

Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling in Managing Student Discipline in Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Original Research Article

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in managing student discipline in secondary schools. These findings were based on a study conducted in 2016. The study adopted descriptive survey research design guided by B. F Skinner (1952) and behavioral theory postulated by Krumboltz and Thoresen (1996). The target population included principals/deputy principals and teachers. For getting a representative sample, the researcher stratified the schools into four educational divisions. Stratified proportionate sampling was then used to select 3 secondary schools from each division that participated in the study. This formed 30% of the total number of secondary schools in the sub-county. All the head teachers (12), from the selected schools were purposively sampled for inclusion in the study. Simple random sampling was used to select 30% of teachers from the selected secondary schools. The data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedule and document analysis. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequencies and percentages. The analyzed data was presented using a frequency table. The study findings revealed that students in most secondary schools in their respective schools followed school rules and regulations related to student discipline through guidance and counseling. The study concluded that lack of principal's support in the programme, lack of teachers and students commitment in the Programme are the major threats in managing students' discipline effectively. These findings imply that principal's support in the Programme and also teachers' and students' commitment to a large extent are important in the effectiveness of the guidance and counseling services. This study recommends that teachers handling guidance and counseling should not be given other responsibilities as those of disciplinary as this could amount to conflict of roles. This may assist students not to withdraw from guidance and counseling teachers.

Keywords: Guidance and Counseling, Managing, Student Discipline.

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INTRODUCTION

Student discipline involves the use of effective disciplinary strategies. Schools normally employ different disciplinary strategies in order to achieve their predetermined educational goals. This is because different schools have different levels of student discipline. Moreover, according to Gaustad [1], a school has two main goals; firstly, to ensure safety of staff and learners and secondly, to create an environment conducive to learning. The management of student discipline in schools is a corporate responsibility amongst the principal, the teachers and the parents. Head teachers are expected to play a position of authority in an organizational hierarchy and perform activities and processes that move a group towards accomplishment of its goals. Besides, teachers at secondary schools are normally trained and majority of them hold a degree certificate and other certificates beyond this.

In an effort of managing student discipline, each school in Kenya has developed its own unique ways of maintaining discipline within the school [2]. Nevertheless, a good number of these professionals might be over relying on corporal punishment despite its ban in 2001 through the legal notice of 2001 [3]. Parents also play a major role in management of student discipline. According to [4], parents and community are the first link in effective school discipline practices.

The preceding paragraphs indicate that discipline in school setup, has a lot to do with the different disciplinary strategies employed in a school and to a large extent, discipline plays the vital role of influencing and furthering learning goals in a school [5]. The issue of indiscipline has been a worldwide concern. It is therefore that this research endeavors to investigate the effectiveness of disciplinary strategies of managing student discipline in Rongai secondary schools of Nakuru County.

In Kenya, the issue of student discipline problems in learning institutions and more particularly in Secondary schools has been a major concern to the society and school administrators as this works against the core objectives of these institutions. In supporting this, Kombo [6] states that despite the enormous efforts being made by the government, school management and administrators to control discipline, the level of indiscipline problems in schools is still on the rise in Kenya.

School administrators are considered to employ a number of disciplinary strategies of managing learner's discipline; for example, the use of guidance and counseling, rewards and punishments among others. Cases of Indiscipline among students have been as a result of a number of factors including society influence, curriculum content, teachers' influence, school's environmental climate, parental training among others. The government of Kenya (GOK) through the Ministry of Education (MOE) has always set up commissions of inquiries any time the secondary schools unrests become a great concern especially when it leads to massive destruction property and death of students. The condition of students' indiscipline in Kenyan Secondary Schools is of great concern. For instance in 2007, 300 secondary schools were closed following student rampage destroying property and lives [7] The most recent disciplinary case that occurred was at Kituro secondary school in Baringo County whereby senior form four students forced a fifteen-year-old form one student to drink ethanol at the dormitory on 18th June 2013. In the recent past, a number of students have been reported to be involved in indiscipline cases [8]. For instance, in 15th October 2012, hundreds of students of Mama Ngina secondary in Rongai District sent home after they damaged some property worth thousands and likewise to Solai Boys in the year 2013.

