

PRINCIPALS' AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROVISION OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES AND MAINTENANCE OF DISCIPLINE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF NYAMIRA DISTRICT-KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The overall running, control, tone maintenance, the general development of school education and all-round standards in secondary schools is the ultimate responsibility of the principals. They are particularly charged with the responsibility of fostering the right atmosphere for child growth and development (Calestine, 2002). Principals must constantly be in touch with all school activities, whether academic or co-curricular although they may delegate some of their many responsibilities to other members of staff (Republic of Kenya, 1979). In essence, the principal is held responsible in case of the failure of any activity or services in the school (Mbithi, 1974).

It is within this set up that this paper endeavoured to investigate principals' and students' attitudes towards provision of guidance and counselling services and maintenance of discipline in schools of Nyamira District. The study also sought to determine the importance of guidance and counselling in the running of schools and establish whether principals were trained to guide and counsel students. The study used questionnaires for principals and students as research instruments which were issued to eighty (80) principals and four hundred and four (404) students drawn from sixty (60) public and twenty (20) private secondary schools. The questionnaires were each divided into three parts. The first part sought demographic information of the respondents and schools. The second part contained attitude items while the third part contained open-ended questions. Besides that, the study used interview schedules for principals and also observation schedule.

The study was Ex-Post Facto in design. Two-tailed T-test and One Way analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were used for data analysis. The T-test was used to test for significant differences between principals' attitudes towards guidance and counselling in relation to their gender, and school category. ANOVA was used to test for significant differences between principals' attitudes towards guidance and counselling and their age, teaching and administrative experiences. From the analyzed data, it emerged that only 24.4% of the principals were conversant with the objectives of guidance and counselling services in

schools. The study also showed that principals and students were not adequately informed about the role of the teacher-counsellors. Besides, principals and teachers-counsellors lacked training in guidance and counselling skills and therefore they felt incompetent to guide and counsel.

Background of the study

The Ministry of Education views the school principal as a key player in initiating and organizing good guidance and counselling services (Rono, 1989). Roeber (1955:26) emphasized how important it is for principals to have positive attitudes towards school guidance and counselling by stating that; School administrators' attitude towards any service in the school, whether new or old needs the acceptance and leadership of the school administrator. Without his/her approval and continued support, any service will wither on the vine because teachers and students sense and frequently adopt the school administrator's attitude towards any service in the school.

Provision of guidance and counselling services in Kenyan schools was formally started in the 1970s. This was as a result of the 1967 and 1968 careers conference reports which was followed by the establishment of Guidance and Counselling Unit in the Ministry of Education in July, (1971).

Before this year (1971), guidance and counselling services in schools mainly concentrated on career guidance which was almost entirely based on the voluntary efforts of teachers who somehow felt motivated to provide it. In secondary schools, guidance and counselling services were commenced to cater for students with social, personal, psychological, educational and vocational problems. A handbook for school guidance and counselling providers was produced in 1971 and revised later in 1973 following the inception of guidance and counselling unit in the Ministry of Education. In the handbook, school principals' responsibilities in the provision of guidance and counselling services were enumerated and they were, according to the handbook, required to select competent and committed teacher – counsellors and establish guidance committees to organize and co-ordinate the services in their respective schools, provide time and facilities needed for the service and precisely define areas of responsibility for teacher – counsellors.

Principals' attitudes towards guidance and counselling services in their schools significantly influence the attitudes of those others who are involved either as recipients, for example, students or as promoters as in the case of teachers. The principal can produce an atmosphere of cooperative enterprise through the attitude he or she has towards the services. Therefore, principals become role models to be emulated by both teachers and students. Wanjohi (1995) noted that in secondary schools where the principals had a positive attitude towards guidance and counselling services, for example, Alliance Boys High School, Starehe Boys' Centre, Mang'u High School among others, there happened to be positive responses from students towards it and therefore, they do not experience alarming cases of indiscipline.

Brumma L. K., (2000) observes that the person with a problem must be willing to seek assistance from a counsellor and if he or she is unable to do this then it is very difficult to work cordially with him or her. The teacher-counsellor cannot create this readiness in students; it must come from within the student who has a problem. It is a popular view that successful counselling involves, to some reasonable degree, voluntary client participation. Patterson, (1974), noted that how a client perceives counselling might serve as a barrier of the process. This attitude is derived from a person's prior experiences in or out of counselling and the nature of his or her concerns may even keep him or her off from seeking help.

