

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	1	2	3	4	5
Teenage girls in the community are at risk of becoming addicted to drugs, which negatively affects their well-being and protection.					
The use of drugs in the community increases the vulnerability of teenage girls to abuse, neglect, and exploitation.					
The availability of drugs in the community negatively affects the outcomes of child protection programs for vulnerable teenage girls.					
The cost of drugs in the community negatively affects the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls.					
The addiction rate in the community negatively affects the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls.					
Drug abuse in the community is a significant barrier to the outcomes of effective child protection for vulnerable teenage girls.					
The prevalence of drug use in the community contributes to a culture that normalizes harmful behaviors and practices toward teenage girls.					
The negative impact of drug abuse on child protection is exacerbated by poverty and limited access to resources and support services.					

6. In your opinion, how has drug abuse affected child protection outcomes for vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county?

……
……
……
……

III: Family structures

7. The statements in the table below are about the effects of family structures on child protection programs outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county Kenya. Indicate whether you agree or disagree using the scale below:

1= Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Uncertain 4=Disagree 5= strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5

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Family structures negatively affect the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls.					
Single mothers face more challenges in raising teenage girls compared to single fathers, which negatively affects the outcomes of child protection.					
Single mothers face more societal stigma and discrimination compared to single fathers, which negatively affects their ability to implement child protection programs effectively.					
Single parents lack adequate parenting skills are less effective in implementing child protection for their teenage daughters.					
The availability of support from family, friends, and community members positively affects the outcomes of child protection by single parents.					
The availability of support from government and non-governmental organizations positively affects the outcomes of child protection by single parents.					
The negative impact of different family structures on child protection is exacerbated by poverty and limited access to resources and support services.					

8. Can you describe any specific challenges faced by members of single parents in accessing child protection services for their teenage daughters?

……

……

……

……

IV: Neighborhood Insecurity

9. The statements in the table below are about the effects of neighborhood insecurity on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub-county, Kenya. Indicate whether you agree or disagree using the scale below:

1= Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Uncertain 4=Disagree 5= strongly disagree

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	1	2	3	4	5
Neighborhood insecurity negatively affects the outcomes of child protection for vulnerable teenage girls.					
Insecure neighborhoods increase the risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of teenage girls, undermining the effectiveness of child protection.					
The lack of safety and security in neighborhoods hinders the access of vulnerable teenage girls to essential support services, such as health care and education.					
The fear of violence and crime in neighborhoods discourages parents and caregivers from seeking help for their teenage daughters, negatively affecting the outcomes of child protection.					
The lack of trust between residents and law enforcement agencies negatively affects the outcomes of child protection in insecure neighborhoods.					
Insecure neighborhoods with high levels of crime and violence are associated with a higher prevalence of harmful cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation and early marriage.					
Neighborhood insecurity exacerbates the impact of poverty and limited access to resources and support services on vulnerable teenage girls, making them more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.					

10. Can you describe any specific challenges or safety concerns related to implementing child protection in certain neighbourhoods or communities?

……

……

……

……

V: Child Protection outcomes

11. The statements in the table below are about the effects of neighborhood insecurity on child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West sub county, Kenya. Indicate whether you agree or disagree using the scale below:

1= Strongly Agree 2= Agree 3= Uncertain 4=Disagree 5= strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
child protection provides essential support services to vulnerable teenage girls, such as education, healthcare, and nutrition.					
The program is successful in promoting gender equality and empowering young girls to achieve their full potential.					

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The child sponsorship program ensures that all registered girls in primary school have access to basic education, healthcare, and nutrition, regardless of their socio-economic background.					
The program creates safe spaces for girls to learn and grow, free from discrimination and violence.					
child protection has the potential to make a lasting impact on the lives of vulnerable teenage girls, helping them to break the cycle of poverty, violence, and exploitation.					

