

What Hinders Guidance and Counselling Effectiveness in Enhancing Discipline in High Schools in Murang'a County, Kenya

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Abstract: *The main purpose of this study was to assess the factors hindering the efficiency of guidance and counselling services in addressing school discipline in high schools in Kenya with specific focus on secondary schools in Murang'a County. The study mainly focused on the teachers in charge of guidance and counselling in secondary schools. A descriptive survey research method and purposive sampling were used. Data was collected using questionnaires to probe the issues under the study. The research data was thematically analysed. The study revealed that guidance and counselling departments are ineffective in enhancing school discipline, guidance and counselling teachers are inadequately trained, motivated and faced with many challenges such as lack of facilities and financial support by school administration, conflict with school discipline policy and lack of clear government policies to guide guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. The respondents felt a great need to undergo in-service training on counselling and school discipline to make them effective.*

Keywords: School discipline, Guidance, Counselling, school counsellor, Motivation

1. Introduction

The issue of school discipline continues to be pertinent to the Ministry of education and other stakeholders especially after criminalising the use of corporal punishment as a method of instilling discipline among the students. Guidance and counselling is now the legally accepted approach of enhancing students discipline in secondary schools in Kenya Basic education act (2013). However, investigation done into the role of guidance and counselling in selected schools show that effective guidance and counselling can be used both as curative measure in addressing school discipline and avert and correct indiscipline among students Oyiego, D. M (2012)

Research has shown that without proper discipline, an organization cannot function well towards achieving its goals Ouma, M., Sinatwa, A., Enose, M. W and Serem, T. D.K (2013). Schools in Kenya cannot realise the set educational goals unless school discipline is given prominent attention. The increasing indiscipline cases in schools are a major contributing factor to poor performance in examinations in Kenya. Disciplined students work hard to achieve their set goals and objectives Gitome, J., Katola, W., Nyebwari, M. T, and Gechika, B (2013). Maintaining students discipline is an issue that remains an uphill task in secondary schools in Kenya.

Discipline in school context can be defined as a state of order in the classroom or the school that permit learning to proceed smoothly and productively Geldenhuys, J and Doubell, H. (2011). Indisciplined students pose great challenge for teachers in fundamental bid to educate children effectively Ameteppee, L., Chutiyo, K and Morgan, A. S. (2007). In an effort to find a sustainable solution to school discipline challenge in secondary schools, the voice of the

teachers should be an important component of any initiative or research Finley, L. L. (2004).

One main goal of counselling is behaviour change through modification or replacement of maladaptive patterns of behaviours Tylar, L. G. (1961). The role of guidance and counselling in school discipline is significant despite its inefficiency in schools in Kenya. The role of the school counsellors in school discipline is critical but surrounded paradoxical arguments. Some argue that when teacher counsellors function as disciplinarians their ability to establish encouraging counselling relationship with students could be compromised Devoss, J and Stillman, S. (2011). Others argue that if behaviour is caused, then those acts which are unacceptable are as much a concern of the school counsellors as are positive behavioural performances Petters, H. J. (1967).

Peculiar phobia appears in some guidance leaders, when they consider the relation of guidance and discipline. They fear that any contact with discipline will interfere with the success of guidance and counselling. The fear is quite unwarranted and arises largely from misunderstanding Petters (1967). So to excuse a school counsellor from "working with discipline cases" means to lose the very behaviour specialist who should know something about guidance and ways to assist in guidance and counselling of the students with behavioural problems manifested in indiscipline. Professional school counsellors who develop skills in students' behaviours management and discipline can assist teachers and other school personnel with challenging students' behaviours and also facilitate a systematic change in the school. School counsellors can advocate for discipline practices that are proactive, respective and meet the need of all students Devoss *et al* (2011)

Lack of training in guidance and counselling has been noted as a major factor causing ineffectiveness of guidance and counselling services in Kenyan secondary schools and the services don't march the international benchmarks Nyangi, P. (2014). The training of school counsellors in practical strategies as part of effective systematic approach to enhancing school discipline should be a priority of the stakeholders in education in Kenya. To improve the reliability of guidance and counselling in schools more effective training programs for the teachers are needed. The best counsellors continue to learn throughout their careers- from their own experiences, from experiences of their colleagues, from reading, from seminars and from interactions with their clients Egan, G (1990). Professional counselling is more than giving advice and therefore competent counsellors must keep in touch with current developments in their profession and have repertoire of professional education and application Less, D. (1997)

The level of motivation and commitments of the school counsellors toward offering quality and effective guidance and counselling services in secondary schools largely depend on their level of motivation. Quality training is important in motivating school counsellors by increasing their self efficacy offering quality guidance and counselling services and handle discipline issues in schools.

