

Students' Perceptions of the Influence of Guidance and Counselling Services on their Academic Adjustment in Secondary in Kenya

Evelyn Kanus

PhD Student, Moi University, P.O. Box 3900-30100, Eldoret

Abstract: *Guidance and counselling services in secondary school play a major role in school adjustment of students and the subsequent achievement of their full potential. The purpose of this research was to investigate secondary school students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their academic adjustment. The research adopted a mixed approach research methodology and the ex post-facto causal comparative research design. The philosophical paradigm on which the research was based is pragmatism. The geographical locale of the research was Keiyo Sub-county. The research established that there were significant differences in students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on academic adjustment in secondary schools. It is recommended that since there exist significant differences in students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their academic adjustment, there is need to address the challenges and shortcomings that exist in the guidance and counselling provision in the schools so that all the students are adequately assisted to make the desired academic adjustment.*

Keywords: Guidance and Counselling, Perceptions and Academic Adjustment.

1. Introduction

The field of guidance and counselling has a rich history. It is a service that is thought to have been there from the beginning of human existence (Rao, 2002). In the traditional African society, guidance and counselling involved educating the youth about tradition and culture of the community (Mutie & Ndambuki, 2004). This was done from generation to generation by the elders who considered it their social responsibility. The guidance and counselling was done informally and the elders depended on their age, knowledge, exposure and expertise. However, formal guidance and counselling is thought to have originated in Europe and North America. In North America, guidance and counselling as a movement was started as a reaction to change process in an industrial society (Nasibi, 2003). The focus was mainly on the provision of occupational information. In Kenyan secondary schools, formal guidance and counselling started because of recommendations given in various government reports and policy documents. These documents include development plans, policy papers, education commission reports and Sessional papers. The most prominent ones include the Ominde Report of 1964 that recommended that children be given courses of education that suited their needs (Ominde, 1964). This recommendation led to the setting up of guidance and counselling unit at the inspectorate headquarters by the Ministry of Education in 1971. The other is the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (1976), commonly known as the Gachathi Report (Gachathi, 1976). This report stated that teachers should participate in guidance and counselling as part of their normal duties. Guidance and counselling should hence be integrated with other topics as Careers, Ethics, Human Relations, Family Life and Sex Education. The Kamunge Report, commonly known as The Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower further recommended that schools should establish guidance and counselling services for youth to enable them face the realities in life (Kamunge, 1988).

Guidance and counselling is useful in a variety of ways. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), guidance and counselling is a broad professional field with a wide range of activities, programmes and services geared towards assisting individuals to better understand themselves, their problems, their environment and their world and to develop adequate capacity for making wise choices and decisions in life (UNESCO, 2000). Nasibi (2003) notes that guidance and counselling services in Kenyan schools is part of a broad delivery system designed to enhance the success of all learners. These services are an integral component of the educational mission of a school. Guidance and counselling services promote the personal, social, educational, and career development of all students. Additionally, a lot of emphasis has been put on guidance and counselling in Kenyan schools especially after it was recommended as an alternative after the ban of corporal punishment (Government of Kenya (G.O.K), 2001). This ban called for strengthening of guidance and counselling services in schools.

Naturally, learners need to make a series of adjustments as they report to school. It is the desire of every individual learner to be able to achieve a healthy school adjustment. Apart from the physical adjustment that is achieved in most schools in the first week in the process of orientation to the schools physical environment, the student has to make academic adjustments. Adjustment is understood as the absence of negative manifestations (such as aggressiveness, lack of attention or disruptive behaviour) among individuals, as well as the presence of certain competencies, which include the co-operation, compliance to various tasks, and self regulated behaviour (Wentzel, 2003).

