

Teacher Counselors' Perception on the Impact of Guidance and Counseling Programs on the Satisfaction of Students' Emotional Needs in Secondary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

An important role of guidance and counseling is to guide in the emotional development of the learner, facilitating healthy or positive emotions and discouraging negative emotions. Emotions play a key role in directing behavior of learners and shaping personality development. The school counselor is seen as a mentor and a guide in controlling emotional outbursts. The paper sought to find out the perception of teacher counselors on the impact of guidance and counseling programmes as currently implemented in schools on the satisfaction of students' emotional needs. The research study was guided by gestalt theory of perception. The target population for the study was all teacher counselors spread among secondary schools in five counties where ten secondary schools represented other schools which were selected through stratified random sampling method. Twenty teacher counselors were sampled and Ex. Post factor research design was adopted for the study. Data collection was done using questionnaires and the pilot study undertaken in three schools outside the sampled schools but within the same region and the reliability of the teachers questionnaire was 0.765. Expert opinion was sought to ascertain content and construct validity of the instrument. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics. (Means) and inferential statistics (t – test and anova) used to test null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that the rigid schedules in secondary schools do not allow teacher counselors to attend to students' emotional needs. Teachers perceived that guidance and counseling has had positive impact on students' emotional needs satisfaction based on their overall means. The gender of teacher counselors, teaching experience, appointment criteria and counseling qualifications were found to influence their perceptions while school type, school category and age were insignificant. The paper recommends the strengthening of guidance and counseling programs to deal with gaps noted such as examination anxiety, sharing of emotional feelings, correction of students and coping with losses which have to be closed. In addition the following qualities of counselor were proposed such as friendly, comforter, considerate, role model, supportive, loving, persuasive, polite, sensitive, confidential, accommodating, eager and good listening in order to draw attention of the learners for counseling function in the area of emotional needs satisfaction.

Key Words: Counsellors, Perception, Emotional Needs, Secondary Schools, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counseling has existed as long as man has existed on earth. People have used the program on guidance to serve various needs of interest. Some of these needs fall in broad categories such as personal, social emotional vocational, academic, technological and cultural among others. Emotion has been understood to mean an agitated or excited state of the mind and body. Every emotional experience involves many physical and physiological changes in a person which can be expressed overtly and thus easily observable or covertly which are internal physiological changes and thus not observed. These changes become so specific and distinguishable in human beings that a simple glimpse can enable the detection of a particular emotional experience in an individual and identification of whether one is angry or scared (Mangal, 2002).

Adolescence has been referred to as the period of storm and stress by many scholars hence it may be difficult for them to control their emotions. Their emotions fluctuate very frequently and quickly (Hurlock, 1978). In a short span of time they could switch between being happy and extremely sad. The role of guidance and counseling therefore is to train students on their emotions and proper channelizations of emotional energy (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999).

Boys and girls tend to become self-conscious and inquisitive about each other's new dimension. They become restless, agitated and distracted. They seek more freedom and independence and tend to resent interference from adults. If they are not helped adequately they become emotionally crippled. Emotional counseling has emerged as a discipline to provide help to students on schools such that they are not tormented by their internal conflicts and also do not become cynical and resort to self-determinative strategies (Makinde, 1984).

Since emotions play such an important role in determining what kind of personal and social adjustments students will make when they grow, their satisfaction should be of the kind that facilitate good adjustments possible (Hurlock, 1978) emotions can be detected by such features as restlessness, fear, day dreaming, alertness, smiling, friendliness and concentration.

Students in secondary schools may face conflicts between independence, and dependence, conformity and non – conformity, self-assertion and self-negation, early versus later maturation of the genitals and even financial troubles which produces stress (Biswalo, 2000). School counseling plays an important role in the emotional upbringing of students as students are helped to resolve and cope with developmental concerns. The healthy conducive atmosphere of the school always results in a balanced emotional growth. All such things like the physical facilities provided in the school, the methods of teaching, the organization of co-curricular activities and social life in the school, the attitude of teachers towards the students and the self-example of teachers emotional behavior influence emotional development of learners (Herington & Parke, 1999).

The maintenance of proper social relationships and acquisition of social virtues are effective means for bringing essential modification in the emotional behavior of the students (Mangal, 2002). The proper social development can bring desirable and socially approved emotion. Emotions in their crude form are harmful to the individual and the society. One of the aims of guidance and counseling is to train and modify emotions for the welfare of the individual and that of the society (Biswalo, 2000)

The various methods that a counselor can utilize to train and modify emotions include repression, mental occupation, redirection or sublimation and catharsis. According to Bowers and Kottman (1995) moral and spiritual training should form part of the school guidance programme. High ideas of life and moral principles should be made the guiding factors of students' life.

