

Students' Perception of the Impact of Guidance and Counselling Programmes on the Satisfaction of Social Needs in Selected Kenyan Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The need to have guidance and counselling programs integrated fully in secondary school curriculum is increasingly becoming important due to emerging students' needs that not only influence students' behaviour but also affects their academic performances. The purpose of the study was to determine students' perception of the impact of guidance and counselling on students' social needs satisfaction. The research study was guided by Gestalt theory of perception. The target population for the study was all students spread among secondary schools in Rift valley region of Kenya and ten secondary schools were selected from five counties through stratified and simple random sampling. Four hundred and fifty students were selected through stratified random sampling, the research design adopted for the study was Ex post Facto. Data collection was done using questionnaires, which was validated by experts in counselling with the reliability of the instrument being 0.893. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study concludes that the rigid schedules in secondary schools do not allow teacher counsellors to attend to students requiring personal help and specifically social needs. Results further revealed that the category of school in which the students were drawn was found significant. This paper strongly recommends that school counsellors need more training on the various approaches on tailoring their guidance and counselling services to cater for the social needs of adolescents. It was also noted that the failure of guidance and counselling programs to handle learners social needs could have led to other social problems and challenges in and out of school such as the many cases of indiscipline reported in many secondary schools.

Key Words: Perception; Counselling, Satisfaction, Social, Needs

INTRODUCTION

The needs of young people keeps changing as the society evolves, guidance and counselling in secondary schools has become an important service that attempts to harmonize and fulfil the varied needs of the students during the course of their learning. These needs include, social needs which the guidance and counselling intends to make the learners understand their social life Rao (2005) is of the view that there are counselling needs of the students where inadequacy in satisfaction has effect on their learning. Biswalo (2000) and Gross & Cappuzzi (2001) alludes that the satisfaction of social needs of the learners reduces indiscipline cases and can enhance harmony in school.

Nzomo (2010) contends that it is possible that students in secondary schools in Kenya are only taught to pass examination at the expense of their holistic educational development. In a study conducted in western region of Kenya learners reported that their rebellion in schools arose from unattended grievances and needs (Lutomia & Sikolia, 2002). Guidance and counselling focuses on students developmental needs which include social needs. Rao, (1991) alludes that an important aim of secondary school guidance and counselling programme is to enable students enjoy their life at school through happy and rewarding interpersonal relationships with other students and teachers.

According to Sorenson (1964) social needs include increasing ability to get along with oneself and others. During the process of satisfying social needs there is a progress in social abilities and skills of an individual which brings improvement in the maintenance of social relationship. An individual will therefore try to mould his or her behaviour and seek adjustment and harmony with others. A school having a healthy social and democratic atmosphere inculcates many social virtues among the students while poor and unhealthy atmosphere at the school and negative behavioural characteristics cast a bad influence on the social behaviour of the students (Mangal, 2002). When students are helped they become able to function adequately as individuals and in group situations. Counsellors also assist students to

develop a greater ability to cope with and solve their social problems according to American School Counsellors Association (Asca, 2003).

Among the national goals of Education is the need to consciously help the learner to acquire positive attitude and foster respect for human persons (Republic of Kenya, 1988), guidance and counselling programme has been defined as a programme in secondary school which is concerned with determining and providing for the developmental needs of the learners, it has been expected that guidance and counselling helps in efficient functioning of schools by reducing conflicts and friction among the personnel (Rao, 1991). Ng'eno (2012) defines Guidance and Counselling as a holistic program designed to Provide for the Developmental needs of all learners which Include personal, academic, social and vocational. Patri (2005) alludes that Guidance and Counselling helps clients to move towards greater levels of self acceptance and self-understanding.

The study was guided by Gestalt theory of perception. Gestalt is a German word which means —an organized whole. It also means pattern or configuration of the whole (Mangal, 2007). Human nature is seen as being organized into patterns or wholes. According to Perls (1973) the central point in Gestalt psychologists is that humans do not perceive things as isolation but organize them through their perceptual process into wholes. For instance a car carries different and even greater meaning than its individual components. The perception of guidance and counselling was considered in the context of the whole as represented by the overall mean which implied that it was either positive (satisfied), neutral and negative perception (dissatisfied).