Student indiscipline cases indicate that there could be ineffective disciplinary strategies employed in the Kenyan learning institutions. In supporting this, Wright and Keetley [9], Munn and Johnstone [10] noted that although the teachers attest to the fact that the repetitive nature of student discipline cases caused them stress, they are all not in agreement on how to deal with indiscipline cases.

It is observed that various studies have investigated on various disciplinary strategies in management of students' discipline. For instance, a study by Mutua [11] investigated into alternative strategies of discipline in the absence of corporal punishment; District investigated on the effects of disciplinary strategies on students' behavior. Some studies have shown that teachers in secondary schools adopted alternative strategies of managing student discipline especially after outlawing of the corporal punishment by the Government. For instance,

Mogho[12] investigated on alternative strategies to corporal punishment and secondary school student discipline. It is evident that little research has been done on the effectiveness of these disciplinary strategies. The purpose of this study is the effectiveness of the disciplinary strategies used in managing student discipline, which constitutes the gap that this study sought to fill. Although there are many disciplinary strategies that are used in management of students in public schools, it is important and urgent to look into the effectiveness of these disciplinary strategies in secondary schools in Rongai Sub- County, Nakuru County.

The Need for Guidance and Counseling on Student Discipline in Secondary Schools

Guidance is a process of helping to understand, appreciate, and accept their situation, by helping them to cope and manage their situations in acceptance and healthy manner. On the other hand, counseling is a process of helping a person with a problem or need to decide through identifying, exploring and examining available alternatives while also appreciating the consequences. Guidance and counseling is not disciplining, threatening, forcing, giving solutions, advice or opinion in dealing with a solution. It is a preventive method that can be utilized to minimize the student's indiscipline in schools. It helps the youth acquire the right moral values and beliefs, self-esteem, a sense of identity hence guiding and forming their character.

Guidance and counseling was started in America at the beginning of the 20th century as a reaction to change process in an industrialized society. Moreover, formal guidance and counseling can be traced to America in the late 1890s and early 1900s. In addition; a case can be made for tracing the foundations of guidance and counseling principals to ancient Greece and Rome with the philosophical teachings of Plato and Aristotle [13]. Other contributions to this were Godwin (1911), weaver (1912) and Davis (1913) (internet source).

This was because of it gathering momentum at the end of 19th Century in Europe and United States of America. Guidance and counseling services were set up within the department of Education in September 1968 when the recommendations made by Louis, a consultant set over by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was taken up, [14]. School guidance and counseling programmes have therefore been introduced to assist students overcome the number of challenges they experience at home and the school. Consequently, not all lessons of the past can effectively deal with the challenges of modern society. Muithya [15] notes that in the Traditional African society; character formation was achieved through intense formal and informal Programme of guidance and counseling. In essence, the differences and

contradictions in present day have their origin in the social and historical forms that have shaped modern culture.

Nziramasanga [16] states that, because of many pressures imposed on the family, parents tend to have little time with their children to give them the necessary guidance. The parents expect the school to provide solutions to the indiscipline in secondary schools caused by their children. UNESCO adds, “African adults have become more concerned with earning money and less occupied with many traditional practices that formerly contributed to the upbringing of young people”. Rapid sociological changes emanating from modernization and urbanization stress students hence and counseling services cannot be overstated. Globally, it is evident that students in all levels of learning and in educational institutions have needs that call for guidance and counseling services that if unattended can lead to numerous disciplinary issues and wastage. Guidance and counseling services are essential elements in discipline management of people in all societies for it is difficult for any function well without the exercise of discipline.

The term “Guidance and counseling” have been conceived internationally in different ways. According to Makinde [17], defined them as an interaction process co-joining the counselee, who is vulnerable and who needs assistance the goal of which is to help the counselee learn to deal more effectively with himself and the reality of his environment. Guidance and counseling addresses the problem of indiscipline and its root cause.

The adolescents in schools find it difficult to cope with the challenges that come due to their physical, psychological and emotional changes coupled with the rapid changes in the society. Witmer [18] says that African traditions and cultures guided youth in societal roles, values, belief system, sex, regimental roles and skills they would need to enhance their culture. Makinde notes that guidance and counseling has been an essential element in discipline management of people in all societies even the most primitive societies grow out of the necessity of giving individuals behavior patterns in the interests of the group. Individual students need to be advised on the importance of making responsible decisions rather than conforming to peer pressure without questions.