According to research carried out by Tessler, (1972) students are more willing to seek help when they feel their difficulties are less attributable to their own failure than to difficult situations. It has also been demonstrated that when students feel adequate in their skills and then they do not succeed in a task, they are more willing to seek guidance and counselling or help than those who initially felt inadequate as observed by Moser, (1963). A person's world view therefore is likely to determine what one attributes as the cause to the problems affecting his or her life, which in turn influences his or her attitudes towards seeking help. Patterson, (1962) also indicates that the type of services described also influence one's attitude towards seeking help. As noted by Lytton, (1974), students with personal problems can be a severe problem to the school management and can have a disruptive effect on other children. With this in mind, principals cannot afford to ignore guidance and counselling in their schools.

Many secondary schools in the past have been involved in strikes that led to mass destruction of property worth millions of shillings. Meru Central District, for example, had secondary school students going on strike. In 1991, it witnessed the most shocking, senseless and ghastly incident at St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School where tragedy resulted into the death of nineteen (19) girls, seventy one (71) rape cases and four (4) boys being jailed for manslaughter as reported by Mwokia, (2004) and Mwenda (2005). It was an incident that primarily involved students both as the assailants and as the victims as noted by Daddeya, et al. (2006). From the Kenya Television Network facts on file of 18th October (1991), it was reported that violent practices by students is not a new phenomena in Kenya. Past outrages includes statements like, “students of Kimuthula School, in Kitui disrupts the Kenya Certificate of Secondary School Examination.” According to Odupoyi K. (1999, October 29). Schools strike again. The Daily Nation Newspaper, PP. A3, A4, secondary school girls from Karoti were suspended after they set their dormitory on fire! Besides, Kihutu School was closed on that same day because students went on strike over what they called lack of freedom of expression! Adipo, L. (2000, July 15). Poor school administration. The Standard newspaper, P5 also reported that students from Dagoretti High School destroyed several teachers’ houses to protest the suspension of form three prefects. There is no government in the world therefore which would like to have indisciplined students in schools who will eventually become learned thieves and murderers.

According to Education Act Cap 212 of the Laws of Kenya, corporal punishment was used as a way of dealing with indiscipline in schools. In this act, corporal punishment was inflicted only after a full inquiry on the offender and offence had been made and was administered by the principal or teacher to whom it had been delegated by the principal. It was not to be inflicted in the presence of other students. A record of every corporal punishment administered was to be properly documented showing the name and age of the student, the offence committed, the number of strokes inflicted and by whom. This kind of punishment, as a way of maintaining discipline became unpopular and at times caused riots and therefore it was outlawed in April 25th 2001 by the government of Kenya.

However, the government did this without giving suitable alternatives and clear guidelines on how to apply them in place of the use of the cane. Principals and teachers since then do not know how to handle the alarming increase of strikes and other indiscipline cases in schools. This study therefore, was

intended to bridge this gap by showing that effective provision of guidance and counselling can be a suitable alternative in case principals and students acquire favourable attitudes towards it.

A principal who has positive attitudes towards it will always ensure that facilities needed for it to be provided effectively are provided and that there is a department specifically handling guidance and counselling in the school with competent teacher-counsellors in place. Also a student, who has positive attitude towards it, will always seek this service whenever he/she is confronted with a problem. Those principals and students who have negative attitudes will do exactly the opposite and probably that is why there were escalating indiscipline cases in schools especially those in Nyamira District where this study was carried out. How then, were their unfavourable attitudes going to be changed? It was this question the study intended to answer.

From the moment of birth onwards, we are exposed to both direct and indirect stimuli which can teach us to hold particular attitudes towards an attitudinal object. Parents, other family members, media, peers and teachers all provide attitudinal socialization experiences by which people come to learn appropriate attitudes and behaviour. Children learn to develop positive attitudes towards certain people, foods and toys and hold negative attitudes towards other people and things. By the time we are adults, these attitudes may have been modified, but the process of acquisition and development of attitudes continues. Learning and reinforcement theories approach attitudes as learned responses to particular stimuli, and the focus of these theories has been on identifying the nature of the stimuli that lead s to develop and hold specific attitudes.

