

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES AND THEIR  
EFFECT ON BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NYERI  
COUNTY, KENYA.**

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**ABSTRACT**

Guidance plays an important role in preventing educational, personal, social, mental emotional and other similar problems among primary school pupils worldwide. The study sought to establish the strategies that guidance and counselling service providers apply for effective behaviour management; the training level for guidance teacher's and pupils' attitude towards guidance and counselling services in school; and the frequency at which guidance and counselling services are being offered in primary schools. The instruments used in this study were questionnaires for the head teachers, interview schedules for counselling teachers and focused group discussions for pupils. The study established that; the guidance and counseling departments in the majority of the primary schools in Nyeri was active. Secondly, the strategies that the guidance and counseling teachers applied were found to be effective in behavior management. Additionally, pupils had a

positive attitude towards counseling in the primary schools, and this had an effect on behavior management. The study recommended that the government to review the teacher training syllabus, and include more content on Guidance and Counseling and behavior development of the pupils. The schools should also provide the necessary resources to the guidance and counseling teachers, to enable them handle the counseling cases.

**Key words: Guidance, Counselling, behaviour management, training**

## **1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Guidance and counselling services help reduce irregular behaviour patterns emanating from social, psychological, emotional and developmental problems (Rowley et al. 2005). The increase in “diverse pupils’ problems and the current economic situation have made the need for effective counselling services even more critical than in the past” (Mapfumo, 2001). Guidance and counseling is an interaction process co-joining the counselee, who is vulnerable and who needs assistance and the counselor who is trained and educated to give this assistance.

Guidance and counseling service are crucial elements in behaviour management of pupils in all levels of education. There exists necessity of guiding pupils on behavior patterns in the interests of the whole school. Using guidance and counseling to promote discipline must continually be practiced if people are to work harmoniously for the achievement of common purpose. According to Madhuku (2005), the growing number of social, economic and family problems has resulted in an increased need for Guidance and Counselling services in schools. He further stressed that teachers and schools have the responsibility of ensuring that each pupil matures steadily along his own personal line. This can be achieved through comprehensive guidance of the pupils to the desired path in life, and rigorous counseling exercises to them, during and after schools.

Effective school counselling results in an increase of behaviours related to achievement such as improved study habits, efficient use of time and greater academic effort. According to Euvrard (1996), effective high school guidance services operate in a preventive way and equip pupils with information, skills and attitudes, which enable them to negotiate the challenges of adolescence successfully. Where there is no guidance and counselling, schools lose those children who are not able to cope with specific academic standards. Guidance and counselling services enhance pupils’ performance reduce pupils’ dropout rates and prepare students for the world of work and life UNESCO (2002). Education policies have changed over the years including the banning of corporal punishment. Guiding and counseling has therefore remained the single most suitable way of reaching the pupils in schools. Parents have become too busy to afford quality time and attention to their children; hence the task has been put squarely on the shoulder of the teachers. This has therefore necessitated the need to strengthen guiding and counseling in schools. Family and societal changes provide a major challenge to education as a social institution for change and development (Abagi, Olwega & Otieno, 2000). Parents bear the bigger burden of educating their children and therefore more parents are spending their time on economic activities and less time with their children. This deprives the children the opportunity of receiving parental guidance. Many at times, the parents spend very little free time with their children, and this creates a gap between the parents and the children.

As a result of this, the pupils counseling needs are left un-attended, and now the task is left for teachers. At present, there are no officially established or government approved guidance and counseling programs in the Kenyan primary education system. Some schools have started guidance and counseling programs that are aimed at responding to pupils needs usually in times of crisis. In

such programs, some of the teachers are requested by the school administration to take the role of guidance and counseling. Pupils who are encountering personal problems then go to the identified teachers to discuss their problems. Since there are no specific facilities and time set aside for these discussions, the availability of such teachers is minimal, hence not many pupils use the opportunity. In schools where facilities are available, the teachers are not properly trained to deal with the issues the pupils present to them.

### **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Guidance and counselling services have been put in place in public schools in Kenya. The services are meant to assist pupils to learn about responsible behaviour by examining a full range of consequences for their behaviour and by making value judgment about their behaviour and its consequences in order to make realistic decisions in life. Guidance and counselling has become even more crucial in recent years following the withdrawal of corporal punishment that was initially used by teachers to instill discipline. However, this seems not to have been realized since there are noticeable pupils' indiscipline and behaviour cases in primary schools in Nyeri County that often take the form of substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, poor sexual relationship, wastage of time, distress, depression, poor study habits and school dropout. This situation puts in question the implementation and effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme in primary schools. It is for this reason that this study aims at investigating the effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling services on Behaviour Management in primary schools in Nyeri County, Kenya.

### **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling services on Behaviour Management in primary schools in Nyeri County, Kenya.

### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study was guided by the following objectives:-

1. To establish the strategies that guidance and counseling service providers apply for effective behaviour management on pupils in primary schools in Nyeri County.
2. To find out the training level of guidance and counselling service providers and its effect on behaviour management in primary schools in Nyeri County.
3. To determine the counselors' and pupils' attitude towards guidance and counseling services for effective behaviour management on pupils in primary schools in Nyeri County.
4. To examine the frequency at which guidance and counseling services are provided and its effect on pupils behaviour management in primary schools in Nyeri county.

### **1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

Guidance and Counseling programs are designed to address whatever interferes with a pupil's ability to learn, to succeed, and to participate in the learning process. These issues enhance learning and justify the existence of the guidance and counselling program. Academic excellence requires personal excellence and the ability of an individual to utilize the educational opportunities available. This calls for the review of the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme, and especially on its effectiveness in behaviour management in primary schools.

### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study will be on much significance to the Ministry of Education in that it will assist the educational policy makers, the primary school administrators, and the teaching staff in planning and

making appropriate decisions to strengthen guidance and counseling services in the primary schools. The recommendations of this study will also assist the counselors in undertaking the pupils' affairs, thus helping them to achieve academic, vocational, social and personal growth and appropriate integration into the values and productive activities of the society. Parents of the pupils will also benefit from the recommendations of this study in that they will be geared towards improvement of the guidance and counseling service, at the school, and hence reduced task for them. The study will too create awareness on the importance of effective guidance and counseling services at primary school level.

### **1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study was carried out in public primary schools in Nyeri County. Specifically, focus was on the issues relating to guidance and counseling at primary school level.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Behaviour Management**

Behavior management has been and is still the chief concern of educators across the country. More should be done to create effective classroom and school environment through the use of better classroom management approaches (McKinney et al., 2005). Students' misbehavior may be in the increase due to several factors. First, teachers may not be trained well on behavior management methods, on how to research on behavior management approaches; and schools not having a seamless and consistent approach to behavior management utilized across classroom, pupils, and teachers.

Over the years discipline has been equated to punishment, specifically corporal punishment. Punishment and discipline however, is not the same thing. Discipline involves teaching others right from wrong; it includes methods to prevent or to respond to behavior problems so they do not occur in future. Pupils who are disciplined behave appropriately in different situations.

### **2.2 Guidance and counselling**

Guidance is defined as a process, by which a person is assisted to understand, accept and use his or her interests, abilities aptitudes and attitudinal patterns, in relation to his or her aspirations. According to Ndondo (2004), counselling on the other hand is defined as a process in which the counselee having identified an emotional problem is helped by the counselor to see his problem clearly until he or she is able to give himself or herself advice considering his opinions, abilities and limitations in solving it.

In the school situation, counseling is a personal and dynamic relationship between two individuals, one older and more experienced and wiser, in such a case, a teacher, and another younger, less experienced and less wise that is the pupil (Wango and Mungai, 2007). The aim of counseling in school should go beyond the initial focus of helping to solve pupils' immediate problems. Counseling and supporting pupils with difficulties should be seen as a means of beginning the process of empowering young people to fully utilize their potential. The development of effective study habits in relation to how one can utilize his or her assets and manage his or her abilities for optimal development is an essential service of guidance and counseling services (Oniye & Alawane 2008). The counselor is obliged to ensure that the pupils receive proper guidance on the various time management methods, saving time in actions and creating time to do the academic things. However, the adoption of the methods of time management is the responsibility of the pupil.

### **2.3 Strategies of Guidance and Counselling**

Children need clear limits and guidance on what is right and wrong and abandoning the short cut of violence is likely to produce better disciplined children. Counsellors need to see clearly that there is always an alternative, and this can be found if corporal punishment is no longer considered as a possible tool for meting out discipline. These range from proper planning, monitoring and evaluation, sharing information, empowering pupils among others.

### **2.4 Counsellors training**

Hornby (2003) recommends that all teachers should have basic counseling skills and that at least one teacher, in this case the teacher counselor, should have specialist expertise in counseling. In this way, they would be able to assist the children and young people in school. This entails for the incorporation of guidance and counseling units in the teacher training curriculum, so as to enable the teachers to obtain the counseling skills, during the teacher training time. Fuster, (2002) argues that many professional training; programmes require counseling pupils to have supervised practice, group training, personal therapy or similar educational experiences. Each of these is designed to increase self- awareness, facilitate self-acceptance and remove the emotional and psychological blocks that hinder counseling effectiveness. These skills are achieved through training of the counselors, to be in charge of guidance and counseling in primary schools. The training of school counsellors has been found to have an effect on school guidance and counseling services implementation and effectiveness.

