

# The Influence of Professional Qualifications of Teachers and their Perception of the Rights of Children in Guidance and Counseling Programme among Public Primary Schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** *The school teacher counselors need to have adequate skills in how to manage an overwhelming number of referrals and student case files, other teachers' influence on the guidance counselling programme, distinguish between their skills and those of other teachers and how to implement counseling programs seamlessly without causing friction with the rest of the school programme. The purpose of this study was to determine whether teaching experience of the teachers influences their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counseling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya. The study was guided by the social learning theory and client-centered theory. This study used a descriptive research design. The study population was 739 teachers comprising of 95 public primary schools with a total of 95 head teachers, 95 teacher counsellors and 549 senior teachers. The sample schools were selected using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table which yielded 76 out of 95 schools. Proportionate sampling was used to select 76 head teachers, 76 teacher-counselors, 76 senior male teachers and 76 senior female teachers to yield a total of 304 respondents. The instrument was pilot tested in 10 primary schools in Maralal Sub-county in Samburu County for validity and reliability. The reliability coefficients for questionnaires were estimated through Cronbach's alpha. The resultant alpha were  $r = .80$  for head teacher,  $.75$  for seniors teachers and  $r = .79$  for teacher counselor questionnaires respectively. The validity of the instruments was checked by the researcher who also sought the opinion of experts from the School of Education in Laikipia University. The questionnaires were considered reliable after yielding a reliability coefficient alpha of at least 0.70. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme version 25.0 for windows was utilized to analyze the data. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including percentages, means and frequencies. Hypotheses were tested using t test, ANOVA and simple regression at .05 level of significance. The study concluded that professional training in guidance and counselling does significantly influence teachers' perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. Most teachers implied that they were well conversant with educational matters especially children rights implementation in guidance and counselling programme. The study findings might be beneficial to the National and County Ministry of Education, parents, teachers and other stakeholders in implementation of children policies in guidance and counselling programme in primary schools in Kenya.*

**Keywords:** Rights of Children, Free Primary Education, Guidance and Counselling, Professional training.

## 1. Introduction

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) states that school counselors should possess proficient skills in program development, program leadership, collaborative practices, as well as appropriate referral procedures (ASCA, 2010). Kozlowski and Huss (2013) state that school counselors have unique, specialized training needs that differ from those of clinical mental health counselors since they work in complex educational systems, have large case loads, and manage school counselling programs. Kozlowski (2010) further states that it is important that guidance counselors understand the unique role they full fill in schools as they carry out their work. He further states that school counselors need to have adequate skills in how to manage an overwhelming number of referrals and student case files, other teachers' influence on the guidance counselling programme, distinguish between their skills and those of other teachers and how to implement counselling programs seamlessly without causing friction with the rest of the school programme.

Kozlowski and Huss (2013) mention that it is important that the school guidance counsellors are adequately trained because they are able to tell apart their duties from the rest of the teaching fraternity. This way they restrict themselves to putting into practice their guidance and counselling skills as well as their time in school. They further state that school counselling programme is planned to supplement the main school's educational goals that addresses the curriculum by working on students' personal, social and career needs and intertwining them with academic needs and development. As such the counselling programme focuses on both the individual student as well as on entire student body.

According to (ASCA 2010), school counselors are ethically bound to be concerned with the educational, academic, career, personal and social needs of every student and should encourage wholesome development of every student. At the same time, they should be prepared to work with a diverse student population (Uehara, 2005). School counselors are deemed to be leaders, advocates and consultants for the student populace in a school. Their responsibilities include but not limited to conducting one-on-one counselling

sessions, core curriculum lessons, counselling and academic programme planning, group counselling and parent education (ASCA 2012). As such school counsellor training needs to be comprehensive to enable the counsellors to meet the needs of individual students at the same time emphasizing the counselling programme development (Brott, 2006). School counsellors are leaders in their own right within the schools. They thus require to be trained and to develop leadership mindset so as to help the students develop leadership skills (Dahir & Stone, 2012).