Some of the topics in the guidance programme aimed at satisfying students' emotional needs which were investigated included over coming fears in life, coping with stress, emotional expressions, rewards for good efforts, control of anger and frustration, overcoming failures, dealing with provocation in school, channelization of emotion through extracurricular activities, communication of emotions, and overcoming depression among others.

Statement of the Problem

The Kenyan government has over the years emphasized the use of guidance and counseling services to deal with many of the students' challenges including those arising from their emotions which goes along way in providing their developmental needs. Although a lot of efforts have been put in place for guidance and counseling in schools, little results can be identified. Many vices which were anticipated that a programme on guidance and counseling could help eradicate are still rampant such destruction of school property and lives, fighting, lack of respect, to authorities, bullying others, strike and unrest, harassment of girls, drug abuse and other irresponsible behaviours are on the increase. This paper sought to find out the extent to which guidance and counseling programme is achieving its objective in the area of emotional needs of learners.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Gestalt theory of perception. Gestalt is a German word for 'organized whole'. Human nature is seen as being organized into patterns or whole. According to Perls (1973) the key tenet in Gestalt psychology is that humans do not perceive things in isolation but organize items through their perceptual process into wholes. For instance, a car carrier has a different and even greater meaning than its individual components. The perception of guidance and counseling was considered in the context of the

whole as represented by the overall mean which implied that it was positive, neutral or negative perception.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research study adopted ex post facto design as the variables were naturally occurring. The study population comprised all teacher counselors of secondary schools in South and North Rift regions of Kenya. The schools were stratified as private and public. Ten schools were randomly chosen from the five counties. In each of the secondary schools selected, two teacher counselors took part in the study. In total, there were 20 teacher counselors. The teacher counselors were selected because they are the ones who implement the guidance programme. The assumption was that a disciplined student can also process the correct emotion in various situations.

Teacher Perception Questions (TPQ) comprised two categories that of bio data information and perception of the impact of guidance and counseling on emotional needs. The items were in the form of Likert scale. To ascertain face, construct and content validity expert opinion was sought from experts in the Educational psychology department. The reliability of the instrument was obtained through internal consistency method after pilot study and that teacher counselors questions was 0.765. The instrument was scored in a positive direction so that the higher the score the more positive perception and 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 using means as shown:

Dissatisfied (negative) below 17.

Not sure (uncertainty) 18 to 24 and satisfied (positive) 2.5 and above.

RESULTS

The data collected was analyzed using t- test and Anova. This was done hypothesis by hypothesis, the first part of data analysis gave the nature of perceptions of teacher counselors and Deputy head teachers on the impact of guidance and counseling which was presented in form of means as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Nature of perceptions on emotional needs

	Guidance and counseling helps in	Teachers	Perception
1.	Control of anger and frustration.	2.60	Positive
2.	Providing opportunities to discuss person problems.	2.60	Positive
3.	Enhancing curiosity.	3.0	Positive
4.	Developing confidence for future plans.	2.5	Positive
5.	Over coming fears.	2.45	Neutral
6.	Coping with stress.	2.40	Neutral
7.	Participation in joyful activities like singing, and debates.	2.80	Positive
8.	Providing opportunities for emotional expression.	2.80	Positive
9.	Creating good relationships.	2.90	Positive
10.	Rewarding for good efforts.	2.75	Positive
11.	Correction with love.	2.75	Positive
12.	The feeling of worth/valued.	2.90	Positive
13.	Redirecting emotions.	2.80	Positive
14.	Helpful during examination.	2.90	Neutral
15.	Emphasis on interpersonal relationship.	2.35	Neutral
16.	Reducing fears.	2.25	Neutral
17.	Coping with losses.	2.20	Neutral
18.	Sharing emotions with others.	2.35	Neutral
19.	Developing emotional control.	2.50	Positive
20.	Self respect.	2.62	Positive

From the table it can be noted that the items with means above 2.5 included guidance and counseling helping in control of anger and frustration, providing opportunities to discuss personal problems with counselor, enhancing curiosity in school, participating in joyful activities, providing opportunities for

emotional expression, creating good relationships, rewards for good efforts, correction with love, the feeling of worth, redirecting emotions, helping during examination, developing emotional control and self respect. This shows that teacher counselors viewed guidance and counseling positively.