According to goal setting theory of motivation having specific goal or purpose in mind that one is trying to accomplish can be most important factor in explaining motivation and material incentive like money may improve performance by increasing commitment to a particular goal. Statt, D. A. (2004). Therefore it's in order if the Ministry of education, Teachers Service Commission and school administration to motivate school counsellors as a strategy of promoting the efficiency of the guidance and counselling services in secondary schools.

2. Statement of the Problem

Many secondary schools in Murang'a County experienced students' unrest in 2013. This attracted the attention of stakeholders in education sector. A survey was conducted on the causes of strikes and general indiscipline in the county that revealed lack of effective guidance and counselling programs as a major contributing factor to the increasing indiscipline in secondary schools Tiego, P. M. and Kamore, S.K.(2014). The key question was why guidance and counselling in secondary schools persistently fails in addressing discipline challenges despite its recognition in education policies as a discipline intervention strategy. It's on this background that this study was carried out to probe what is ailing the guidance and counselling services in high schools in Murang'a County. **Counselling Research Institute of Kenya** facilitated the study in collaboration with Murang'a County education office. The study was aimed at coming up with workable recommendations that can make guidance and counselling effective in addressing indiscipline in Kenyan schools.

3. Objectives of the study

- 1.To find out the perceptions of guidance and counselling teachers on their role in school discipline

- 2.To explore the competency of teacher counsellors to handle school discipline in high schools in Murang'a County
- 3.To investigate how teacher counsellors are motivated to improve their efficiency and commitment in enhancing school discipline.
- 4.To find out challenges faced by guidance and counselling teachers in handling students with discipline problems

4. Research Questions

- 1.What are the perceptions of guidance and counselling teachers towards their role in school discipline?
- 2.What is the competency of the G&C teachers in handling school discipline in high schools in Murang'a?
- 3.How are teacher counsellors motivated to improve on their efficiency and commitment to enhancing school discipline?
- 4.What are the challenges facing teacher counsellors in handling discipline in high schools in Murang'a?

5. Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by a simple structure model to help in developing deep insight and focused on the key issues of peer counselling program in high schools being probed. The conceptual framework shows the interrelationships between variables in the carried out research Orodho, J. A (2009)

6. Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey design. This is an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). The research targeted 60 teachers in charge of counselling departments from 60 secondary schools from Murang'a East, Murang'a South, Kigumo, Gatanga, Kahuro, Kangima and Mathioya districts of Muranga County. Purposive sampling was used to ensure the target population provided reliable information Kombo and Tromp (2006).

Table 1: Summary of teacher counsellors' gender

Gender	No of teachers	%
Male	28	47%
Female	32	53%
Totals	60	100%

Table 2: Summary of the ages of the teacher counsellors

Levels of training	No of teachers	%
Bachelors	45	75%
Masters	12	20%
A level	2	3%
Phd	1	2%
Total	60	100%

Table 3

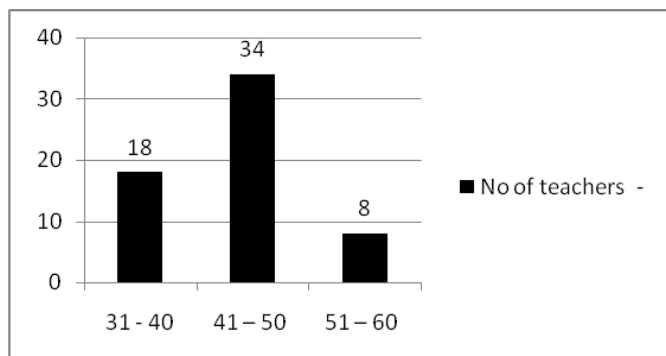


Table 4: Types of the schools represented

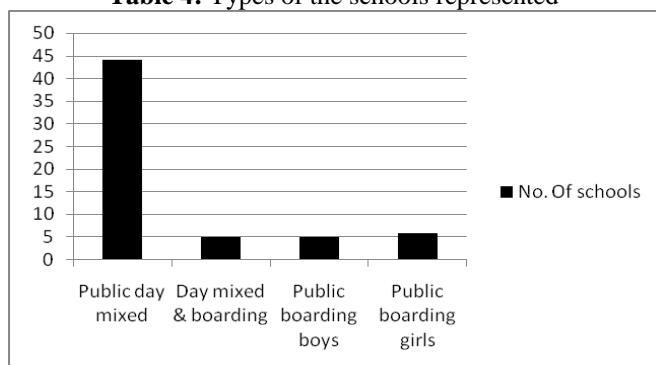


Table 5: Location of the School

School location	No of schools	%
Urban	-	-
Sub - Urban	8	13%
Rural	52	87%
Total	60	100%