Research has well established the indispensable role that guidance and counselling services play in the life of students. Chireshe (2011), shares the same opinion in

making the claim that guidance and counselling services received by students result in a decrease in cases of poor discipline among students and reduced dropout rates. Academic performance has also not been satisfactory in most of the secondary schools in Kenya. For instance the highest mean score recorded in Keiyo sub - county in the last 5 years in KCSE is 6.8108 in the year 2011 and the lowest is 4.9953 that was recorded in the year 2013 (Keiyo Sub-county Education Office). This state of affairs has led to student protests in some schools. Data from the same office show that 16 candidates from one school were found to have engaged in examination irregularities in the year 2013. This state of affairs continues to prevail despite the fact that the Kenyan Government has put in place many policies with regard to management of education. Such policies include recommending that guidance and counselling services be established and strengthened in all schools, enforcing the ban on corporal punishment and recommending various discipline practices (Wangai Report, 2001). Unfortunately, research studies on students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on academic adjustment is scanty yet they are the major consumers of these services. It should be noted that despite the manifold benefits of guidance and counselling services, very few studies have investigated the secondary school students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their academic adjustments.

Purpose of the Research

To investigate secondary school students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their academic adjustment.

Research Hypothesis

Ho 1: There are no significant statistical differences in secondary school students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their academic adjustment.

2. Review of Literature

This section presents the review of literature on the guidance and counselling and students academic adjustments under the following sub-headings.

Concept of Guidance and Counselling

One of the functions of education is to provide opportunities for each student to reach his or her potential in the areas of academic, vocational, personal and emotional development (Lunenburg, 2010). Guidance and counselling is an integral part and is centred directly on this function. Though offered in the same office and by the same personnel in a school, guidance and counselling services are quite distinct. Guidance services are geared towards directing, piloting, leading or showing the right way to students (Makinde, 1983). A student who seeks this service can be said to receive a steering towards a certain desirable direction or course of action. On the other hand, the counselling services involve a consultation, discussion, exchange of ideas or advice (Makinde, 1983). The main difference between the two is that the guidance service is more or less public whereas issues dealt with by the counselling service tend to be confidential and private. This is aptly captured in the

definition of counselling provided by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP, 2006) as a process that takes place when the counsellor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty that the client may be experiencing.

Furthermore, Brown (2009) observes that the other key distinction between guidance and counselling lies in the role of information. He observes that information is required in guidance that encompasses informing, advising, advocating, and assessing. Whereas on the other hand, the role of information in counselling is more modest and the focus is in helping the clients meet their needs. The common tendency therefore is to use the term guidance to refer to the more information and to reserve counselling for more emotional issues. This is for the simple reason that while the aspects of guidance are mostly concerned with the provision and interpretation of information, counselling is concerned with feelings of the heart and lays more emphasis on the helping process.

The importance of the guidance and counselling services in any school cannot be overstated. This has been captured in its definition as a service as an organized service established as an integral part of the school environment designed to promote the development of students and assist them towards the realization of sound wholesome adjustment and maximum accomplishments commensurate with their potential (Nasibi, 2003). Mutie and Ndambuki (2004) emphasize on the importance of the guidance and counselling services. They see it generally as a service that will help the students to harmonize their abilities, interests, and values, thereby enabling them to develop their potential fully. Self-knowledge is very essential as it helps the individual to formulate life goals and make plans which are realistic.

Guidance and Counselling Services and Academic Adjustment

Establishing the students' perceptions on the influence of guidance and counselling services on their school adjustment was one of the objectives of this research. Education is said to be a powerful equalizer of people's endowments with which they expand their horizon of life choices, grasp economic opportunities, and attain higher living standards thereby enjoying a life of happiness and well-being. It also acts as a foundation upon which one can build the rest of their life. Therefore, it is important for students to acquire a wholesome education in their life. This is only possible with proper academic adjustment of the student while in school. For example, it may happen that considerable academic differences exist between the primary school environment and secondary school environment, such as greater emphasis being placed on evaluation of students (Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm & Splittgerber, 2000; Benner & Graham, 2009).