12. What can be done to enhance the outcomes of child protection?

……

……

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APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Guide: Impact of Literacy on Access to Child Protection Programs

1. Can you describe your understanding of drug abuse among teenage girls in Laikipia West……..?
2. How prevalent do you perceive drug abuse to be among vulnerable teenage girls in this area……?
3. What specific effects have you observed or encountered related to drug abuse among teenage girls……?
4. How does drug abuse impact the child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in your experience……..?
5. How would you describe the typical family structures of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West……?
6. From your experience, how does family structure influence the child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls……?
7. What role do parental figures or caregivers play in ensuring the protection of teenage girls in different family structures……..?
8. Have you observed any particular challenges or strengths associated with specific family structures in relation to child protection outcomes…….?
9. How would you assess the literacy levels among vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West……?
10. What impact does literacy, or lack thereof, have on the child protection outcomes of teenage girls in this community……..?
11. How does literacy influence access to information and resources related to child protection…….?
12. In your opinion, what are the barriers that illiteracy presents in terms of recognizing and responding to child protection issues……?
13. How would you characterize the level of neighborhood insecurity in Laikipia West from your perspective?
14. What specific forms of insecurity are most concerning for the child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls?
15. How does neighborhood insecurity impact the daily lives and safety of teenage girls in this area?
16. Are there any community efforts or strategies in place to address neighborhood insecurity and its effects on child protection?

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APPENDIX V: LETTER FROM SPU

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 LIMURU, KENYA
Email: office@spu.ac.ke
Website: www.spu.ac.ke

Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
Mobile: +254 (0) 728 - 669000
(0) 736 - 424440

BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

6th August, 2024

National Commission for Science and Technology,
P.O. BOX 30623-00100,
Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RECOMMENDATION FOR MICHAEL MURIITHI MWANIKI – MDSNRB264821 TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter confirms the above-named person is a student in the Master of Development Studies (MDS) Program at St. Paul's University.

The second year consists of a major research work leading to a Thesis. The student's selected topic is:

"Social factors affecting child protection outcomes of vulnerable teenage girls in Laikipia West Sub County, Kenya."

Kindly grant this student the required permit.

Yours Faithfully,

06 AUG 2024

Dr. John Muhoho
Director Board of Postgraduate Studies

APPENDIX VI: NACOSTI PERMIT

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **118773**

Date of Issue: **09/August/2024**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Mr.. Michael Muriithi Muriithi of St. Paul`s University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Laikipia on the topic: SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING CHILD PROTECTION OUTCOMES OF VULNERABLE TEENAGE GIRLS IN LAIKIPIA WEST SUBCOUNTY, KENYA. for the period ending : 09/August/2025.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/24/38869**

118773

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

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See overleaf for conditions

St. Paul's University Repository

APPENDIX VII: LETTER FOR ISERC

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 Limuru,
Kenya
Email: office@spu.ac.ke
Website: www.spu.ac.ke

Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
Mobile: +254 (0) 728-669000
(0) 736-424440

REF: SPU/226/2024 **Date: 5th August 2024**

TO: Michael Mwaniki
St. Paul's University

Dear Michael,

==========

REF: Social Factors Affecting Child Protection Outcomes of Vulnerable Teenage Girls in Laikipia West Sub County, Kenya

==========

Greetings,

This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 235, for the period between 5th August 2024 – 5th August 2025 (1 year).**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect

the integrity of the research must be reported to *SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours

v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.

vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.

vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.

viii. Please note that it is within the ISERC's mandate to monitor your research and to do random visits to the site. All research is subject to post approval monitoring.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) ***https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke*** **and also obtain other clearances needed.**

