
THE LEVEL OF TRAINING OF TEACHER COUNSELORS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAMARINY DIVISION OF KEIYO DISTRICT, KENYA

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ABSTRACT: *In any institution, the guidance and counselling department is deemed so crucial because it has an impact on the growth and the provision of quality educational programs. The impact of guidance and counselling in schools depends on the availability of resources, both human and physical and the support of the head teachers (Lutomia & Sikolia, 2008). This entangled with proper teacher counselor training makes guiding and counseling contributes to the great success in schools. It is therefore important for every school to have a working guidance and counselling program to be able to support the students who need assistance for their growth and discipline in schools. Parents must also be included in the program for it to function properly (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). This paper focuses on identifying teacher counselor and their levels of training in secondary schools in Kamariny Division of Keiyo District. The author employed a descriptive survey design targeting the teacher counselors in the selected schools. The population of the study comprised 10 teacher counselors. Purposive sampling was used to select the teacher counselors. A questionnaire was used in data collection after which the data were analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 12.5 for Windows. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. The findings showed that the teacher counselors are not adequately trained to counsel the students in the secondary schools. Many of them have attended only workshops and seminars on guidance and counselling. The paper therefore recommends that each secondary school in Kenya should have a well trained guidance and counselling teacher to assist the students deal with existing and emerging challenges.*

KEYWORDS: Level, Training, Teacher Counselors, Guiding and Counselling Secondary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Historical Development of the Guidance and Counselling Movement

The guidance and counselling movement started in Europe and USA in the 19th century but did not gain momentum until the 20th century (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). Some of the pioneers of guidance movement in the U.S.A were Frank Parson (1909), Brewer (1932-1942), Reed (1944) and Shertzer and Stone (1976). At the beginning, the guidance movement focused on the vision of occupational guidance and later it included assessing individuals for different jobs (Makinde, 1984). Before 1900, most counselling was in the form of advice-giving in most parts of the world. Most of the pioneers of counselling identified themselves as teachers and social reformers (Gladding, 2000). The Counselling movement then focused on the provision of occupational information (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). According to Gladding (2000), Psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud dominated counselling between 1900-1909. Jesses B Davis was the first person to

set up systematic guidance in a public school in Michigan (U.S. A). He believed that proper guidance would cure the ills of the American society. In 1901, Frank Parsons established a vocation bureau at Boston which emphasized on vocational information, planning and guidance. He assisted young men to make vocational choices based on occupational aptitudes and interests (Makinde, 1984). Moreover Clifford Beers in 1909 founded the National Committee for Hygiene, which promoted the improvement of services to the mentally ill (Gladding, 2000).

In the African traditional setting guidance was done among the children, adolescent and adults (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). During childhood, a child was guided on the societies' dos' and donts'. They also imparted with the cultural values of the society. During adolescence, guidance was directed towards training and teaching the adolescent about social obligations, courage, perseverance and how to make independent moral decisions (Ibid). Adults were taught skills like hunting, raiding, weaving, and taking care of the less privileged in the society. Guidance of the old men and women were done by agencies through interaction. Effective guiding and counseling in schools however requires that teacher counselors be trained to acquire the skills in running the programmes. The following sections discuss the organization and qualifications for counselors.

Organization of Guidance and Counselling Department in Secondary Schools

The personnel in the guidance and counselling department committee according to GoK (2009) includes the Head of Department, Assistant Head of Department, Form 1-4 teacher counselors, and Associate counselors e.g. club coordinators and boarding masters. The committee helps in guidance and counselling activities and programs. It offers forums for sharing guidance and counselling activities and effective implementation of the program. The committee also makes consultations, monitoring and evaluation of activities like getting feedbacks from active and involved teachers. It also recommends for replacement of a committee member in case of absenteeism or transfer hence continuity of the guidance and counselling activities in the school.

According to Mutie and Ndambuki (1999), guidance and counselling program must be included in the school timetable and the school budget. The programs that must be programmed include group guidance whereby a talk is given to the whole school or a particular form on a certain issue, group guidance, individual counselling, orientation of form ones, parents guidance, teachers, seminars and guidance and counselling related clubs like peer counselling (GoK, 2009). It further observes that the guidance and counselling department should plan and arrange for resource persons. The department should work in partnership with external speakers/counselors, organizations NGO's), NACADA, Rehabilitation centers and other organizations like churches to be able to access the speakers who will give talks on education, careers, health and discipline.

The counselling room/office should be available and should be specifically located for the purpose of counselling (Wangao & Mungai, 2007). The office should be located in ideal place to allow students visit any time without feeling intimidated. It should also allow room for privacy so that the students can discuss issues with ease. This is because counselling in particular deals with highly personal problems and therefore it requires a quiet and confidential setting of a two way communication (Dondo, 1996).