There are other reasons why students need assistance to in making the right adjustment in school academically. Repetto, Penna, Mudarra and Uribarri (2007) indicate that guidance and counselling services are important in schools so as to promote motivation and improve learning in students particularly those coming from other cultures, in

which they could have learned hopelessness and experienced erroneous beliefs that might persist throughout their entire lives. There is also the need to adapt to the different teacher expectations and teaching styles in secondary school (Pratt & George, 2005). Furthermore, keeping up with the demands of secondary school is a source of concern for students, what with the pressure to achieve academically arising from a variety of sources including parents, teachers, and peers (Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody, 2001). Support from guidance and counselling at this time is paramount.

Mutie and Ndambuki (2004) note that poor organization, laziness, being easily distracted and lack of self-confidence are among the factors that contribute to poor academic performance. They however emphasize that through academic counselling, students can be motivated to improve on their academic standards. Academic guidance and counselling is normally done through training learners on effective research methods and examination techniques. This is supported by Abid (2006) who carried out an experiment that proved that guidance and counselling services have a significant positive effect on students' attitudes and research habits which result in improvement of students' academic performance.

More research studies have linked guidance and counselling services to improved academic performance. One of them is a research of Missouri high schools in the USA that was undertaken by Lapan, Gysbers and Sun (1997). The research found that schools with more fully implemented model guidance services had students who were more likely to report that they had earned higher grades, and that their education was better at preparing them for the future since their schools made more career and college information available to them. Similarly, a research on the effects of counselling on classroom performance found that underachieving students who received counselling improved significantly on classroom behaviour and in Mathematics and Language Arts grades (Gerler, Kinney & Anderson, 1988). However, guidance and counselling services have also been noted to be ineffective in enhancing academic performance (Ileri & Muola, 2010).

Rao (2002) gives specific areas for academic counselling. The first one is preparation for research. It is noted that learners hear and absorb only when they are ready to hear and learn, they therefore need to be prepared to know what to expect and what is expected of them. Secondly is helping the learner to develop interest in the subject thus dedicating more time to the subject. This is important since some learners develop likes and dislikes with regard to subjects that may adversely affect performance. He notes that poor performance may in turn lead to other problems like loss of interest in studies, irregular attendance of class, truancy and other minor delinquencies. Thirdly is developing reading and note-taking skills. This is because some students may have reading difficulties and their rate of reading may be slow and comprehension is poor.

A learner therefore needs to find an environment that is conducive for reading and to focus on the topic or subject and write notes that will be used for revision for

examinations. In addition, a learner needs to be helped to develop memory skills by devising ways of preserving what has already been studied in the long-term memory. The final area is the putting in place appropriate steps to develop the necessary remedial programme and the making of a personal research time-table by the learner. A sound guidance and counselling programme could help the learners understand themselves, understand their own problems and overcome them and promote academic excellence.

The American School Counselling Association (ASCA) states that the role of the school counsellor is in supporting the student academically (ASCA, 2005). The ASCA National Model (2005) emphasizes the counsellor's role, as an expert on issues regarding child and adolescent development, to become leaders for change in the educational system. The model emphasizes that it is the responsibility of the school guidance and counselling service to "support the school's academic mission by promoting and enhancing the learning process for all students." (2005, p. 15). It should be noted that schools in Kenya have complied with the directive from the government to provide guidance and counselling services in all learning institutions. However, there is paucity of information concerning secondary school students' perceptions of the influence of this important service on their academic adjustment. This necessitated a research on this area.

3. Materials and Methods

The philosophical paradigm for this research was pragmatism. This research was conducted through the *ex-post facto* causal comparative research design. The population for this research comprised of secondary school students in Keiyo Sub-county. The researcher drew the respondents from all the types of schools found in the sub-county. These comprised of single-sex boarding schools, mixed sex boarding schools and mixed day schools. The researcher drew the respondents from all the types of schools found in the sub-county. These comprised of single-sex boarding schools, mixed sex boarding schools and mixed day schools. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents from the selected schools. Secondly, purposive sampling was used to identify respondents for the interview. Data was collected through the use of questionnaire and interview. Data was analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods.