The main tool of data collection used in the study was questionnaire. The questionnaire included both open ended and closed questions focusing on motivation, training and perception of the teacher counsellors and the challenges that hinder their efficiency, training, supervision, evaluation and challenges faced by peer counsellors in high school. The participants were informed that filling the questionnaires was voluntary. Proper informed consent requires that the consent be voluntary Macleod (2003). Descriptive statistics in percentages and frequencies and bar graphs were used to analyse the data obtained. Thematic analysis was derived from the open ended questions while percentages and frequencies cross tabulation was used to report analysed data

7. Results of the Study

School counsellors' perception on their role in school discipline

The first research question of the study was to find out teacher counsellors perception about their role in enhancing school discipline. The respondents were asked to describe the relationship between school discipline and guidance and counselling. 23% described the relationship as conflicting, 77% described the relationship as complimentary. The study probed further to establish whether teacher counsellors have

put programs in place to enhance school discipline. The table below show the responses of the respondents

Table 6: Guidance and counselling programs put in place to enhance school discipline

Programme	Frequency	%
Guiding parents	48	80%
Peer counselling	43	72%
Students guidance programs	49	82%
Administrators programs	10	17%
Character development program	20	33%
Teachers program	19	32%
Non-teaching staff	4	7%
Community program	2	3%

Students, parents and peer counselling programs are given the prevalence neglecting administrators, teachers and non teaching staff who play a vital role in enhancing school discipline. The study investigated on the people targeted when preparing the school discipline guidance and counselling programs. 97% targets students, 28% target parents, 17% targets teachers and 3% target non teaching staff. The finding supports the findings of table 6. Teacher counsellors were asked what their specific roles are in enhancing school discipline. The following roles were identified

1. Evaluating the school discipline needs
2. Developing school intervention programs
3. Counselling students with discipline issues
4. Advising school administration on appropriate discipline approaches

It can be concluded that teacher counsellors are aware of their responsibility in enhancing school discipline.

Teacher counsellors' competency in handling school discipline

The second research question of this study was to explore the competency of teacher counsellors to handle school discipline issues in secondary schools. The teachers were asked to rate the efficiency guidance and counselling services in handling school discipline. 28% rated it successful, 34% rated it wanting and 38% rated it fair.

The study probed from the teachers the most important requirement to be considered when appointing teachers counsellors in secondary schools. 68% indicated training, 80% indicated interest, 28% indicated gender, 35% indicated age, 25% indicated religion and 80% indicated character and personality.

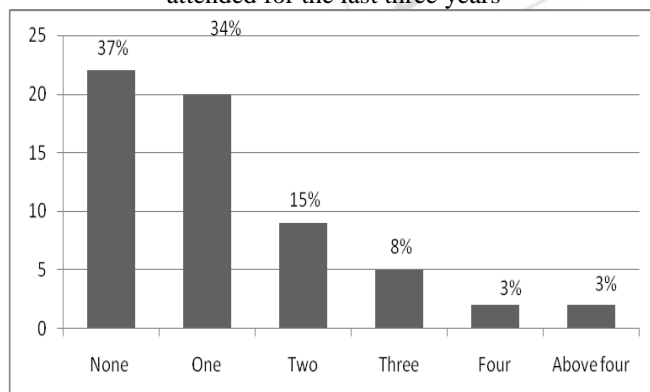
Teacher counsellors were further asked how they obtain their competency in guidance and counselling. 67% indicated from training, 75% indicated from experience, 63% indicated from refresher courses, 58% indicated from seminars and workshops and 2% from reading guidance and counselling related materials. Teachers were asked how well training received prepared them on some selected roles in enhancing school discipline.

Table 7: Teacher counsellors' preparedness in some selected roles

Roles in G/C	Not at all prepared	Minimally prepared	Adequately prepared	Well prepared	Very well prepared
Counselling students with drug abuse problems	6 10%	22 36.6%	19 31.6%	4 6.7%	4 6.7%
Counselling students on effects	3 5%	16 26.7%	21 35%	11 18%	1 1.7%
Counselling students with discipline problems	4 6.7%	6 10%	11 18%	17 28%	5 8.3%
Assessing students or conduct disorder	1 1.75%	20 33.3%	6 10%	14 23.3%	5 8.3%
Planning and implementing	11.7%	12 20%	11 18%	8 13.3%	9 15%
Coordinating guidance/counselling programs	5 8.3%	15 25%	17 28%	10 16.7%	7 11.7%
Crisis management (strike)	11 18%	13 21.7%	12 20%	8 13.3%	4 6.75%
Identifying school discipline policies that hinders students success	5 18%	10 16.7%	15 25%	13 21.7%	3 5%
Assessing school guidance and counselling needs	4 6.7%	9 19%	17 28%	17 28%	5 18%