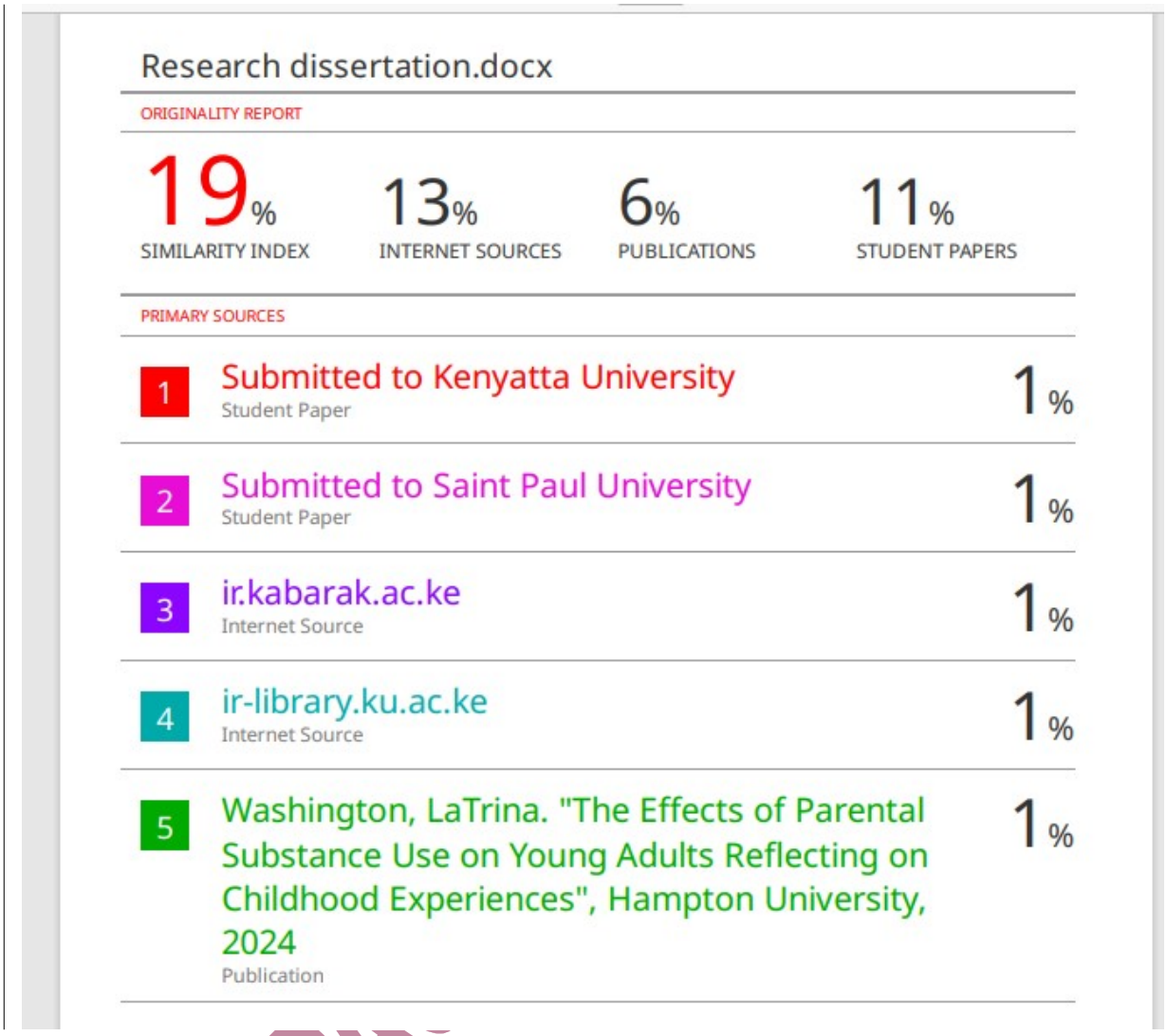
Yours sincerely,



Dr. Daniel Nzengya, PhD
Chairperson
SPU- Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee



APPENDIX VIII: PLAGIARISM REPORT



Research dissertation.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

19%	13%	6%	11%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to Kenyatta University Student Paper	1%
2	Submitted to Saint Paul University Student Paper	1%
3	ir.kabarak.ac.ke Internet Source	1%
4	ir-library.ku.ac.ke Internet Source	1%
5	Washington, LaTrina. "The Effects of Parental Substance Use on Young Adults Reflecting on Childhood Experiences", Hampton University, 2024 Publication	1%

ST. PA