There could be principals and teachers who strongly belief that it is only corporal punishment that can ensure discipline in schools. This is because they have been applying it and are therefore used to it as the only remedy to indiscipline problems. This study therefore, was intended to unravel the mystery surrounding alarming cases of indiscipline in secondary schools by proving that guidance and counselling is a more powerful variable which can be used in place of caning, if all principals, students and teachers can have positive attitudes towards it.

It is expected that since school going children spend three quarters of their time in school, they ought to seek help to deal with their problems from the teacher-counsellors. However, some factors could encourage or discourage students from seeking help and one of this could be the readiness of the student to receive help. The counsellor therefore, as noted by Cottles, (2001) does not create this readiness; it must come from within the person. Brammer, (1998) indicates that unless a person is ready for counselling, it is difficult to work with him or her.

Strikes and fights in schools suggest that students have social, psychological and educational problems which can effectively be alleviated by adequate provision of guidance and counselling services. There is need for students to be listened to, be understood well and then guided out of their straining circumstances. Moreover, unrest in schools in the country is a pointer to the fact that there is something grossly wrong with the administration of most schools. It is possible that professionals who are inadequate in dealing with the problems associated with growing youth have slipped through the selection process in the Ministry of Education.

Discipline promotes individual growth and development, it creates a free conducive atmosphere for interaction, makes learners have confidence in decision making and generally it has a great bearing to the learners' performance in their national examinations as noted by Norwhich, (2000). This observation therefore shows that discipline, which can be brought about by effective provision of guidance and counselling services, is the backbone of all activities carried out in schools. Schools are expected to produce adults who can be responsible citizens capable of making major decisions on problems affecting their lives and who can contribute largely to their communities' development.

Objectives of the study

The following objectives were identified for the study:

1. Assess the attitudes of principals' towards provision of guidance and counselling and maintenance of discipline in their schools.
2. Establish whether principals' personal qualities such as gender, age, teaching and administrative experiences have any effect on their attitudes towards provision of guidance and counselling services and on maintenance of discipline in school.

3. Determine whether there were differences in principals' attitudes towards guidance and counselling in different categories of schools.
4. Assess the attitudes of students towards seeking guidance and counselling services in schools.
5. Establish whether there were gender differences in students' attitudes towards seeking guidance and counselling services in relation to the category of the school.
6. Determine whether there was any significant difference in students' attitudes towards seeking guidance and counselling services and the gender of the teacher-counsellor.

The concept of attitude

The main theme of the study being the determination of principals' and students' attitudes towards guidance and counselling and how it can be used to maintain discipline, it is thus vital to clarify the meaning of the concept attitude. No single definition of attitude can be found that will satisfy all those who study the topic. This fact is largely a consequence of the broadness of the concept, which permits various definitions reflecting the theoretical point of view of the individual student of attitude. Nevertheless, a certain commonality is apparent when we examine some of the more

widely held definitions. Backman (2001) express the view that attitude "refers to certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act towards some aspect of the environment" Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965) emphasize the evaluative aspect of attitude and, like Secord and Backman, note the regularity of this evaluative disposition.

According to Koulas, (2002) attitude is a personal disposition that impels an individual to react to an object, situation or proposition in favourable or unfavourable ways. Bast, *et al.* (2004) concur with Koulas, in their statement that, how people feel or what they believe, is their attitude. They state that; an attitude is an organized and consistent manner of thinking, feeling and reacting to people, groups and social issues or more generally to any event in the environment.

Attitudes consist of three components, which are: the cognitive component, affective component and behavioural component. The cognitive component is very much related to thoughts and beliefs while the affective component relates to emotions or feelings. Behavioural component on the other hand relates to action. These three components of attitudes are formed when the three components are so interacted that specific feelings and reaction tendencies become consistently associated with the attitude object.