School counsellors encounter a myriad of counselling issues arising from the counselling sessions. Some of the issues may be beyond their scope and thus they require skills that enable them to establish counselling and clinical referrals (Kozlowski and Huss 2013). School counsellors training include building their capacity as the student referral points by other lay helpers in the teaching and non-teaching fraternity. According to (Kozlowski and Huss 2013) referrals to school counsellors should be addressed differently than referrals in clinical settings. School guidance counsellors require skills in the legal and ethical practices to adhere to when doing referrals for the cases that are beyond their skills' capacity. The skills enable the guidance counsellors to distinguish the between the referral cases that need counselling and those that may only require services of other professionals such as doctors. As such every referral should begin with the school counsellor's consultation with the caregiver or member of staff who has referred the child.

The training of a school counsellor enables him or her to acquire counselling skills such as genuine interest in others, self-reflection, ability to listen on multiple levels, accessible, authentic, flexible and a sense of humour. Varia and Desai (2011) details the qualities that a counsellor needs to be equipped with to enable him or her to assist individuals to improve their lives. Carl Rogers, the proponent of client centered counselling theory came up with desirable qualities of a good counsellor that are imparted during professional training of a counsellor Varia and Desai (2011).

Qualities of a good counsellor include but not limited to:

- 1) Empathy: This refers to ability of a therapist (counsellor) to get into the client's mind and view the issues raised from the client's perspective.
- 2) Genuineness: This refers to the warm and friendly that communicates to the client that the counsellor is honest in the counselling process.
- 3) Warmth: This quality refers to the ability of the counsellor to show interest in the client and the counselling process without making the counselee feel over powered.
- 4) Concreteness: This is the ability of the counsellor to listen to what the client is trying to say rather than what the client says.
- 5) Unconditional positive regard: This refers to warmth feeling towards the client irrespective of the client's feelings and or emotions in a non-judgmental manner.
- 6) Tragic sense: This quality requires the counsellor to know that all human beings (counsellors included) have limitations and they listen to clients not because they are better but rather because they are willing to listen.

- 7) Sense of humour: This quality makes the client feel at ease in front of the counsellor and reduces tension in delicate situations.
- 8) Self-awareness: This quality requires the counsellor to evaluate themselves in order to be aware of their own limitations and strengths during the counselling session. A counsellor is thus able to disclose their limitations to the client (page 2 to 4).

Varia and Desai (2011), state that it is important to train a counsellor because it facilitates the therapeutic relationship. They further mention that an effective counsellor is trained to collect data in a counselling process in two ways. This includes data that connects to the client's background, abilities, achievements, plans and attitude on one hand as well as the issues about which the client seeks counselling assistance. These areas may be educational, social or personal. This forms a sound base of the counselling process.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

- The study was guided by the following research objective:
- To determine whether professional level qualifications of the teachers influences their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.
- To achieve the research objectives for this study, the following null hypotheses were posited and tested at .05 level of significance:

H<sub>0</sub>1: Teachers' professional level has no statistically significant influence on their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

### Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design to determine whether teachers professional qualification influences their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counseling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya. The study was conducted in Tangelbei, Nginyang, Mondri, Kolowa and Churo divisions of East Pokot Sub-county of Baringo County, Kenya. The East Pokot Sub-county borders West Pokot, Turkana, Baringo, Marakwet, Laikipia and Koibatek counties. The population under study comprised of the 95 teachers, 95 teacher counsellors, 377 male teachers and 172 female teachers from 95 Primary schools in East Pokot Sub County giving a total of 739 respondents. Purposive sampling was used to select 76 head teachers, and 76 teacher counsellors, 76 senior male and 76 senior female teachers. Therefore, the sampled primary schools had 76 teachers, 76 teacher counsellors and 152 senior teachers out of which 76 which were male and 76 female and yielded a sample size of 304.

### Instrumentation

This study employed questionnaires as the data collection instrument. Questionnaires were administered to the head

teachers, teachers appointed and serving as teacher counsellors and senior teachers with long teaching experience and had administrative roles in the school. Teachers were purposely included into the study because they are the implementer and custodians of the children rights in the schools.

#### Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

The research instruments were systematically evaluated to ensure that they are valid. A valid Instrument is paramount to ensure that the data collected accurately samples out the desired attributes of the population (Borg & Gall, 2007). The questionnaires were subjected to scrutiny by the researcher to ensure that they are responding to the objectives of the study. The opinion of supervisors and other experts from the School of Education of Laikipia University on content validity was also sought. Reliability of the instruments was tested in a pilot study in Maralal Division in Samburu County to provide the required information on its reliability and establish the time taken to administer the instruments in order to make necessary modifications and adjustments on questionnaires before data collection in the field. Maralal Division was chosen because it is far from the study location and would not thus interfere with the objectivity of actual data collection. The questionnaires items were considered reliable and thus suitable for data collection after yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.75 for senior teacher questionnaires, 0.79 for teacher' questionnaires and 0.80 for teachers questionnaires.

#### Data Analysis

The data collected through questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The quantitative data obtained was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics such as percentages, means and frequencies. Rating of values were as 5- Strongly Agree, 4- Agree, 3 Not Sure, 2- Disagree and 1- Strongly Disagree with the statement. Opinions such as Strongly Agree and Agree and Strongly Disagree and Disagree were put together respectively for easier data presentation. Testing of hypotheses was done by Regression. Null ( $H_0$ ) was tested at .05 level of significance. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) noted that most researchers in education and social sciences use a significance level of .05 to test hypotheses. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 was employed to analyze the data.

### 3. Results and Discussions

The main purpose of this study was to determine whether teacher professional qualification influences their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counseling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

#### Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The research targeted 95 teachers, 95 teacher counsellors, 377 male teachers and 172 female teachers from 95 Primary schools in East Pokot Sub County giving a total a population of 739. The researcher sampled 76 out of 95 primary schools in East Pokot Sub County using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table through proportionate stratified random

sampling. The male and female senior teachers were selected to achieve gender balance.

**Table 1:** Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Male	173	56.9
Female	131	43.1
Total	304	100.0

Source: (Field data, 2019)

Table 1 shows that among the respondents male teachers were more at 56.9% (173) while female respondents were the fewer at 43.1% (131) to yield a total of 304 respondents. Research has also shown that pastoralist communities support boy child education as opposed to the girl child as reported by Warrington and Kiragu's (2011) in their findings among the Maasai in Kajiado that fathers did not value education for their daughters, hence gave minimal support to those who did manage to go to school. This can be generalised for a similar pastoralist community in East Pokot which explains lower number of female teachers than men teachers in primary school set up establishment.

**Table 2:** Distribution of Respondents by Position Held in School

Position held in School	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Senior Teacher	150	49.3
Head Teacher	79	26.0
Teacher Counsellor	75	24.7
Total	304	100.0

Source: (Field data, 2019)

As shown in Table 6, 49.3% (150) of the respondents held the position of senior teacher in the school while 20% (79) held the position of a teacher and 24.7% (75) held the position of teacher counsellors. The information reveals that administrators in primary schools were more that teacher counsellors.

#### Distribution of the Respondents by Highest Professional Qualification

Highest professional qualifications were categorized from the lowest level of teacher preparation education to the highest academic qualification. Thus the categories include Untrained, P1, and Diploma in Teacher Education, Bachelor of Education and Master of Education. The distribution responses are presented in Table 3

**Table 3:** Distribution of Respondents by Highest Professional Qualification

Professional Qualification	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Untrained	14	4.6
P1	258	84.9
Diploma in Education	11	3.6
Bachelors	18	5.9
Master of Education	3	1.0
Total	304	100.0

Source: (Field data, 2019)

Table 8 shows that the highest percentage in professional training of the respondents was PI grade level of training at 84.9% (258), followed by bachelors at 5.9% (18), and followed by Diploma in Teacher Education at 3.6% (11). This was followed by untrained at 4.6% while those who

had attained Master of Education level of training were 1% (3). Most education training implying that they were well conversant with educational matters especially children rights implementation in guidance and counselling programme.