It is through guidance and counseling that students remain disciplined and focused in life. Collins [19] indicates that through guidance and counseling, students are assisted to be disciplined and become able to deal with challenges and realities they face in their academic, social and environment. It helps the learners to develop self-awareness among themselves and capacity for self-observation. Some students may not conform to their teachers’ requirements due to factors

outside their control. Gushee [20] argued that counseling services provided to students experiencing personal, academic or behavioral difficulties could result in behavior changes such as improved self-image and greater self-discipline.

It is therefore imperative for teachers to understand the problems the students are facing. This is what guidance and counseling does. Guidance in school is a process of influencing student’s behavior to become desirable, while counseling refers to an act of helping students to cope with their problems [21]. A teacher is more likely to elicit appropriate behavior if they can understand the situation the learners face and offer guidance and counseling to the students and the students’ family.

Guidance and counseling (G&C) services in secondary schools were introduced for different reasons in various parts of the world. In United States of America (U.S.A), the services were introduced to assist students with their development and career aspirations [22]. According to UNESCO (2000), many African Ministers of education have realized the growing number of social problems that affect students in African schools hence resolved to introduce secondary G&C services in their respective countries to curb these problems. For instance, In Malawi, the need for guidance and counseling was recognized after a survey was done of 20 school counselors in southern and central regions. In Zimbabwe, people at all times have experienced emotional or psychological distress and behavioral problems. Consequently, before independence, guidance and counseling was only taught in former European, Asian and colored schools hence students within such privileged schools benefited from it [23].

The need for effective G&C services in Kenyan institutions has made an ever-urgent need by the pressure of greatly expanded and diversified educational systems and opportunities in the county. Although G&C was introduced in Kenya formally in 1967, under the Ministry of Education, it has been engraved in the African traditional society since time memorial. This is evident by a report of the National Committee on Education Objectives and policies Gachathi Report, Republic of Kenya, [24] which recommended that the Ministry of Education should take charge of delivering counseling services.

Additionally, Kenyan government had put in place several measures as establishment of guidance and counseling units in all schools, good classrooms management practice, effective teaching methods and inclusion of learner in making school rules [25]. Also, there have been several measures aimed at curbing the various cases of indiscipline in learning institutions particularly the use of guidance and counseling units in all secondary schools.

Subsequently, the need for guidance and counseling has been recognized in various government reports and educational commission in Kenya since independence. The report of the National Committee of Educational objectives and policies of 1967” recommended that guidance and counseling be taught using subjects like religious education, social education and ethics to enable the school promote the growth of self-discipline among students. In supporting this, Ndakwa [26] notes that spiritual nourishment is quite vital for emphasizing human virtues and harmonious co-existence. This is in agreement with a report on Presidential Committee on students unrest and discipline in Kenyan schools that one of the contributing factors for unrest and indiscipline in our educational institutions is the violation of moral values which when commonly accepted in the society as a rule of life leads to harmonious and happy life for the society as a whole. The report further notes that the present way of life of our youth indicates decline of the society and strongly supports that student’s unrest are impacted by the eroded societal values.

The programme was started in Kenya to assist students to appreciate their roles and develop right attitudes towards discipline. Since its introduction, there have been infractions that still require guidance and counseling. For example, assault, arson, fighting and theft, destruction of administration blocks, riots and rape and even loss of lives. For example, the most recent disciplinary case occurred at a certain school in Baringo County whereby senior form four students forced a form one student, 15 years to drink ethanol at the dormitory on 18th June, 2013. The high prevalence of indiscipline cases in Kenyan schools are blamed for quite a number of reasons. In (October 15, 2012), hundreds of students went on the rampage in Laikipia, Nyandarua and Nakuru counties protesting against the extended third term. In Nakuru sub County students of Mama Ngina Secondary were sent home after all were blamed on Education Minister by then Mutula Kalonzo. The Minister should have consulted widely before issuing a circular on the closing dates. The Kenya Union of Post primary Education (KUPPET) had urged the minister to bring forward the closing dates from November 23rd to November 9th of 2012.