Triandas, (2006) states that attitudes are learnt. Citing Allportas, (2003) he highlights different ways through which human beings acquire attitudes. Man, in most cases acquire attitude through talking with family members and friends. Therefore, according to him most people acquire most of their attitudes in the environments (homes) in which they were brought up. The development of individual thinking, feeling and actions is guided by the attitudes of the members of a group she or he belongs. Attitudes are acquired in this manner from most of people's attitudes but they are not particularly intense. Attitudes are also learnt through direct exposure to the attitude object and they thus appear to be intense in nature.

From the foregoing, it can be argued that a principal's behaviour or actions towards guidance and counselling services can determine his/her attitude towards it. In case principals have a positive attitude towards it, this will be evidently clear through their tendency to encourage it or support it in their schools. On the other hand, if principals have negative attitudes, this will be evidenced by failure to initiate, encourage and support it. It is worthwhile also to note that, attitudes are acquired through a traumatic experience with the attitude object. However, attitudes acquired through such a manner are rare but when they occur, they are extremely intense. Therefore, peoples' experiences determine their attitudes.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods in an Ex-Post Facto design. Kerlinger, (1986) defines an Ex-Post Facto design as being a system of empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control over independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because inherently they cannot be manipulated. Inferences about relations among variables are made, without direct intervention from concomitant variation of independent and dependent

variables. Kerlinger then further says that, this design is recommended for educational and social research under which this research belongs. This study used principals and students from both public and private secondary schools as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Sampled Population

N= 80 Secondary schools

Category of school	Number of mixed schools	Number of boys schools	Number of girls schools	Total number of schools
Public	46	10	4	60
Private	6	4	10	20
Total	52	14	14	80

Source: Nyamira District (2008) Report

According to the table shown above, there were sixty (60) public schools and twenty (20) private schools used in the study. In the category of schools, boys' schools outnumbered girls' schools by a very small margin. According to the district's students' enrolment record for the year 2008, there were approximately 32,000 students. Out of this number, the researcher used 404 students in the main study, that is, 202 boys and 202 girls.

The study used questionnaires, interview schedule and observation schedule as research instruments. Principals' questionnaire was divided into three major sections. Section 1 sought background

information on the principal and school while section 2 had items on principal's attitude towards guidance and counselling. In this section, Likert summated rating method was applied to establish principals' responses towards various attitudinal statements. Each statement in the attitude scale was followed by five responses which were: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Uncertain (U), Disagree (D) and strongly Disagree (SD). Respondents were expected to express their attitude towards each of the items in the various sub-titles by ticking only one response. Section three (3)

had one major sub-title which was "importance of guidance and counselling services in facilitating school, discipline.

The study also used interview schedules for principals purposely to establish a rapport with the subjects in order to gauge their consistence and reliability of the responses they gave in their questionnaires. The interviews also gave opportunities to the researcher for soliciting slightly more details than questionnaires would do.

Students' questionnaire, focused on "Biographical Data" and "Attitudes towards guidance and counselling." Under biographical data, there were three (3) items seeking information on the student's gender, class and age. There were sixteen (16) statements based on problems experienced by students in schools, and two items seeking information on student's awareness of guidance and counselling services. Section two dwelt on "Attitudes towards guidance and counselling." Here, the student was required to indicate his/her opinion towards the items given by putting a tick (✓) next to the response which accurately represented his or her level of agreement or disagreement. There were eleven (11) statements based on student's attitude towards guidance and counselling services and eleven (11) statements based on, "Importance of guidance and counselling services. Also four open-ended questions seeking in-depth information on time allocated for provision of guidance and counselling services, facilities provided, weaknesses witnessed in those given the responsibility to guide and counsel students and student's opinion on guidance and counselling were asked. The attitude scale used was an adaptation of the Fischer and Turners' test of attitudes towards seeking psychological help (ATSPH, 1970).

The study also used observation schedule to gather information on the facilities provided for guidance and counselling sessions, how guidance and counselling sessions were conducted, the skills used by teacher-counsellors', students' attitudes, how long guidance and counselling sessions took and how they were ended. Therefore,

observation schedules were not used as an alternative to the questionnaire but were a means to establishing the reliability of the responses given by principals and students in the questionnaires they filled.