### **2.5 Teachers and pupils attitude**

Negative attitudes of some school administrators, counsellors and students affect the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling services (Reynolds & Cheek 2002). Guidance and counselling in schools may not survive without administrative support for their implementation and maintenance (Herr 2001). Therefore, counseling process represents a part of the total process of guidance which is helping individuals, achieve the self- understanding and self- direction necessary to make the maximum adjustment in a particular environment.

### **2.6 Time Allocated to Guidance and Counselling Programme**

School counselors' heavy teaching loads and other responsibilities such as administrative duties in the school leave little time for them to meet student needing guidance and counselling services. Muchiru (1998) argues that parents claim to have little time with their children to give them the guidance and counselling. The pupils lack an elder person to guide them guidance at home. At school, there usually exists a gap between the pupil, and the teachers. This is probably because of the disciplinary measures the teachers take, or accrued respect towards the teacher, that makes the pupils to shy away with their counseling problems.

Besley (2002), advocates for the employment of full-time school counselors. Biswalo (1996) argues that the need for counseling services today could be due to the ever- growing complexity of the society and people have to learn how to cope with the upcoming challenges. Therefore, counseling in schools should be considered as a remedy to the current issues, in regards to the ability of the pupils to cope with them and should be given enough time. Guidance and counselling may help to genuinely change the school environment and pupils' potential for the better (Fusick, 2004).

## **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Mixed methodology was used in this study. It was appropriate for the study because the researchers collected both quantitative and qualitative data. Some of the items in the questionnaire were

analyzed quantitatively. This meant the use of numbers and statistical methods. The quantitative data is going to be in terms of frequency in guidance and counseling and the levels of training while the qualitative data will be in terms of description of teachers and pupils' attitude and strategies used.

This study used a triangulation design. Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. Using this design, the researchers attempted to find answers to questions relating to the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services on behaviour management at the primary school level, in Nyeri County.

#### 4.0. STUDY FINDINGS

The findings have been presented thematically with the themes developed from the research questions. The first objective sought to establish the strategies that guidance and counseling service providers apply for effective behaviour management on pupils, and the responses obtained are revealed on the table below.

**Table 1: Strategies that Guidance and Counseling service providers apply for effective behaviour management on Pupils.**

S t a t e m e n t	S A A U N D S D				
	5	4	3	2	1
The teachers identify the pupils with counseling needs	43.6	41.8	0	14.5	0
The pupils with counseling needs approach the teachers with their problems	12.7	47.3	0	40	0
The misbehaving pupils are counseled before any other action is taken	23.6	54.5	7.3	14.5	0
The pupils that are counseled are left satisfied and knowing their mistakes	18.2	81.8	0	0	0
The teachers do guidance and counselling to the whole c groups	29.1	32.8	0	32.7	0
The counselling sessions are at times individualized as per the needs of the pupils	63.6	36.4	0	0	0
Parents are at times invited in the sessions	25.5	45.5	7.3	7.3	14.5
The counselling sessions are usually discussion between the counsellor and the counselee.	56.4	32.7	10.9	0	0
The teachers lead and guide the pupils by example, by portraying good morals	58.2	41.8	0	0	0
Career and life skill education is usually done in classroom and involving all the pupils	27.3	40.0	0	32.7	0

The study established that the majority (43.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the teachers were able to identify the pupils with counseling needs, as opposed to (14.5%) who disagreed. The study further established that the majority (47.3%) agreed that the pupils with counseling needs did approach the teachers with their problems, as opposed to (40%) of the respondents who disagreed

The second objective sought to establish the out the training level of guidance and counselling service providers and its effect on behaviour management. The findings obtained are revealed on table 2 below:

**Table 2: The training level of Guidance and Counselling service providers and its effect on behaviour management**

S t a t e m e n t	SA	A	UN	D	SD
	5	4	3	2	1
Teacher counselors undergo guidance and counseling training	29.1	34.5	0	36.4	0
All the teachers in the teacher training colleges are trained on guidance and counseling	30.9	36.4	0	32.7	0
The training help in the implementation of guidance and counseling programme	100	0	0	0	0
The training is usually relevant to the counseling needs the pupils	21.8	65.5	0	12.7	0
The training is not usually applicable in the real classroom scenario	12.7	32.7	10.9	43.6	0
The teachers undergo extra training on the issues of guidance and counselling	52.7	25.5	0	7.3	14.5
The ministry of education policy guidelines on counselling are followed	67.3	0	0	32.7	0
The teachers go for seminars on counselling and guidance	21.8	38.2	7.3	14.5	18.2

The study established that the teachers did undergo training, as was revealed by the majority (36.4%) of the head teachers, while 34.5% of the respondents disagreed. The study further established that while in the teacher training colleges, all teachers were trained on guidance and counseling, as was revealed by the majority (36.4%). All (100%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the teachers training in guidance and counseling did help the teachers in implementation of guidance and counseling programmes in the schools. The study further established at (67.3%) that the Ministry of Education policy guidelines on counseling were being followed. However, teachers indicated that lack of support from the parents, bullying of the pupils, insufficient support from the administration and the counseling sessions interfering with the school programmes are among the issues they encountered in handling counseling. The third objective sought to establish the counselors and pupils attitudes towards guidance and counseling services in the schools. The findings obtained are presented on the table below.