Despite the efforts made by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology to democratize the school administration system as evidenced by the ban of cane in schools through legal Notice No. 56, Kenya Gazette, unrest has continued in secondary schools with a new dimension not only are they violent but destructive. Despite the recommendations by the National Committee on Education Objectives and policies Gachathi Report, which recommended that the Ministry of Education should take charge of delivering counseling services, indiscipline cases are still rampant

in schools. Additionally, in the year 2007, Kenyan schools were advised to strengthen the guidance and counseling departments in order to fill the vacuum left by the ban of corporal punishment [27].

The uses of G&C Services seem to be still wanting in helping curb indiscipline in various schools. Such incidences in schools are a pointer to explore and put in place effective disciplinary strategies of dealing with student` grievances so as to prevent the occurrences of such violent episodes. There is a need to investigate if the selected secondary schools use this disciplinary strategy. Following incidences like school strikes, riots, fighting, bullying, theft e.t.c, Waititu and Khamasi [28] recommended that research should be carried out in Kenya in order to establish the effectiveness of G & C in secondary schools. An effective G & C programme is essential for a good school. It is against this background that this study endeavors to find out the reasons behind escalating indiscipline cases in secondary schools despite the government assumption that disciplinary strategies are effectively solving the vice.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out at Rongai Sub-County in Nakuru County. This study utilized the descriptive survey design. This design gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of the existing conditions, identifying the standards against which existing conditions can be compared and determining the relationship that exists between specific events [29]. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The study targeted the head teachers/deputy head teachers and teachers. This population was included in the study because they were all directly involved in employing the disciplinary strategies in managing student discipline in secondary schools. The sample for this study included 12 schools out of 36 secondary schools, 12 head teachers and teachers. The sample for each of the groups under the study constituted 30% of the target population. Kerlinger [30] argues that 30% is representative enough. For purpose of getting a representative sample, the researcher stratified the schools into four educational divisions. Stratified proportionate sampling was then used to select 3 secondary schools from each division to participate in this study. This formed 30% of the total number of secondary schools in the sample. All the head teachers (12), of the selected schools were purposively sampled for the study.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The teachers were asked to express their views on the use of guidance and counseling in enhancing student discipline. The findings are as shown in table 1

Table-1: Use of Guidance and Counseling and Student Discipline

Statement	A		N		D		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The principal supports the programme fully	30	35.7	8	9.5	46	54.8	84	100.0
All teachers are committed to the program and are adequately trained and frequently taken for in service trainings	10	11.9	29	34.5	45	53.6	84	100.0
Teachers plan and implement the programmes fully	15	17.9	28	33.3	41	48.8	84	100.0
Teachers keep records on the most identified student behavior	28	33.3	25	29.8	31	36.9	84	100.0
Guidance and Counseling has helped to prevent vices like drug and substance abuse among students	28	33.3	14	16.7	42	50	84	100.0

It is evident from table 1 that 35.7 % (30) of respondents agree that the principal supported the programme fully, 54.8% (46) disagreed and the rest 9.5% (8) were undecided. The table shows that majority 54.6% (46) disagreed. This would clearly explain why a principal has no option but to provide for material and monetary resources for managing students, a responsibility whose demands are overwhelming. Furthermore, this finding is consistent with Balzer [31] and Wajohi [32] who maintained that; if the head teacher does not support the programme, then little commitment and teachers, students and the community will offer devotion.

The study further investigated whether all teachers were committed to the programme, adequately trained and frequently taken for in-service trainings. Table 1 shows that 11.9% (10) of the respondents agreed, 53.6% (45) disagreed, while 34.5% (29) were undecided. From the findings of the study, majority of the respondents disagreed that all teachers were committed to the programme adequately trained and frequently taken for the in-service trainings. The reason could be that teachers are loaded with lessons leaving them with little time for other responsibilities in schools. They also treat other subjects to be major. Guidance and counseling is conveniently planned for but its time is usually used for other activities such as revision of examinable subjects, marking of students work etc. as reflected in some of the principals interviewed.

This is in line with Kapuya [33] that teachers have other major subjects to which they devote most of the guidance and counseling time. In addition, Barasa, [34], noted that; although guidance and counseling has been accepted in principle, the implementation process has been paralyzed by not giving it the attention it deserves. Schools ought to have enough teachers to enable them achieve its predetermined goals. In so doing, it could have made it difficult to accomplish effective guidance and counseling. On the other hand, the reason could be that most teachers have not attended any workshops or received any training hence lacking its general understanding. This could make teachers face numerous challenges in discharging their responsibilities efficiently and effectively. This is in consistent with [35] that guidance and counseling is

negatively affected by lack of training of teachers and head teachers.