Content validity was done by using the results of the pilot study. The researcher therefore had the instruments appraised and amended by two experts in the area of study. Piloting enhanced the dependability, accuracy and adequacy of the instruments since the responses from the respondents indicated whether the instruments measured what they purported to measure. The researcher then used Spearman Brown Prophecy to determine the reliability of the instrument s whose formula is as shown below:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Reliability} &= 2 \frac{\text{Reliability of } \frac{1}{2} r}{1 + \text{Reliability of } \frac{1}{2} r} \\
 &= 2 \frac{0.9}{1 + 0.9} \\
 &= 0.47368421 \times 2 \\
 &= 0.94736842
 \end{aligned}$$

The reliability for the principal's questionnaire was then found to be 0.95 and 0.93 for the students' questionnaire. The researcher used the split- half method to determine the Coefficient of Internal Consistency or reliability coefficient whose values varied between 0.00 and +1.00. The closer the value was to +1.00, the stronger was the congruency measure (Adamms, 2006). Therefore, charging from the above calculation, the two instruments were found to have a value of 0.9 and above which is closer to +1.00 implying that the instruments were reliable. After data was collected from the field, it was analyzed and interpreted using frequencies, percentages and means. Each item of the attitude scale

was followed by five responses which ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For positively worded statements, responses

were scored as follows; SA = 5, A = 4, UD = 3, D=2, SD = 1. A score of three (3) indicated neutral responses.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the principals' and students' attitudes towards the provision of guidance and counselling services and maintenance of discipline in secondary schools of Nyamira District-Kenya. A number of research objectives were set to guide the collection of the needed information. The objectives were six in number and in order to investigate them, four null hypotheses were formulated and these were:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in principals' attitudes towards provision of guidance and counselling services and maintenance of discipline in relation to:

- (a) Gender of the principals, (c) Principals' teaching experiences
- (b) Principals' age, (d) Principals' administrative experiences.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in principals' attitudes towards guidance and counselling and the different categories of schools.

Ho3: There are no significant gender differences in students' attitudes towards seeking guidance and counselling services and the different categories of schools.

Ho4: There is no significant difference between students' attitudes towards seeking guidance and counselling services and the gender of the teacher-counsellor. To determine whether there was a significant difference between principals' attitudes towards provision of guidance and counselling and their personal characteristics of gender, age, administrative and teaching experiences, a two tailed t-test and one-way, analysis of variance was used.

ANOVA was used to test the four null hypotheses using the T-test formula given below:

$$T = \frac{X_1 - X_2}{\sqrt{\frac{(n_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)S_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}}}$$

X1 = Mean of sample 1

X2 = Mean of sample 2

N1 = Sample 1

N2 = Sample 2

N1 + n2 – 2 + degree of freedom.

Analysis of variance is a statistical procedure used to examine whether the observed differences for variance between more than two samples can be attributed to chance or whether they indicate actual differences among the means of the populations sampled, that is, is the difference statistically significant? (Freud 2006:357). Analysis is also known as F-test (Schuttle, 1999:146).

The hypotheses test was made at 0.005 level of significance and if the computed F-ratio was smaller than the critical value, the null hypothesis was accepted and rejected only if F-ratio was greater than the critical value. Alternatively, when P-value was less than the specified alpha of 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and accepted if P-Value was 0.05 or larger, (Sanders, 2007 P.397). Both approaches were used in rejecting or accepting the hypotheses. In testing null hypotheses Ho1:, Ho1:b, Ho1:c, Ho1:d, Ho2, Ho3, and Ho4 a T-test of significance of the difference between two sample means according to Best and Kahn, (1989:271), was used. A computer programme, SPSS/PC + (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used in analyzing the data. For open-ended questions, the researcher looked at the responses given to each question in the three questionnaires and in the interview schedule and grouped them according to the number of times a given response was given by all the respondents. The researcher then analyzed them using frequencies and percentages.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The researcher analysed principals' attitudes towards various aspects of guidance and counselling. These aspects were: need for guidance and counselling services to students in schools, importance of guidance and counselling services to schools, role of principals and teacher-counsellors in guidance and counselling services, and training of principals in guidance and counselling skills. This was found necessary, since it is possible for principals to be positive in their attitudes towards certain aspects of guidance and counselling and depict negative attitudes or uncertainty in other areas. Responses from some of the open-ended questions were used to supplement information given in this section. The researcher presented the finding of the study in accordance with the research objectives and conclusions reached were based on the findings made.