4. Results

Students' Guidance and Counselling Services

It was imperative to describe the nature of guidance and counselling services in Keiyo Sub-county secondary schools before establishing the students' perceptions of the influence it has on school adjustment. To do this, ten statements on guidance and counselling were provided to students to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the given statements. These responses were later used to rate the services as poor, average or good. The findings of the analysis of the responses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Responses on Guidance and Counselling Services

| Guidance and Counselling services | Disagree | | Undecided | | Agree | |
|--|----------|------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| Students are regularly advised to seek guidance and counselling services. | 53 | 16.1 | 13 | 4.0 | 263 | 79.9 |
| The guidance and counselling office invites speakers to give talks regularly. | 67 | 20.4 | 24 | 7.3 | 238 | 72.3 |
| The teacher counsellor is always available when needed. | 95 | 28.9 | 30 | 9.1 | 204 | 62.0 |
| We have time to seek guidance and counselling services whenever the need arises. | 91 | 27.7 | 36 | 10.9 | 202 | 61.4 |
| Students regularly seek guidance and counselling services | 174 | 52.9 | 52 | 15.8 | 103 | 31.3 |
| Students trust the teacher counsellor to help them when faced with challenges. | 129 | 39.2 | 46 | 14.0 | 154 | 46.8 |
| I highly rate the services offered by guidance and counselling office. | 117 | 35.6 | 60 | 18.2 | 152 | 46.2 |
| The guidance and counselling office observes adequate privacy for us students. | 143 | 43.5 | 49 | 14.9 | 137 | 41.6 |
| I find it easy to share my problems with the teacher counsellor. | 137 | 41.6 | 76 | 23.1 | 116 | 35.3 |
| The teacher counsellor makes regular follow-up on student issues. | 165 | 50.2 | 62 | 18.8 | 102 | 31.0 |

Key: Freq-Frequency and %-Percentage

Results in 1 show that majority of the students tended to agree with first four statements on guidance and counselling provision in their schools. All had a percentage proportion of more than 60%. For instance, majority 263 (79.9%) agreed that they are regularly advised during school assemblies to seek guidance and counselling services. This aims at addressing the various challenges that the students face which could negatively affect their satisfactory adjustment to the school environment. The results above also imply that efforts have been made by school to popularise the service and to sensitise the students on the importance of seeking guidance and counselling services since 263 (79.9%) of the students agreed that they are regularly advised to seek the service. It is evident also that 238 (72.3%) of students agreed that guidance and counselling department in their schools regularly invited speakers to give talks on various issues surrounding their school life. Only 67 (20.4%) disagreed with the statement suggesting that guidance and counselling departments in the majority of secondary schools value the importance of inviting speakers to address various issues affecting students.

Thirdly, 204 (62.0%) of respondents agreed with the statement that teacher counsellors are always available and ready to help when needed, 30 (9.1%) said they are occasionally available and 95 (28.9%) disagreed with the statement. This shows that despite the fact that majority of teacher counsellors are always available for consultation, there are many others who are unavailable suggesting a lack of commitment by the teacher counsellors to their duties. The findings also revealed that 202 (61.4%) of the respondents agreed that they always have time to seek guidance and counselling services in their schools when the need arises, 36 (10.9%) were undecided while 91 (27.7%) disagreed with the statement. From the above findings, it is clear that not all the schools have an open-door policy where students can access guidance and counselling services. The results of the research showed that more than half of the respondents 174 (52.9%) disagreed with the statement that they regularly sought services from the guidance and counselling department while 52 (15.8%) were undecided. 103 (31.3%) agreed that they were regular consumers of guidance and counselling services. The implication of these findings is that most of the students in the sub-county depend less on seeking individual guidance and counselling services. This is clear when compared to the 238 (72%) who agreed that speakers are regularly invited to give guidance services. These services are always delivered to them in a group.