Additionally, it could be that teachers lacked support from the administration in terms of taking them for trainings. That should not be the case for teacher counselors should be trained in guidance and counseling [36]. A study conducted among public high school teachers and students in Kenya revealed that guidance and counseling programmes were not effective partly because of inadequate training, less time and lack of support from the administration [37].

Concerning inadequate training in counseling, some students have landed into serious problems, for example; a form three student who committed suicide in Nyamira because of a teacher who confiscated her phone. In supporting this, Lapan *et al.* [38] carried out a research in 4 secondary schools involving 120 students and 20 teachers and found out that most students did not receive guidance and counseling services. The study further investigated whether teachers planned and implemented the programs fully.

The table revealed that 17.9% (15) of the respondents agreed while 48.8% (41) of the respondents disagreed. The remaining 33.3% (28) of the respondents were undecided. Based on the findings, majority of the respondents would have been for the reason that some of their schools were understaffed hence teachers had heavy workload. Understaffing would have made them not to have time for planning and implementation of the programme. In addition, some of the principals who were interviewed complained of understaffing in their secondary schools.

They said their schools are located in hardship remote areas hence continued to suffer teacher shortages. Moreover, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has been carrying out a balancing exercise to move teachers from overstaffed areas in Kenya since June 2003 but this exercise has faced major resistance. In addition, the interference in transfer from politicians and some government officials has resulted in overstaffing of some urban areas as opposed to rural hardship areas that are not highly potential (report by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, September 2016).

The table also indicates that 33.3% (28) of the respondents agreed that teachers keep records on the most identified behavior issues of individual students, 36.9% (31) were not of the view while the remaining 29.8% (25) of the respondents were undecided. Based on the findings, majority of the respondents disagreed that teachers keep records of the most identified student behaviors of the individual students. This concurs with the findings from some of the interviewed principals that teachers lack seriousness in guidance and counseling and some of the reasons they gave were; teachers were always complaining of their salaries hence might have led to demoralizing them. The findings were in agreement with the previous results of Simatwa [39] who maintained that lack of serious guidance and counseling programmes in schools is the major cause of indiscipline cases in learning institutions. The findings also agree with the sentiments from Ndirangu, [40] that most schools in Kenya face a problem of properly implemented guidance and counseling services and for those that have established the department, they are not well organized in terms of time allocation and infrastructure for these determine the effectiveness of counseling process [41].

The study further investigated whether guidance and counseling has helped prevent vices like drug and substance abuse among students. The table revealed that 33.3% (28) of the respondents agreed. 50.0% (42) disagreed while 16.7% (14) were undecided. It is clear from the table that, majority of the teachers disagreed that guidance and counseling has helped prevent vices like drug and substance abuse. Moreover, some schools context are un-conducive in the overall development of the students hence leading to negative behavior such as; truancy, alcohol, drug abuse and sexual immorality.

In addition, this could perhaps imply that young people may be influenced by the mass media. In supporting this, Mutua [42] conducted a study and noted that young people receive information from movies, television, billboards and magazines. This may make the youth to experiment on the advertised substances. On the other hand, some students may fail to seek help from counselling teachers.

This could be taken to mean that students do not take guidance and counseling seriously. In addition, this could perhaps imply that they also fail to seek help from counseling teachers. These findings are consistent with the findings of Kibui [43] who noted that students have been reported to fail to seek counseling help from teacher counselors. Moreover, consumption of drug and substance abuse has not spared even the most high cost schools like Lenana and Nairobi Schools [44].

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that lack of principal's support in the programme, lack of teachers and students

commitment in the Programme are the major threats in managing students' discipline effectively. These findings imply that principal's support in the Programme and also teachers' and students' commitment to a large extent are important in the effectiveness of the guidance and counseling services. This study recommends that teachers handling guidance and counseling should not be given other responsibilities as those of disciplinary as this could amount to conflict of roles. This may assist students not to withdraw from guidance and counseling teachers.

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