In Kenya there has been great emphasis placed on guidance and counselling services in learning institutions. Although a lot of efforts have been put in place for effective guidance and counselling services the outcomes has largely remain minimal as shown by what has been happening in secondary schools in Kenya. Strikes and unrest in schools, lawlessness, drug abuse and irresponsible behaviours are on the increase and academic performance in most schools has been declining according Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST, 2005). Many studies on Guidance & Counselling has been done on the perception of teachers on the effectiveness of Guidance & Counselling though it has not been fully explored hence the need to undertake the present study to investigate the impact of guidance and counselling on social needs of the students.

Specific areas in the guidance and counselling programme that target the satisfaction of learners social needs include peer relationship, functioning in a group, interpersonal relationships, learning about sexuality, solving social problems, identifying positive and negative habits among peers as well as choice of friends. It was therefore important to conduct this study to examine whether guidance and counselling as currently implemented in secondary schools has accomplished its mandate from students perspective.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The research study was essentially ex post facto. The design was suitable because the variables were naturally occurring. The study population comprised all 500 secondary schools within South and NorthRift regions of Kenya which were categorized as public and private. Ten schools were randomly selected from five counties. The secondary schools were further classified as boarding or day, single or mixed. From the sampled schools a total of 450 students were randomly selected. Each county was represented by two secondary schools. The varied categories involved for the sample provided a representative sample for the school population in the region. Class list was used to get respondents that formed part of the sample in every class. The choice of form two, three and four into the sample was important in that the researcher wanted to look at whether the perception and satisfaction of the impact of guidance and counselling vary according to class level. In addition like any other secondary school curriculum which has learning experiences for each of the classes, guidance and counselling program is organized around class or age appropriate needs. In total there were 250 males and 200 females from public and private schools respectively.

Students Perception Questionnaires (SPQ) comprised two categories that of bio data information and perception on the impact of guidance and counselling on social needs. The items were structured in the form of the Likert scale. To ascertain face and content validity expert opinion was sought from experts in

Educational psychology department. The reliability of the instrument was obtained through internal consistency method after pilot study and it was found to be $r = .893$ which was considered acceptable for this study. The instrument was scored in a positive direction so that the higher the score the more positive perception hence more satisfied. The scoring of the instrument was done in a Likert type scale that had 3 to 1 in order of satisfied (3), not sure (2) and dissatisfied (1). Descriptive statistics were done by use of means specifically the scoring was done as follows dissatisfied (negative) perception below 1.7, not sure (uncertainty) from 1.8 to 2.4 and satisfied (positive) was from 2.5 and above.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data collected was analyzed using t – test and Anova. This was done hypothesis by hypothesis. The first part of data analysis gave an overview of the perception of students on the impact of guidance and counselling which was presented in form of means as indicated in table 1.

Table 1. Perception of students on impact of G/C on social needs

Guidance and counselling helps in:	Mean	Nature of perception
Learning about sexuality	2.42	Uncertainty
Promote respect for peers	2.73	Positive
Improving leadership skills	2.63	Positive
Choice of right friends in school	2.85	Positive
Encouraging respect for female teachers.	2.86	Positive
Detection of negative habits in peers	2.29	Uncertainty
Detection of positive habits in peers	2.21	Uncertainty
Relating with students of opposite sex.	2.21	Uncertainty
Solving social problems	1.11	Negative
Functioning well in a group	2.55	Positive
Making the right decisions at school	2.62	Positive
Violence prevention due conflicts in the groups	2.52	Positive
Getting knowledge on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)	2.65	Positive
Acquiring knowledge on Sexually transmitted Infections (STI)	2.64	Positive
Implementing programmes that enhance social discipline.	2.42	Uncertainty
Choosing marriage partner	1.75	Negative
Peer conflicts resolution	2.24	Positive
Substance abuse prevention arising from peer pressure.	2.61	Positive
Social development	2.73	Positive
positive self – image	2.65	Positive
Overall Mean	2.43	Uncertainty