The analysis further revealed that only 154 (46.8%) agreed that they trusted the teacher counsellor to assist them when they are faced with life challenges, 46 (14.0%) were undecided while 129 (39.2%) disagreed with the statement. This shows that some students trust their teacher counsellors while others do not. This has an implication on the teacher counsellors' knowledge of guidance and counselling or training. Probably some have not undergone any training and this could affect their delivery of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. Lack of training also means that a counsellor does not possess the qualities of an effective counsellor. One of these qualities is being trustworthy. It was also evident that 152 (46.2%) of students agreed that they rated highly the guidance and counselling services offered in their school, 60 (18.2%) were undecided whereas 117 (35.6%) disagreed with the statement. This finding seems to suggest that the guidance and counselling services in majority of the schools are wanting.

The analysis further revealed that only 137 (41.6%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that the guidance and counselling office in their schools observed adequate privacy for students. Those who disagreed were 143 (43.5%) while the undecided were 49 (14.9%). This implies that either the guidance or counselling office does not offer enough privacy or some teacher counsellors divulge sensitive and personal information pertaining to student issues to other teachers and this affects learners' confidence and assurance in seeking support from the office. The result of the research also depicted mixed responses concerning the next statement on whether students found it easy to share their challenges with the teacher counsellor whereby 137 (41.6%) of respondents disagreed, 76 (23.1%) were undecided, while 116 (35.3%) agreed with the statement. This suggests that more than half of the teacher counsellors may be unfriendly or unapproachable and so students fear them and would not readily confide in them whenever they experience challenges. Lastly, half 165 (50.2%) of the respondents disagreed that the teacher counsellors made regular follow-ups on students who had sought counselling, 62 (18.8%) said they occasionally made follow-ups while 102 (31.0%) did not. This implies that only half of teachers make follow-up on students progress while the other half do not therefore students' challenges are sometimes not addressed fully.

Students' Ratings of Guidance and Counselling Services

Students' ratings on guidance and counselling services were scored as follows: A score of 25 and below was taken to mean that the services were poor, an average score of between 26-34 meant that the respondents were not sure whether the services were not sure (undecided) whether the services were poor or good and thus they were described as average and a score of 35 and above was taken to mean that the services provided were good. The research found that 85 (25.8%) of the respondents indicated poor services, 109 (33.2%) indicated average whereas 135 (41.0 %) indicated that the services were good as shown in Table 2. This means that guidance and counselling services in some schools in Keiyo Sub-county secondary schools are below average since quite a number of students rated it as average or poor. Only 41.0% rated the services as good. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Description of Ratings of Guidance and Counselling services

| | Ratings | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|----------|-----------|---------|
| 25 and below | Poor | 85 | 25.8 |
| 26-34 | Not sure | 109 | 33.1 |
| 35 and above | Good | 135 | 41.0 |
| Total | | 329 | 100.0 |

Perceptions of the Influence of Services on Academic Adjustment

The first objective of the research was to investigate secondary school students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their academic adjustment. To achieve this objective, the following question was asked: Are there significant statistical differences in students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling on their academic adjustment? The first null hypothesis stated; there are no significant statistical differences in secondary school students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their academic adjustment. To answer research question, the participants were asked to respond to ten statements, they were asked to indicate their perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their academic adjustment. The descriptive analysis findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 3: Description of the Influence of Services on Academic Adjustment

| Perceptions of Effects of Services on Academic Adjustment | Negative | | Undecided | | Positive | |
|---|----------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| Regular attendance of classes | 37 | 11.2 | 32 | 9.7 | 260 | 79.0 |
| Developing interest in learning | 41 | 12.5 | 30 | 9.1 | 258 | 78.4 |
| Defining academic goals clearly | 37 | 11.2 | 47 | 14.3 | 245 | 74.5 |
| Timely completion assignments | 55 | 16.7 | 38 | 11.6 | 236 | 71.7 |
| Enjoyment of class discussions | 62 | 18.8 | 31 | 9.4 | 236 | 71.7 |
| Active participation in class activities | 57 | 17.3 | 37 | 11.2 | 235 | 71.4 |
| Looking forward to the start of classes | 73 | 22.2 | 60 | 18.2 | 196 | 59.6 |
| Satisfied with the quality of class work | 96 | 29.2 | 45 | 13.7 | 188 | 57.1 |
| Utilisation of school library services | 119 | 36.2 | 50 | 15.2 | 160 | 48.6 |
| Satisfaction with academic performance | 113 | 34.3 | 63 | 19.1 | 153 | 46.5 |