The study established that majority of the principals who participated in the study and who formed 90% of the whole population had favourable disposition towards provision of guidance and counselling services and this is so because; they strongly recognized the need for guidance and counselling services in schools as shown in table 2 below;

Table 2. Need for guidance and counselling according to principals

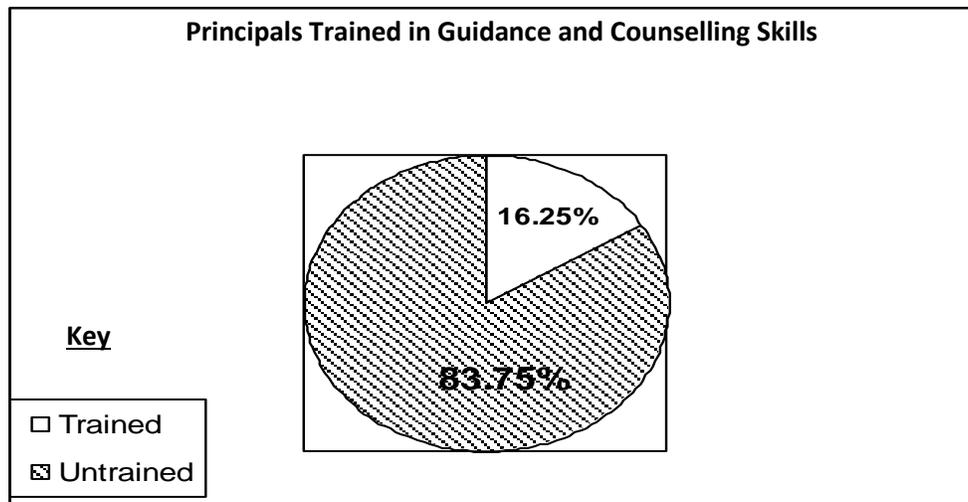
N = 80 Principals							
Statement	Responses					Total and percent	
	SA	A	U	D	SD		
1. Guidance and counselling services are	F	35	37	-	8	-	80
essential in schools	%	43.8	46.2	-	10.0	-	100.0
2. Students in my school do not need	F	-	8	-	37	35	80
guidance and counselling services	%	-	10.0	-	46.3	43.7	100.0
3. Guidance and counselling need to be	F	40	32	-	6	2	80
Intensified in schools.	%	50.0	40.0	-	7.5	2.5	100.0

Their positive disposition was noted through their appreciation of the importance of guidance and counselling to the individual student and the school, with 90% of them indicating unfavourable attitude to the negative statement. The study also established that there was no significant difference between male and female principals' attitudes towards provision of guidance and counselling services and maintenance of discipline in schools. Moreover, principals' teaching and administrative experiences did not show any significant differences in principals' attitude.

Training of principals in guidance and counselling

In establishing whether principals were trained to guide and counsel students, the study came up with findings shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Principals trained in guidance and counselling skills.



The study, in reference to Figure 1 above, established that sixty seven (67) principals who constituted 84% of the total number involved in the study were not trained in guidance and counselling as opposed to only thirteen (13) principals (16.3%) who indicated that they had been trained. This is a very small number considering that fifty six (56) principals representing 70% of the entire population acted as counsellors in their schools. Moreover, this conflicts with one of the principles of guidance and counselling which demands that this programme be implemented by professionally trained personnel according to Barki and Murk Poday (1989). These findings concur with the view expressed by Wahome,

(2005) that principals and teacher-counsellors have no training for the job except probably for the courses they took during their undergraduate or diploma training.