Counselors Qualifications and Credentials

George and Cristiani (1990) suggested three general objectives of counselling. These are to assist individual students to achieve an increasing degree of maturity in working towards the solution of problems; to assist the school staff in securing, interpreting and using information obtained in counselling students; to assist the school and its staff in understanding and working with community in various services.

According to Macleod (1993), counselors are expected to acquire the following skills and qualities:

i) Interpersonal skills: Competent counsellors are able to demonstrate appropriate listening, communication, empathy, awareness of non-verbal communication, sensitive to voice quality, responsiveness, to expression of emotions, structuring time and use of language. These views are in tandem with Lutomia and Sikolia (2008) who argue that good counselors have the ability to interact through skills such as liking and being a good listener. Students like a counsellor whom they are free to share their problems with and are able to show patience, empathy and an attitude of caring.

ii) Personal beliefs and attitudes: Good counselors should have the capacity to accept others, belief in the potential for change, awareness of ethical and moral choices and sensitivity to values held by others and self. Lutomia and Sikolia (2008) further added that counselors need to appreciate personal differences in order to deal with each case on its own merit.

iii) Mastery of techniques: Counselors should have knowledge of when and how to carry out specific interventions, ability to assess effectiveness of intervention, understanding of rationale behind the techniques used and professionally able to handle all types of interventions. The school counselor should have the ability to understand and assess the student problem, to anticipate future consequences of the action taken and be able to remember the information of the student at all times.

iv) Ability to understand and work within social systems: Counselors need to appreciate work and social dynamics in order to be effective. Systems such as family, work relationships of the client and the ability to use support networks and supervision are critical. The above entails being sensitive to the social worlds of clients drawn from difference backgrounds, gender, ethnic and socio-economic orientations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Kamariny Division of Keiyo District in Kenya. A descriptive survey design was employed with focus on the teacher counselors in the ten selected schools. The population of the study comprised 10 teacher counselors. Purposive sampling was used to select the teacher counselors. Questionnaires were used in data collection after which the data was analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 12.5 for Windows. Data was presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. The findings showed that the teacher counselors are not adequately trained to counsel the students in the secondary schools. Many of them have attended only workshops and seminars on guidance and counselling. The paper therefore recommends that each secondary school in Kenya should have a well trained guidance and counselling teacher to assist the students deal with existing and emerging challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to establish the level of professional training for teacher counselor in secondary schools in Kamariny division of Keiyo district. Table 1 gives the details of the analysis. This was aimed at probing the teacher counselors training on counseling. It identified the training of teacher counselors in terms of attending workshops, seminars, diploma and degree courses.

Table 1: Level of Professional Training for Teacher Counselors on Guidance and Counseling

Statement	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Have participated in workshop		
Yes	7	70
No	3	30
Total	10	100
Teacher Counselor Training		
Yes	6	60
No	4	40
Total	10	100
Level of Training as counselor		
Workshop/Seminar	1	20
Certificate course	1	20
Diploma	1	20
Degree	1	20
Masters	1	20
Total	5	100
Facilitation of Counselors to be Effective counselors through		
Workshops & Seminars	4	66.7
Guided by trained members	1	16.7
Through experience	1	16.7
Total	6	100

The study aimed at finding out the training level of the teacher counsellor in the secondary schools. 70% of the teacher counselors had participated in seminars and workshops facilitated by the Ministry of Education. The statistics show that at least 3 schools have teacher counselors who have not acquired the basic counselling skills. This is shown further by the response that 60% of the members of the guidance and counselling committee are trained teacher counselors while 40% of them are not.

The head teachers support the training of teacher counselors through sponsoring them to attend seminars and workshops and individual teacher counselors are going for further studies to acquire the counselling skills. The findings also indicate that in five schools, the teacher counselors had been trained at workshop/seminars, certificate course, diploma, degree and masters levels respectively as shown in table 1. This gives a total of five trained teacher counselor heading the

guidance and counselling departments. Counselors in-training is needed for the teacher counselors to enable them acquire the skills of counselling to make them become competent counsellors (Omulema, 2000). Also, according to Macleod (1993), counselors should have knowledge of when and how to carry out specific interventions, ability to assess effectiveness of intervention, understanding rationale behind the techniques used and professionally able to handle all types of interventions. The school counselor should have the ability to understand and assess the student problem, to anticipate future consequences of the action taken and be able to remember the information of the student at all times.

CONCLUSION

The teacher counselors are not adequately trained to counsel the students in the secondary schools. Many of them have attended only workshops and seminars on guidance and counseling.

RECOMMENDATION

The Ministry of Education should enhance and encourage training of teacher counselors to equip them with the counselling skills which will make them to be competent.

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