Key: Freq-Frequency and %-Percentage

Results in Table 3 show that majority of learners tended to agree that guidance and counselling services in their schools have helped them in school academic adjustment. This is because they agree that they attend class regularly 260 (79.0%), they have developed interest in learning 258 (78.4%), learners can also clearly define their goals 245 (74.5%), others have got the ability to complete their assignments and homework on time 236 (71.7%), enjoying classroom discussions 236 (71.7%) and actively participating in class activities 235 (71.4%). However, less than 20% of the respondents disagreed with the statements in each case. Results further showed that 196 (59.6%) of respondents agreed that they always look forward to start of every class activity and 188 (57.1%) felt satisfied with the quality of class work offered. Moreover, 160 (48.6%) of students agreed that they utilised the school library services regularly. However, 119 (36.2%) disagreed and 50 (15.2%) were undecided on the statement. This could be because of lack of adequate books or space in the existing libraries in secondary schools. They also showed mixed reactions concerning their satisfaction with their academic performance whereby only 153 (46.5%) of students agreed

that they felt satisfied with their level of performance, 113 (34.3%) felt dissatisfied while 63 (19.1%) were undecided. This seems to suggest that guidance and counselling services in Keiyo Sub-county secondary schools have not adequately addressed issues related to students' academic adjustment.

Interview Responses on Influence of Services on Academic Adjustment

A total of 16 respondents were selected and interviewed on their perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their academic adjustment. It was established that the responses were both positive and negative. A total of 62.5% (10/16) gave positive responses while 37.5% (6/16) gave negative responses. Some of the explanations given by respondents who gave positive responses are the invitation of various speakers to give talks to them concerning academic issues like good research habits, reading skills, mastery of content, and the best revision strategies and making a personal research time and generally developing interest in subjects. Other benefits mentioned were improvement in managing assignments,

changing of attitude towards certain subjects, setting, and striving to achieve academic targets and preparation for examinations. The respondents also affirmed that teacher counsellors were always available and provided the same assistance to them at both individual level and group level. One respondent from a girls' boarding school had this to say:

At one time I was performing dismally in almost all subjects, but through the intervention of the teacher counsellor I was able to adopt good research habits, reading skills, revision strategies and making a personal research time table. Today I am among the best performing students in my class.

It was clear from the interview that students who gave positive response had guidance and counselling services popularised during various occasions for example during school assemblies and the service was always available when needed. This was unlike the case of students who gave negative responses. Some of the explanations they provided include the teacher counsellor being unavailable most of the time when they needed the service, lack of time as they are always occupied with other school activities. Some indicated that they would be embarrassed to be seen going for counselling as they felt that it may suggest that they were beset with major problems or they may have misbehaved. For others there was always the fear that the teacher may not observe confidentiality. Yet others suggested that students are shy while others do not believe that the teacher counsellor understands them enough to be of any assistance especially where sensitive personal issues are concerned. These findings seem to suggest that some counsellors are either lacking commitment in their work or do not have time to attend to students' counselling needs. The findings also seem to suggest that the services have not been popularised among students and also attitude issues have come into play hence the embarrassment that students associate with being seen going for counselling.

In testing the null hypothesis, students' ratings on guidance and counselling services and their scores on perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling on their academic adjustment were compared. As indicated in chapter three, students' ratings on guidance and counselling services provision were scored as follows; poor ratings (10-25), average (25-34) and good ratings (35-50). To arrive at the results a cross tabulation analysis was computed with ordinal variables of students' ratings of guidance and counselling against interval scores of students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on academic adjustment. The descriptive results presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Ratings of Services and Influence on Academic Adjustment

| Perceptions of Influence on Academic Adjustment | | | | |
|---|-----|--------|----------------|------------|
| Students' ratings | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error |
| Poor | 85 | 2.1882 | .77910 | .08451 |
| Average | 109 | 2.3761 | .73016 | .06994 |
| Good | 135 | 2.9037 | .29610 | .02548 |
| Total | 329 | 2.5441 | .67987 | .03748 |