**Distribution of Respondents by Counselor Professional Qualification**

Professional training was categorized from the lowest level of counsellor professional training to the highest. Thus the categories include none, certificate in counselling, Diploma in counselling, Degree in counselling and Masters in counselling. The distribution of the responses is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Distribution of Teachers by Professional Training in Counselling

Professional Training in Counselling	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
No training in counselling	104	34.2
In-service Certificate in counselling	166	54.6
Diploma in counselling	25	8.2
Degree in counselling	6	2.0
Master in Counselling	3	1.0
Total	304	100.0

Source: (Field data, 2019)

Table 4 shows that 8.2% (25) of the teachers had a Diploma in counselling, 54.6% (166) had In-service Certificate in counselling, 34.2% (104) had no training in counselling, while 2% (6) had bachelors degree in counselling while 1% (3) had a Master’s degree in counselling. Most teachers had in-service certificate level of training implying that they were well conversant with educational matters especially children rights implementation in guidance and counselling programme where as there were also some teachers with no skills in counselling curtailing the advocacy of child rights implementations. Teacher guidance counsellors play dual roles in the school. They take up the regular teaching duties in class and in addition they guide and counsel the pupils. These two roles require different skills and they need professional training in teaching methodology and counselling. The skills can be gained at the teacher training institutions and or universities. Guidance counsellors can take the professional training skills at certificate, diploma or degree levels. This way they are equipped with skills to assist pupils resolve problems that range from alcohol and substance abuse, family violence, inter-personal relationships to class under-performance.

The objective of the study to determine whether teachers’ professional qualification influence their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County Kenyawas formulated by the following hypothesis:

**H<sub>0</sub>1: Teachers’ Professional Level has no statistically significant influence on their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.**

The hypothesis presumed that the teaching professional level of the teachers influence their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya. To establish the truth of this assumption, ANOVA was carried out. The results of the analysis are as presented in Tables 18 and 19. Teaching professional level was conceptualized in terms of the level of professional training in teacher education. The 4 clusters of respondents’ distribution by professional age were cross-tabulated with perception of the rights of children among the three categories of respondents.

Table 18 presents mean of teachers’ teaching professional level and their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

**Table 1:** Mean of Teachers’ teaching Professional Level and Perception of the Rights of Children

Teachers’ Perception Rights of Children		
Teachers Highest Professional qualification	Mean	N
Untrained	17.79	14
P1	42.70	258
Diploma in Education	106.09	11
Bachelors	114.11	18
Master of Education	126.67	3
Total	48.90	304

Source: (Field data, 2019)

Table 19 presents ANOVA of teachers’ teaching professional level and their perception of the rights of children

**Table 2:** ANOVA of Teachers’ teaching Professional Level and Perception of the Rights of Children

ANOVA					
Teachers’ Perception Rights of Children					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	154144.910	4	38536.228	89.458	.000
Within Groups	128802.129	299	430.776		
<b>Total</b>	<b>282947.039</b>	<b>303</b>			

Source: (Field data, 2019)

From Table 19 the F value was found to be significant (F (4, 299) = 2.612, p = .036). Therefore the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) that teachers’ teaching Professional Level has no significant influence on perception of the rights of children was rejected at .05 level of significance. It means that teachers’ teaching professional level significantly influence the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling. This means teachers’ teaching professional level possessed by teachers in teaching profession influence their perception of rights of children. This indicates that, teachers’ despite their professional training in guidance and counselling, are likely to protect and enhance access the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme in public primary schools. This means all teachers, despite their professional training in counselling have high perception of and would support the implementation of the rights of the children in guidance counselling programme. This contradicts the findings of Ejie and Akinola (2009) who in their studies established that in Nigerian primary schools teachers

perception of human rights were different and that the awareness level was very low.

#### 4. Summary of the Findings

H<sub>01</sub>: Teachers' Professional Level has no statistically significant influence on their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

The hypothesis was tested using ANOVA test. The ANOVA test showed that;

- 1) The value of (F (4, 299) = 89.458, p = .000).
- 2) The null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>) was rejected.
- 3) The teachers' teaching professional level significantly influences their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling.

#### 5. Conclusions of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

- 1) There is significant influence of gender on respondents' perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.
- 2) Teachers' professional level training in teaching does significantly influence their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

#### 6. Recommendations of the Study

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) The study found out that gender plays a key role in perception of right of the child in the guidance and counselling program, since the female teachers presented a higher mean at 52.53 than male teachers at 46.15. It was therefore recommended that whenever possible, schools can assign a male and female teacher in the position of guidance counsellors in public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.
- 2) The study revealed that teachers' professional level training in teaching does significantly influence their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. It is therefore recommended that teachers in public primary schools in East Pokot may enroll for further studies as it may positively influence their perception of the rights of children. This may place them in an advantage position to enhance access of the rights of the children in East Pokot Sub-County.

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