In response to their training, 65 principals who formed 81.3% of the principals who participated in the study indicated their desire for training as shown in table 3 given below;

Table 3. Training of principals in guidance and counselling

N = 80 Principals

Statement	Responses					Total Frequency and percentage
	SA	A	U	D	SD	
1. I need to be trained so as to acquire appropriate skills.	F 34 % 42.5	31 38.8	-	10 12.5	5 6.2	80 100.0
2. Success in providing guidance and counselling does not necessarily depend on a trained counsellor.	F 6 % 7.5	2 2.5	-	37 46.2	35 43.8	80 100.0
3. Trained principals have positive attitudes towards it.	F 52 % 65.0	20 25.0	-	8 10.0	-	80 100.0
4. Guidance and counselling services are not successful in my school because I am not trained	F 36 % 45.0	30 37.5	-	12 15.0	2 2.5	80 100.0

Lack of training therefore, contributed to their feelings of inadequacy and incompetence in guiding and counselling students. Besides this, the study revealed that majority of the principals were not clearly informed about what guidance and counselling was all about. They were not conversant with the objectives of guidance and counselling programme in schools. Counselling is a profession and as a profession, it requires competence, knowledge and skills, which cannot be acquired unless one

undergoes a relevant training. Wachira (1997), and Adhula, (2003) indicated that principals used guidance and counselling to deal with students' deviant behaviours. However, despite the use of this by principals, they (principals) expressed the need and desire to be trained in guidance and counselling skills. There is therefore, evidence that counselling produce positive results even with difficult students. Concurring with Wachira and Adhulas' views, Tattum, (2002) in his study, indicated that counselling had become something of a remedy for disruptive and violent behaviour in British schools. He went a head and said that counselling recognizes the situation in which individuals are likely to be disruptive or the first signs of a disruptive behaviour and acts quickly in a preventive way if possible, to stop influencing others in the group. Guidance and counselling therefore, as majority of respondents noted should be used in schools to replace corporal punishment and other undesired forms of punishment.

Information obtained from students

This study established that provision of guidance and counselling services was important in the running of schools. It was considered as the most contemporary way of helping students come to terms with their personality, social, psychological, educational and vocational needs. In particular, 91.1% of the students who participated in the study indicated that guidance and counselling offered them useful information and that it played an important role in reducing individual and mass indiscipline in schools, thus facilitating the smooth running of schools. The results further showed that the category of school a student was in was not a significant determinant of the attitude students had towards seeking guidance and counselling services. Despite a ban by the government of Kenya for use of a cane as a way of reforming students, it was evident that corporal punishment was still being used in schools as a way of maintaining discipline in schools. Half of the students used for this study who formed 50% of the sampled students indicated it as one of the problems they were facing in schools. This recorded a mean of .50 and a standard deviation of .501 with a standard error deviation of 0.25. This is to say, there is a love for use of the cane amongst teachers as a way of reforming students. Even some principals in their questionnaire indicated that they wanted the ban on the use of the cane in schools lifted. It is high time the Ministry

of Education officials, especially the guidance and counselling unit, came up with alternative ways of punishing students and explain teachers the side effects of using a cane as a way of reforming students. Perhaps, guidance and counselling can come in handy as a suitable remedy to this.

Mbiti, (1974) says that, when a child is punished, there are certain disorders that result from the act. Punishment has not been proven to improve learning or change behaviour. He argues that counselling makes students feel closer to the teacher thereby establishing a cordial relationship. Guidance and counselling enables the teacher to get to the root of the problem and therefore it has a long lasting effect and the student has the freedom to talk and realize the consequences of his or her disobedience. It is significant to note that, when punishment is used quite often, it tends to bring about the behaviour of either escape or avoidance. Tattum, (2002:39) observes that counselling recognizes the situation in which individuals are likely to be disruptive or the first signs of a disruptive behaviour and acts quickly in a preventive way if possible, to stop influencing others in the group. The most common problems that bedevil students were both academic and personal in nature as shown in table 4 given below;