Those teachers counsellors trained in professional counselling were asked to indicate the level of training. 8% have masters degrees in counselling related areas, 5% have bachelor degrees in counselling related areas, 2% have diploma in counselling related area and 10% have certificate in counselling related courses. Teacher counsellors were asked to indicate the number of teachers in their schools trained in professional counselling courses. 41% indicated none is trained, 25% indicated one is trained, 25% indicated two are trained, 5% indicated three are trained, 2% indicated four are trained and 2% indicated five are trained. The teacher counsellors who are trained through seminars and workshops were asked to identify the numbers of seminars and workshops attended for the last three years. The pie chart below shows the summery of the teacher counsellors' responses.

Table 8: Summary of the training workshops and seminars attended for the last three years



The study probed the feelings of the teacher counsellors on the need for in – service training in counselling as a strategy to make them effective in addressing school discipline issues. 3% felt it's necessary and 97% felt it's very necessary. The teacher counsellors were asked to suggest some key areas of training that would be useful in enhancing school counsellors' efficiency in enhancing school discipline if well integrated in training. The following areas were identified:

1. The role of teachers and parents in enhancing school discipline
2. Kenyan legislations and school discipline
3. Emerging issues affecting school discipline
4. Counselling students with drug abuse challenge
5. Role of school administration in school discipline
6. Team spirit in enhancing school discipline
7. Developing proactive guidance and counselling programs enhance school discipline
8. Arresting Homosexuality and lesbianism in schools
9. Understanding deviance in schools
10. Understanding students personality in relation to discipline

It can be concluded from the findings of the study that the teachers in charge of guidance and counselling in most schools lack necessary training and competency in handling school discipline issues in their schools.

Teacher counsellors' motivation

The third research question of the study was to investigate how well teacher counsellors in secondary schools are motivated to improve their efficiency and commitments in enhancing school discipline. Teacher counsellors were asked to rate their motivation in their responsibilities in schools. 8% were highly motivated, 67% lowly motivated and 25% not motivated. The teacher counsellors were further asked identify ways through which they can be motivated to be more productive and committed to their responsibilities of enhancing school discipline through guidance and counselling services. Their responses were summarized as shown is table 9 below.

Table 9: Teacher counsellors' perception of ways of motivating them

Ways of Motivation	Frequency	%
Sponsor them for professional growth seminars, workshops and conferences	31	52%
Reduce their work load	41	68%
Give them special allowances	29	48%
Provide proper counselling rooms, equipments and materials	44	73%

Create a budget to support the guidance and counselling services	48	80%
Support by the teachers	33	55%
Support and train students peer counsellors	38	63%
Support by the parents	32	53%
Support by school administration	50	83%
Putting policies to guide guidance and counselling department	34	57%

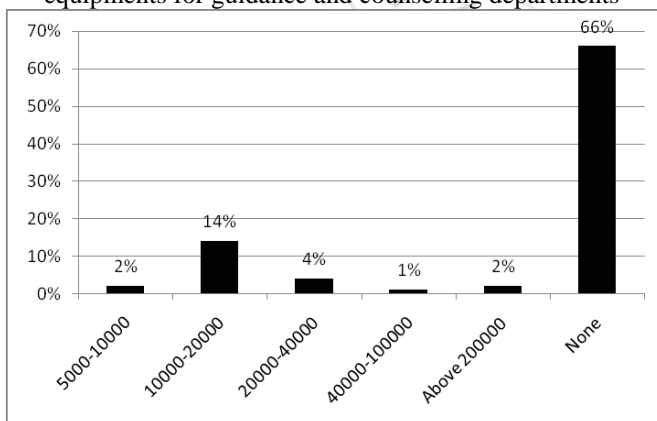
The study probed further on how the guidance and counselling departments are funded to ensure their effectiveness. Teacher counsellors were asked if there are budgetary allocation for Guidance and counselling department in their respective schools. 28% indicated yes and 72% indicated No. To be able to establish how much money is spent in supporting guidance and counselling programs in schools, teacher counsellors were asked to identify the approximate amount they think is used annually in supporting guidance and counselling programs in their respective schools, table 10 below shows their responses.