As presented in table I , thirteen items which ranged from mean statistic from 2.52 to 2.86 indicated they had positive perception on the impact of guidance and counselling on social needs, these included violence prevention, getting knowledge on AIDS, acquiring knowledge on STI, peer conflict resolution, substance abuse prevention, social development, making the right decision at school, functioning well in a group, encouraging, respect for female teachers, improving leadership skills, choice of right friends and promoting respect for peers.

Six items in the social needs comprising of learning about sexuality, detection of negative and positive habits in peers, relating with students of opposite sex, implementing programmes that enhance discipline and peer conflict resolution had mean statistic ranging from 1.75 to 2.42 these gave an indication that students perceived the guidance and counselling services had not impacted positively on these needs hence they were indifferent. The respondents were dissatisfied by the impact of guidance and counselling regarding resolving their personal or social problems with a mean statistic of 1.11. The overall mean for the social needs was 2.43 which indicate uncertainty on the impact of guidance and counselling. This implied that guidance and counselling as currently implemented in most schools is not satisfying students social needs adequately hence the programme may require restructuring to make it more responsive to students' social needs.

HO₁: There is no significant statistical relationship between personal characteristics and students perception of the effectiveness of guidance and counselling on social needs satisfaction.

Table 2. Gender and perception on impact of guidance and counselling social needs

	N	Mean	SD	
Male	231	2.44	.29	
Female	169	2.42	.32	
Independent t – test				
	t	df	Sig. 2 (tailed)	Mean difference
Equal variance, assumed	.526	398	.609	.016
Equal variances not assumed	.519	339	.601	.016

The null hypothesis was supported implying that the gender of the students had no significant impact on their perception of guidance and counselling regards social needs.

Table 3. Age and perception on social needs

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean	F	Sig.(2 tailed)
Between groups	.082	2	.41	.440	.644
Within groups	37.147	397	.094		
Total	37.229	399			

The Anova results shows that there is no significant statistic difference on the impact of guidance and counselling on social needs by the age. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted implying that the age of the students did not influence their perception. Their perception was somewhat similar irrespective of their ages.

Table 4. Category of school and perception on social needs

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean	F	Sig.(2 tailed)
Between groups	.765	3	.255	2.771	.041
Within groups	36.454	396	.092		
Total	37.219	399			

(i) Category	(j) Category	Mean differ (i-j)	Sig.
Mixed	Boarding	.099*	.008
	Day only	.008	.871
	Single	.004	.931
Boarding	Mixed	-.099*	.008
	Day only	-.092	.062
	Single	-.096*	.038
Day	Mixed	-.008	.871
	Boarding	.092	.062
	Single	-.004	.943
Single	Mixed	-.004	.931
	Boarding	.096*	.038
	Day only	.004	.943

The results show that the category of school influenced students perception $P < 0.05$. There was a significant statistical difference on the impact of guidance and counselling on students social needs by the boarding school category that is mixed and single boarding school category $F(3,396 = 2.771, p = 0.041)$ as indicated in table 4. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected implying that the school category where the learners learned influenced positively their perception on the impact of guidance and counselling on social needs satisfaction.

Table 5. Class level and perception of impact of guidance and counselling on social needs

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean	F	Sig.
Between groups	.211	3	.070	.752	.521
Within groups	37.008	396	.093		
Total	37.219	399			

From the results the null hypothesis that there is no significant statistical difference in perception of social needs satisfaction by the class level is accepted concluding that the class levels (form one, two, three and four) did not influence significantly their perception as shown in table 5. It therefore did not matter the class students came from, their perception were similar.