Results presented in the Table 4 reveal that students who rated guidance and counselling services as poor, perceived it as having the least influence on their academic adjustment (M=2.18 and SD=0.77). Secondly, students who rated it as not sure or average perceived the service as having less influence on academic adjustment (M=2.37 and SD=0.69) when compared those who rated guidance and counselling services as good as they had the most positive (M=2.9 and SD=0.296) perceptions of the influence of the services on their academic adjustment. These results imply that the students who rated guidance and counselling services as good also perceived it as having a high influence in helping them in their academic adjustment and vice versa. The statistics above are graphically illustrated in Figure 1.

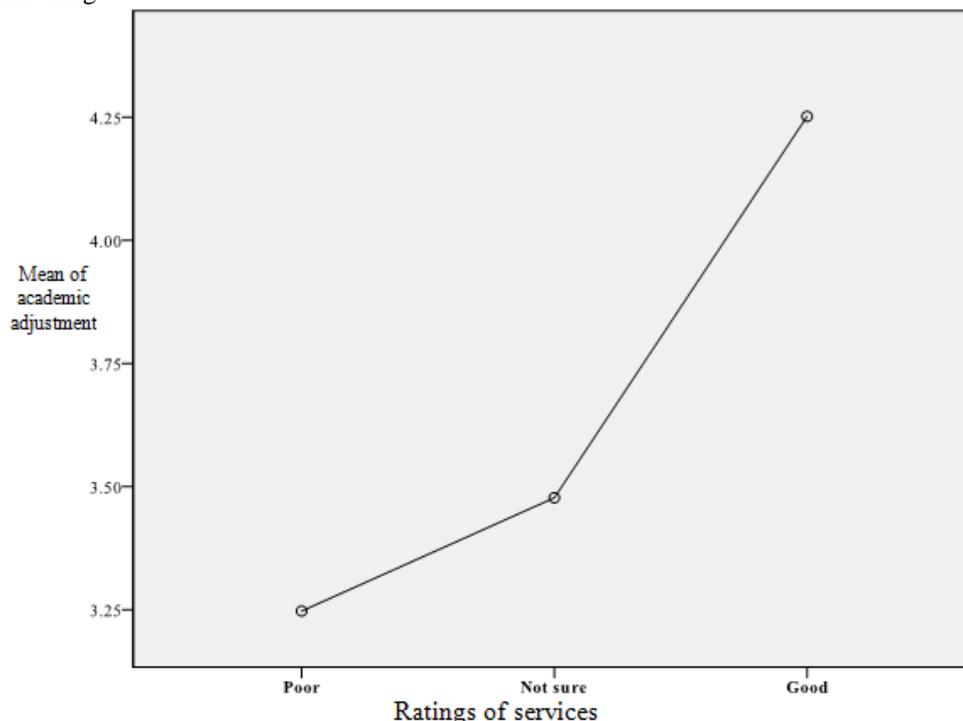


Figure 1: Ratings of Services and Influence on Academic Adjustment

The model above shows that as students' ratings guidance and counselling services improve, their perceptions of its influence on their academic adjustment becomes more positive and vice versa. To test the significance of this, ANOVA was computed at 95% confidence level. A summary of the results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: ANOVA on Influence of Services on Academic Adjustment

| ANOVA | | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| Academic Adjustment | | | | | |
| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Between Groups | 63.552 | 2 | 31.776 | 52.202 | .001 |
| Within Groups | 198.441 | 326 | .609 | | |
| Total | 261.994 | 328 | | | |

The obtained ANOVA values were $F(2, 326) = 52.202$, $p = 0.001$ and the critical values were $F(3, 325) = 2.99$, $p = 0.05$. The calculated F values were higher than the critical values that led to rejection of null hypothesis. This suggests that there exist significant differences in students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their academic adjustment in secondary schools. The results indicate that students who rated guidance and counselling services as good or helpful, perceived it as having a positive influence on their academic adjustment while those who rated guidance and counselling as poor perceived it as having a low or negative influence on their academic adjustment. The null hypothesis was thus rejected leading to the conclusion that there exist significant statistical differences in students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling on their academic adjustment.