Table 10: Summary of the approximate amount of money used to fund g/c programs per year

Available facilities and equipments	Frequency	%
Counselling room	23	38%
Counselling office	12	20%
Computers	2	3%
Projectors	0	0%
Furniture	12	20%
Lockable filing cabinet	3	5%
Stationeries	12	20%
Reference materials	17	28%

The study investigated how well the guidance and counselling departments are provided with the necessary facilities and equipments that can motivate the teacher counsellors effective. The findings were as shown in table 11 below:

Table 11: Summary of the available facilities and equipments for guidance and counselling departments



It can be concluded from the findings that teacher counsellors in secondary schools are not motivated and therefore not committed in enhancing school discipline in their respective schools. Many schools don't take guidance and counselling seriously as indicated by lack of budgetary allocation and adequate facilities and equipments necessary to make the departments effective.

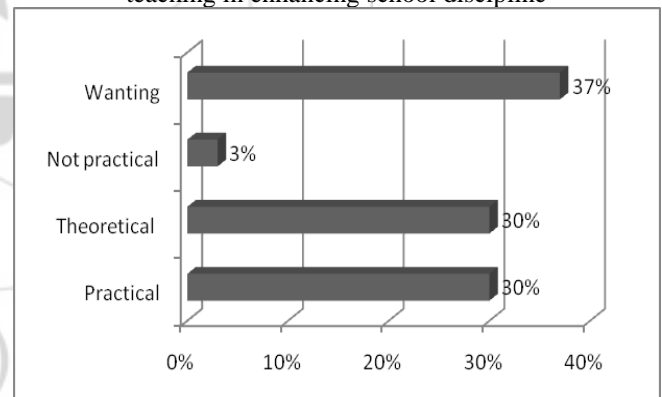
Perceived challenges hindering effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in handling school discipline issues

The last research question of the study was to establish challenges faced by guidance and counselling teachers in handling students with discipline problems in their schools. The following challenges were identified

1. Lack of administration support
2. Lack of training in discipline issues
3. Dual role conflicts
4. Lack counselling rooms and facilities
5. Lack of time
6. Lack of government policy in implemental and support of guidance and counselling services
7. Conflicts with school discipline policies
8. Lack of support by teachers
9. Lack of support by parents
10. Negative attitude about counselling with students
11. Violation of ethical issues necessary for effective counselling
12. Lack of follow up (supervision)
13. Impact of social media

The study probed the effectiveness of the life skills in enhancing schools discipline. Teacher counsellors were asked how they would describe the teaching of life skills in their respective schools. Their responses were summarized as shown in table 12 below

Table 12: Teacher counsellors' perception of the life skill teaching in enhancing school discipline



Those who described life skill teaching as practical based their responses on the followings reasons

1. Concepts taught are practical and helps students face challenges in life and school
2. Life skills is taught and supervised
3. Life skill teaching compliment guidance and counselling services to the students

Those who described life skill teaching as wanting based their responses on the following reasons

1. Many teachers are not willing to teach life skills
2. Teachers don't take life skills teaching seriously
3. Teachers were not inducted on the teaching of life skills
4. Life skills teaching not time tabled therefore not taught
5. Where life skills lessons are provided in the teaching time table teachers use the lesson for remedial and syllabus coverage

It can be concluded from the findings that guidance and counselling services are ineffective in handling school discipline due to many obstacles that need to be urgently addressed by all the stakeholders in the education sector.

8. Conclusion

The study established the ineffectiveness guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in handling school discipline challenges. The teachers in charge of guidance and counselling are aware of their responsibilities in enhancing school discipline but are inadequately motivated and trained. Most schools don't take guidance and counselling seriously as indicated by lack of budgetary allocation, facilities and equipments. Ineffectiveness of guidance and counselling services in handling school discipline was caused by lack of adequate training in counselling, lack of support by administration, inadequate funds and lack of vivid government policies on schools guidance and counselling. The findings of the study are a clear evidence of appropriateness of the objectives under investigation.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made

1. The government to develop a strategy of harmonizing, coordinating and supervising the guidance and counselling services to ensure its effectiveness in addressing school discipline issues
2. School administrators and boards of managements to take guidance and counselling services in their schools seriously by ensuring adequate budgetary allocation and provision of necessary facilities and equipments according to the basic education act 2013
3. The teacher counsellors need to be motivated to be more proactive and productive in developing and implementing school discipline program in their respective schools
4. There is urgent need for seminars and workshops that are based on the need assessments of the teachers in relations to their perceived challenges and professional inadequacy.
5. School principals need to be sensitized on the importance of guidance and counselling and their roles in enhancing school discipline.
6. Discipline committees in schools should work hand in hand with the guidance and counselling departments in addressing school discipline issues.
7. More research is needed focusing on the roles of school heads and boards of management in enhancing school discipline.

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