Table 4: Problems experienced by students in schools

N = 404 Students

	Problems in their schools	Response	F	Percent	Cumulative percent	Mean	STD Deviation	STD Error mean
1.	Failure to complete assignments given to me in good time.	-	163	40.3	40.3			
		Yes	241	59.7		.60	.491	.024
		Total	404	100.0	100.0			
2.	Time management problems: Studying too many subjects.	-	204	50.5				
		Yes	200	49.5	50.5	.50	.501	.025
		Total	404	100.0	100.0			
3.	Unexplainable fear of failing exams.	-	188	46.5				
		Yes	216	53.5	46.5	.53	.499	.25
		Total	404	100.0	100.0			
4.	Domestic problems such as poor relationship with my parents, guardians, brothers and sisters.	-	312	77.2				
		Yes	92	22.8	77.2	.23	.420	.021
		Total	404	100.0	100.0			
5.	Poor relationship with those in authority: Principal and prefects.	-						
		Yes	271	67.1	67.1	.33	.471	.023
		Total	133	32.9	32.9			
			404	100.0	100.0			
6.	Taking of drugs such as bhang and too much smoking of cigarettes, which I am not able to stop.	-	376	93.1	93.1			
		Yes	28	6.9	6.9			
		Total	404	100.0	100.0	.07	.254	.013
7.	Taking of alcohol habit, which I am unable to stop.	-	370	91.6	91.67			
		Yes	34	8.4	8.4	.08	.278	.014
		Total	404	100.0	100.0			
8.	Managing my sex desires and involvement in sex acts	-	296	73.3	73.3			
		Yes	108	26.7	26.7	.27	.443	.022
		Total	404	100.0	100.0			

The study also revealed that the gender of the guidance and counselling teacher was not a significant determinant of the attitude boys and girls have towards guidance and counselling. Besides that, the

study also showed that secondary school students in Nyamira District had positive attitude towards seeking guidance and counselling services and that there was no significant difference in attitude towards guidance and counselling between boys and girls. In this case, attitudes towards seeking help were thus not influenced by the gender of the students. This positive attitude expressed by students concur with observation made by Brammer (1973), and Petterson (1974), who observed that the person with a problem must be willing to seek assistance from a counsellor and if he or she is unable to do this then it is very difficult to work cordially with him/her. From students' responses therefore, their willingness was evident. They also noted that, how a client perceives counselling might serve as a barrier of the process. This attitude is derived from a person's prior experiences in or out of counselling and the nature of his or her concerns may even keep him or her off from seeking help.

Success of guidance and counselling services in schools

Majority of the respondents, that is; principals and students (78.4%) were of the opinion that guidance and counselling services were not successfully implemented in their schools. Only one principal said that provision of these services was successful in his school. Forty-seven percent (47.1%) of the respondents indicated that the services were fairly successful and 15.7% indicated that they were not successful at all. The study further clearly indicated that vocational guidance took the third priority as opposed to personal counselling and educational guidance. Principals cited delayed or lack of vocational materials and lack of information on occupational requirements.

Time allocation for guidance and counselling

Responses from principals and students indicated that time allocation for guidance and counselling services was an issue to be resolved. The study further established that time for guidance and counselling purposes in various schools depended on a number of factors such as: availability of teacher-counsellors, availability of students and the urgency of the matter. Therefore, the study's findings also indicated that students were not well informed about the importance of guidance and counselling services in schools.

Problems facing guidance and counselling

The study finally established that provision of guidance and counselling services faced many problems in schools. Top on the list was student-related problems such as having a wrong notion of what guidance and counselling was all about and unwillingness to open up. This was followed by parent related problems, which was cited by majority of the principals and students who participated in the study. Lack of trained personnel was the third constraint cited in 89.4% of the schools.

CONCLUSIONS

Having analyzed and interpreted the findings obtained from the data collected, it was concluded that principals' attitude towards provision of guidance and counselling services was not influenced by their personal qualities such as age, gender, teaching and administrative experiences. Besides that, it was also concluded that training of principals in guidance and counselling skills was not only essential but also urgent since majority of them (96.3%) were not trained. It was established that training had a significant effect on the principals' and students' attitudes towards guidance and counselling.

The study's findings also led to the conclusion that guidance and counselling services were not given the seriousness they deserved. In virtually all the schools, resource materials and facilities were inadequate if not lacking. For example, students' records were availed in only 9.5% of the schools, and only 26% of the schools had a few reference materials while stationery was only availed in 16% of the schools. Moreover, time for guidance and counselling was not specific, since it depended on the availability of the principals and teacher-counsellors and in 56% of the cases, students were not all aware of what guidance and counselling was all about.

The findings of the study necessitated the conclusion that principals and students who participated in the study regarded guidance and counselling as a contemporary way of dealing with indiscipline in schools hence it would therefore be a suitable alternative to the use of the cane. Students appreciated its importance in making them aware of whom they were and being able to cope with their personality deficits.

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