**Table 4: Counselors and pupils attitude towards Guidance and Counseling services**

S t a t e m e n t	SA	A	UN	D	SD
	5	4	3	2	1
There exists a huge virtual distance between the pupils and teachers	23.6	21.8	0	54.5	0
Pupils fear teachers, instead of respect	7.3	36.4	0	45.5	10.9
Pupils fear the teachers reactions	7.3	47.3	21.8	23.6	0
Some counseling needs are associated with the teachers and hence the students shy away	18.2	21.8	14.5	32.7	12.7
Some needs are too personal for discussion	18.2	56.	0	14.5	10.9
Some teachers are not even concerned by the pupils needs	54.5	0	0	21.8	23.6
Unavailability of the teachers	14.5	0	10.9	50.9	23.6

According to the above table, majority of the respondents (54.5%) disagreed that there existed a huge virtual distance between the pupils and the teachers. The study further established that the

pupils respected teachers, instead of fearing them, as was revealed by the majority (45.5%) of the respondents. Additionally, the study established that some of the pupils needs were too personal, and that is why the pupils did not discuss them with the teachers, as was revealed by the majority (56.0%) of the respondents. The study further established that some of the teachers were not concerned with the pupil's needs, as was revealed by the majority (54.5%) of the head teachers.

The fourth objective sought to establish the frequency at which guidance and counseling services are provided and its effect on pupils' behaviour management in primary schools. The findings obtained are presented below on table 5.

**Table 5: Effect of the frequency of Guidance and Counseling services on behaviour management in primary schools**

S t a t e m e n t	S A		A		U N		D		S D	
	5	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	
The pupils did visit the counseling teachers frequently	5	3	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	
The time allocated by the school for guidance and counseling was adequate.	41.4	0	3	1	9.1	44.3	6	3		
The guidance and counseling teachers are able to handle the students within the allocated time	9.4	3	1	9.1	44.3	6	3			
The pupils who attended counseling sessions regularly change their behaviours	3.1	50.1	1	9	15.9	12.5				
The guidance and counselling teachers are able to handle all the cases of indiscipline in the schools	1	9	3	1	9.4	3	8	3	1	
The guidance and counselling teachers do offer group counselling to the pupils, oftenly	6.3	2	5	2	8	3	4	6	3	
The more oftenly the counsellors offered counselling to the pupils, the more the pupils developed a positive behaviour change	1	9	7	5	3.1	3	1	0		

Results from the table above established that, those pupils who attended guidance and counseling sessions regularly, did change their behaviours, as was revealed by the majority (50.1%) of the respondents. The study also revealed that the the guidance and counselling teachers were not able to handle all the cases of indiscipline in the schools, as was revealed by the majority (38%) of the respondents. The study further established that the more often the counsellors offered counselling to the pupils, the more the pupils developed a positive behaviour change, as was indicated by the majority (75%) of the respondents.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers made the following conclusions. One, guidance and counseling departments in the majority of the primary schools in Nyeri was active, and the pupils did receive counseling services. The strategies that the guidance and counseling teachers did apply were found to be effective in behavior management.

Secondly, though teachers who offered guidance and counseling in the schools, had undergone some basic training in guidance and counseling, they however lacked professionalism in counseling, and this did have an effect in behavior management of the pupils. Thirdly, though pupils had a positive attitude towards counseling in the primary schools, some of the pupils did shy away from disclosing to their teachers some of their counseling needs and this had an effect on behavior management. Lastly, the study concludes that the frequency of provision of guidance and counseling services did have a positive influence on the behavior development of the pupils, however, the time allocated for guidance and counseling was not adequate.



## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers made the following recommendations: One, the government of Kenya through the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) should review the teacher training syllabus, and include more content on Guidance and counseling and behavior development of the pupils. This information is important in equipping the teachers in training with the strategies to handle behavior management, by use of guidance and counseling. Secondly, schools should provide the necessary resources to the guidance and counseling teachers, to enable them handle the counseling cases. Thirdly, teachers' in-charge of guidance and counseling in the primary schools should be offered training through seminars and workshops, to equip them with the emerging strategies of handling the guidance and counseling cases in the schools. The schools should also review and allocate more time to counseling issues, in order to effectively handle the guidance and counseling cases in the school. Alternatively, the school should allocate more teachers the role of guidance and counseling. Lastly, parents should also take part in counseling of the pupils, while at home, and should co-operate with the teachers in handling and solving of the pupils counseling needs.

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