The uncertainty or neutral perception were noted in the items such as overcoming fears, coping with stress, emphasis on interpersonal relationship, reducing fears, coping with losses and self-respect. Based on gestalt principles, it implied that guidance and counseling as currently implemented in most schools is not satisfying students' emotional needs adequately hence may require improvement to make it more responsive to students emotional needs.

Ho₁. These is no significant statistical relationship between personal characteristics of teacher counselors perception of the effectiveness of guidance and counseling on emotional needs satisfaction.

To test this null hypothesis, t-test was performed.

Table 2. Gender of teachers and perception of the impact of guidance and counseling on emotional needs

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Male	8	2.87	17
Female	12	2.45	34
Independent sampler test	t	df	sig(2 tailed)
Equal variances assumed	3.20	18	.005
Equal variance not assumed	3.64	16	.002

The findings show that male teachers were satisfied than female counterparts based on their mean values. The null hypothesis that the gender of teacher counselors has no significant impact on their perception on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling on students emotional needs satisfaction is rejected implying that the gender of teachers significantly influence their perceptions on emotional needs $T(18) = 3.20$, $p = 0.005$).

Teaching experience and perception of the impact of guidance and counseling on emotional needs the test the null hypothesis one way Anova was utilized.

Table 3. Teaching experience and perception of teacher counselors

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	f	Sig
Between groups	1.783	3	.594	17.673	.000
Within groups	.538	16	.34		
Total	2.321	19			

M

(1)	Teaching (1)	Teaching Experience	Mean Differences	Sig
1-5 years	6-10years		-.38*	0.003
	11-15years		.59	0.000
	16-20years		-.08	.483
6-10years	1-5 years		.38*	.0003
	11-15 years		.97*	.000
	16-20years		.30*	.020
11-15 years	1-5years		-.59*	.000
	6-10years		-.97*	.000
	16-20years		-.078	.000
16-20years	1-5years		.078	.483
	6-10years		-.30*	.020
	11-15years		.67	.000

The results indicate that the teaching experience is significant in influencing the perception on the impact of guidance and counseling on emotional needs at $p < 0.05$. post hoc results was significant $F(3,16) = 17.673$, $p = 0.000$. From these results, the null hypothesis that teaching experience has no significant influence on teachers' perception on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling on students' emotional needs satisfaction is rejected implying that the teaching experienced perception. Teachers with teaching

experience of between 16 to 20 years had more positive perceptions than the others hence they were more satisfied.

Table 4. Age of the teacher and the perception of the impact of guidance and counseling on emotional needs (Anova was utilized to analyze)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between groups	.019	2	.010	.070	.932
Within groups	2.302	17	.135		
Total	2.321	19			

The findings show that there is no significant difference in satisfaction according to the different ages of the teachers on the impact of guidance and counseling on students emotional needs. From the results, the null hypothesis was accepted concluding that the age of teacher counselor didn't significantly influence their perception on the impact of guidance and counseling on the satisfaction of students emotional needs. Their perceptions were similar irrespective of their ages.

Table 5. Appointment criteria and perception of the impact of guidance and counseling on emotional needs (Anova was performed)

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between groups	.899	2	.450	5.373	.016
Within groups	1.422	17	.84		
Total	2.321	19			

Multiple Comparisons

(1) criteria	(1) criteria	Mean difference (1-1)	Sig
Experience	Training	-.21	.371
	Qualification	-.50*	.005
Training	Experience	.21	.371
	Qualification	-.30	.239
Qualification	Experience	.50*	.005
	Training	.30	.239

The findings shows that the appointment criteria influence teacher counsellors' perception of the impact of guidance and counseling on emotional needs ($p < 0.05$). From the results, the null hypothesis that the appointment criteria has no significant impact on teachers' perception of the effectiveness of guidance and counseling on students emotional needs satisfaction is rejected as the appointment criteria of counselors have significant influence on perception of teacher counselors on the satisfaction of emotional needs of students. The teachers who had the right qualification and experience were positive in their perceptions than the others. They were also more satisfied on the impact of guidance and counseling on these needs than those appointed based on other criteria.

