

Abstract

There are debates whether Khat is a contributor to divorce and family break ups and social disorder like crimes and theft. This is corroborated by constant media highlights. For example, Mungai (1983) Khat consumption retards development and prosperity of both the individual and his nation. It makes one sleepy at odd times when others are working. It makes one weak hence less resistance to diseases. Khat chewers will care less about family, nutrition and health but spend many hours chewing and looking for the substance. Thus, this study aimed at examining the effects of Khat consumption on family relationships in Kamukunji constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya. Guided by the Structural Functionalism Theory and Conflict Theory, the study reviewed a number of existing literature relating to the problem of family relationships associated with Khat consumption. The study was conducted in Kamukunji Constituency of Nairobi County. The Somali community is the dominant tribe in the larger part of the suburb. This study applied exploratory and descriptive survey research designs with a mixed method approach. This study targeted the entire Khat consumers' households and retail traders in Kamukunji constituency. The sample consisted of 335 main consumers who used questionnaires, 5 key informants, 19 FGDs and 70 retailers (used questionnaires) selected through wardclustering and then snowball sampling. Piloting was conducted in Kibra constituency using 30 consumers' households and 10 retail traders. Validity was examined by aligning the questionnaire with the Structural Functionalism and Conflict Theory. Reliability statistic of was assessed through obtaining a Cronbach alpha of 0.914. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS - Version 20) was used for both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study applied the three analytical types of Univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis. Qualitative data were analyzed through the process of coding where common themes were identified and examined in relation to the context, meaning and circumstances. The study found that whereas the consumption of Khat has been perceived to be associated with men's low levels of sexual interest and libido, in the study area, it is noted among the majority of the respondents, especially men that their interest in sex increased with consumption of Khat. However, there was an interesting difference where more women observed that Khat consumption diminishes sexual interest. Most of the Khat users had a history of Khat use in their family and the social economic implication associated with Khat use in Kamukunji Constituency is comparable to other studies carried out in other parts of the world. There is urgent need to create awareness on Khat consumption and available treatment and rehabilitation services for those who are

willing to reform and that schools and religious institutions can be excellent avenues for information dissemination