5. Discussion of Findings

The research found that students' perceptions differed on the ratings that they gave on the provision of guidance and counselling services in the schools. The ratings were poor, average or good. To investigate the actual statistical differences in students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on academic adjustment, an ANOVA test was conducted that revealed significant differences. The obtained ANOVA values were $F(2, 326) = 52.202$, $p = 0.001$ while the critical values were $F(3, 325) = 2.99$, $p = 0.05$ thus leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The results predictably indicated that enhanced provision of guidance and counselling services improved students' perceptions of the influence of the services on academic adjustment and vice versa. The respondents to the questionnaire who had positive perceptions on the contributions of guidance and counselling services on their academic adjustment noted that there were benefits of receiving guidance and counselling services. They reported that their classroom attendance patterns improved, most of them were able to develop interest in learning for they were able to clearly set their academic goals, do their homework with little pressure, were involved in classroom discussions, and actively participated in class work activities. This meant that students with academic difficulties and challenges who sought guidance were able to change their learning cycle and progress for the better as their fears on

poor performers were addressed by their teacher counsellors. This underscores the importance of providing guidance and counselling services that address academic issue of learners as it has been proved to be important towards students' improvement in performance in schools. These findings concur with Lapan, et al. (1997) who posited that students in schools with a fully implemented guidance and counselling programme are likely to score higher grades. This is because academic challenges faced by students are addressed adequately. Indeed during the interview, respondents who indicated that they perceived guidance and counselling services as having an influence on the academic adjustment stated that they were able to apply the good research habits and revision strategies that were shared during guidance and counselling sessions and were able to make drastic improvements. Others cited the encouraging words and active support that they received from the counsellors as factors that contributed to their enhanced performance academically. This implies that there are some schools in Keiyo sub-county that have functional guidance and counselling departments. The findings showed that those who rated guidance and counselling services as poor scored lower mean scores ($M = 2.18$ and $SD = 0.77$) on perceptions of the influence of guidance on academic adjustment as compared to those who rated the services as good ($M = 2.90$ and $SD = 0.29$). This may be attributed to the fact that students' academic counselling needs are not met in a situation where implementation of the guidance and counselling services is poor. Some of the reasons cited by the respondents during the interview include the unavailability of the teacher counsellor when needed, lack of time as they are always occupied elsewhere among others. The implication of the findings is that some schools have not heeded the call for the implementation of functional guidance and counselling departments in schools (Mutie & Ndambuki, 2004). It is possible that such departments exist in name only and the teacher counsellors are not committed to the work. It is also possible that due to the teacher counsellors' workload, the teacher counsellor barely has time to avail himself for counselling services as noted by Ndirangu (2007). It is also possible that some teacher counsellors are under pressure to produce a good mean in their subjects and therefore barely get time to attend to their additional duties of guiding and counselling students. It is also common knowledge that guidance and counselling is not examined, so it is likely to be ignored by the teachers and students. Students' academic challenges need to be addressed fully and the best way to it in schools is through academic guidance and counselling. When this is done the learners are likely to excel academically and be better prepared for future careers (Lapan, et al., 1997). However, the number of students who scored a low and average mean score in their perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling on their academic adjustment is quite alarming. They seem to suggest that all the guidance and counselling efforts that the various stakeholders have invested in Keiyo Sub-county schools have not borne much fruit in the area of academic adjustment of students.

6. Conclusion

The study findings revealed that generally students tend to have positive perceptions on the influence of guidance and

counselling services on school adjustment. The paper concludes that there exist significant statistical differences in students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling on their academic adjustment. Results showed that students who rated guidance and counselling services as good, they had positive perceptions on their academic adjustment while those who rated guidance and counselling as poor perceived it as having a low or negative influence on their academic adjustment.

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