Table 6. Counseling qualifications and the perception on emotional needs (T – test was utilized to analyze the data)

	N	Mean	SD
Diploma	7	2.87	.18
Degree	13	2.48	.34

Independent samples test

	T	df	Sig (2 tailed)
Equal variances assumed	2.772	18	.013
Equal variances not assumed	3.304	17	.004

The study findings show that the non-graduate teachers were more satisfied in perception of the impact of guidance and counseling on students emotional needs than the graduate teachers $T(18) = 2.772$, $p = 0.013$. From the results, the null hypothesis that the counseling qualification of teachers has no significant impact on their perception on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling on students emotional needs satisfaction was rejected implying that the counseling qualification of teachers significantly influenced

their perception on the satisfaction of students' emotional needs. Non – graduate (Diploma teachers) were more positive towards the impact of guidance and counseling on the satisfaction of emotional needs than the graduate counter parts.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is presented based on the hypotheses and is guided by Gestalt principles especially the wholistic impression. The overall satisfaction for teacher counselors was 2.62 indicating that they were satisfied with regard to the impact of guidance and counseling on the satisfaction of emotional needs. From Table 1, the respondents were satisfied with respect to the impact of guidance and counseling on emotional needs such as coping with stress, promoting opportunities for emotional expression, overcoming fears in life and control of anger and frustration.

The findings also shows that respondents were uncertain (neutral perception) on the impact of guidance and counseling on some items such as counselors being helpful during examination time, reducing fears through self-expression, correcting students with love, sharing emotions with others, feeling valued and worth implying that the guidance and counseling programmes could not be delineated clearly as having done much regarding these items.

The findings therefore show gaps in the implementation of guidance and counseling programmes which require closure solution. The fact that the respondents show satisfaction on some parts of the emotional needs and uncertainty in others weakened the guidance and counseling programme hence overallly the programme is dysfunctional.

The study findings are consistent with Eshiwani (2001) who asserted that educators have used overloaded and unbalanced curriculum that emphasis cognitive needs and overlooking other elements of learner welfare such as emotional needs. The findings also agrees with Hurlock (1978) who alluded that since emotions play such an important role in determining the kind of personal adjustments people make, their satisfaction must be the one that facilitate good adjustments. The study results are also consistent with the findings of Simatwa and Ajowi (2010) who found that the unrest in schools could be spontaneous response to deeply rooted frustration and the feeling of powerlessness that require strong guidance program. Additionally, the findings support what Ngale (2009) found in a study that only 6.3% of the students indicated they will consult the school counselor when they have emotional problems.

The gender of teacher counselors was found to influence their perception on the impact of guidance and counseling on emotional needs as shown in Table 2. Male teacher counselors seem more satisfied than their female colleagues. The study findings agreed with Mutie and Ndambuki (2002) who found that gender perceptions are linked to sex role stereotyping. In addition, teaching experience of teachers was significant in its influence on the perceptions of the impact of guidance and counseling on emotional needs as shown in Table 3. Appointment criteria of teacher counselors was found significant based on Anova results as indicated in Table 5. Teachers who were appointed based on qualification showed more positive perception and satisfaction on emotional needs. This implies that the method used to appoint teacher counselors to implement guidance and counseling programming might dictate to a large extent their willingness and resourcefulness in running and managing the guidance programmes. It also influences their perceptions on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling on the client needs.

The findings are consistent with Egbochuku (2008) who found in a study that the qualification of counselors had impact on the quality of guidance and counseling services they provide to secondary school students. Counseling qualification of teachers was found to be significant where the non-graduate teacher counselors had more positive perceptions and were more satisfied than their graduate colleagues based on t-test results.

CONCLUSION

The provision of guidance and counseling programmes do not satisfy students' emotional needs as indicated by the low mean in the teachers subscale. This can be link to the structures in the schools that emphasis more on good performance in academics as oppose to other vital needs of the students.

Guidance and counseling services should thus be revamped to enhance emotional development of the learners both in individual and group therapies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need to promote guidance and counseling activities that target all students not only a few requiring such services which can be done in form of group counseling for all and specific students.

Emotional developmental aspects during adolescent period should be entrenched in the guidance program to enable learners benefit from these and also to understand the root of their emotions and how to control them.

Guidance and counseling program should focus on holistic aspects of the students and not only academic. The school administration should have programs to deal with items that registered uncertainty perceptions such as overcoming fears, coping with stress, coping with losses and sharing out their emotions with others.

There should be collaboration among stakeholders in the implementation of guidance and counseling program where each has a responsibility to assist learners emotionally.

Teachers' perception of guidance and counseling need to be taken into consideration in the implementation of the program: Their views and opinions should be sought to enhance program execution. Teacher counselor should be emotionally mature so that he or she helps in modeling learners emotions.

Guidance and counseling services should be enhanced in the learners adjustment periods e.g. entering form one, leaving form four, promotion to next class and after some events such as bereavement or other losses. Guidance team should foster a conducive school atmosphere which results in balanced emotional behavior of students.

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