DISCUSSIONS

The discussions of the results has been done in the context of gestalt principles specifically the whole impression. The findings has established that the perception of the impact of guidance and counselling on the satisfaction of social needs based on the overall mean values was 2.4 indicating a situation of uncertainty as shown in table 1. Some of the items in the social needs which the respondents were satisfied that guidance and counselling has had positive effects which included promoting respect for peers, choice of right friends and functioning well in group. The respondents were dissatisfied on the impact of guidance and counselling on its ability to assist students solve their personal or social problems, and choosing marriage partner. The respondents were uncertain on the impact of guidance and counselling on detection of negative or positive habits, implementation of programs that enhance social discipline and peer conflict resolution.

Since the perception of the respondents is that guidance and counselling satisfies their expectations in some items while dissatisfying in other the validity of the programme is therefore reduced hence not functional with regard to social needs of the clients. This could be an indicator of the indiscipline incidences happening in secondary schools. This study has agreed with Rao, (2005) who found that social needs of the young have not received necessary attention through the implementation of guidance and counselling hence pupils do not know how to behave in a group. The findings also confirmed what Wachira (2009) who found that social issues of the students needed intense coverage through counselling program. The study results found that the age, and gender of the students were found insignificant in their influence on the perception of guidance and counselling as indicated in table 2 and 3. The findings agrees with Musgrove (1973) who discovered that gender of students did not significantly influence their perception if on guidance and counselling.

The class level was found insignificant in its influence on the perception of guidance and counselling on social needs as exhibited in table 5. This could have happened due to the exposure and personal experience, and regularized structures in schools. The findings agrees with Musgrove, (1973) who in a study found class level not significant in perception of guidance and counselling.

The research findings revealed that the category of school in which students came from significantly influenced their perceptions on the impact of guidance and counselling on social needs as shown in table 4. The findings revealed an important information on provision of counselling services which take into account the school category or setting of the school (Boarding, day, single or mixed school) where the guidance and counselling programmes are offered.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the discussion of the findings the following conclusions were made: The social needs of the students are not adequately satisfied by the provision of guidance and counselling services. Specifically the guidance and counselling programme have not been able to help students solve their personal or social problems which can help to explain disharmony and restlessness in many secondary schools. The negative perception (dissatisfaction) and the uncertainty perception (not sure responses) is an indication that the guidance and counselling programme is not functional in most schools with respect to the social needs of the students. This could be link to structures in the schools such as no formal time for counselling, lack of facilities and inadequate support to the programme among others.

It was also revealed from the study findings that some important areas of guidance programme regarding social needs of the students were not given adequate coverage in the guidance and counselling programme such as learning about sexually, detection of negative and positive habits in the peers, relating to students of opposite sex and peer conflict resolution. This makes them encounter adjustment problems during their stay in schools and transition to college, careers and future life.

The category of school was found significant in perception on the impact of guidance and counselling on social needs hence is an important consideration in the implementation of the program.

That there is need to promote guidance and counselling activities that target all students not only a few requiring such services which can be done in form of group counselling for all and specific categories of students. The study postulate that if the guidance and counselling programme can succeed in addressing students academic needs then if it is implemented well it can also succeed in overcoming challenges arising due to non fulfilment of social needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

School counsellors need to be retrained in social aspects of guidance and counselling program on adolescents which helps them better during individual and group counselling.

That there should be a deliberate effort to continue the task of creating awareness among the students on the importance of guidance and counselling in addressing their social needs.

There should be team work in the implementation of guidance and counselling program among teachers, parents, peer counselling among others with each having responsibilities.

There is need for stakeholders to take into account students' perception on guidance and counselling program as this affect to a great extent their utilization of counselling services.

Guidance and counselling program should focus on the holistic aspects of the clients and not only academic.

There is need to include in the program as many aspects of the students needs as much as possible so as to help in their overall development.

That counsellors working in the various school categories such as Boarding Schools, Mixed Schools and day schools should adjust their counselling programs according to needs of specific cases.

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BIO-DATA

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