

Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing Students Academic, Career and Personal Competencies. A Case of Secondary Schools in Nyamira District, Kenya

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Abstract

Guidance and counselling programme was first implemented in Nyamira District secondary schools after the banning of the cane in 2001. However, students in the district still lack academic, career and personal competencies as indicated by persistent poor academic performance, school disturbances and high drop-out rates. This may be attributed to ineffective school guidance and counselling programme among other factors. Thus this study purposed to determine the secondary school students, head teachers and teacher counsellors' perceptions on the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme in enhancing students' academic, career and personal competencies. The study utilized ex-post facto causal comparative design. The respondents of the study were 18 head teachers, 18 teacher counsellors and 302 students drawn from a population of 3752 form three students, 47 head teachers and 47 teacher counsellors. Random sampling method was used to select student respondents. Purposive sampling method was used to select the head teachers and teacher counsellors who participated in the study. Data for the study were collected using open and close ended questionnaires and interview schedules. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Means, frequencies and percentages were the descriptive statistics while one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was the inferential statistic used. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 was used to estimate the reliability. Reliability co-efficient of 0.87, 0.92 and 0.60 for students' questionnaire (SQ), Teacher counsellors Questionnaire (TCQ) and Head Teachers Questionnaire (HTQ) were obtained respectively and were considered acceptable for the study. All the respondents who participated in the study perceived school guidance and counselling programme as effective in enhancing students academic, career and personal competencies. Education stake-holders and policy makers in education who include teacher counsellors, school managers, TSC personnel, Ministry of education officials and NGOs interested in education matters may use the results of this study to strengthen, improve and maintain the programme services. It was recommended that guidance and counselling programme be implemented and fully supported as a matter of priority in all secondary schools to equip all students with necessary academic, career and personal competencies.

Keywords: Perception, effectiveness, guidance and counselling, competencies, Nyamira District.

1.0 Introduction

Guidance and counselling is becoming an increasingly important programme in Kenyan secondary schools as it assists students to handle day-to day psychological and social problems arising from their transition from childhood to adulthood and modern challenges afflicting the Kenyan Society. According to Barwick (2000) the guidance and counselling profession started in the United States of America during the Great Depression. It began as a means of matching workers and jobs due to increased diversity of occupations and lack of jobs, a situation similar to what is happening in Kenya today. The Kenya government has long recognized the need for school guidance and counselling. For instance, in 1971 guidance and counselling programme was implemented according to the recommendations of the Kenya Education Report (GOK, 1964). Subsequent education reports have recommended the strengthening and improvement of the programme to make it more effective (GOK, 1976; GOK, 1999 & GOK, 2001). Despite the implementation of the programme and its subsequent improvements, a number of studies indicate that it may not have achieved its objectives as students lack the competencies required to maximize their academic, career and personal potentialities (Okama, 2003; Mutie & Ndambuki, 2011). This is manifested in poor performance in national examinations and increase in examination cheating. For instance, in 2001, alone, 2880 students had their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results in 100 examination centres cancelled (Siringi, 2001). Cheating in KCSE examination can be a sign of lack of adequate study skills, habits and attitudes required to plan for and write examinations among secondary school students. Moreover, the Task Force on Students' Indiscipline and Unrest in Secondary Schools established that unrest, antisocial behaviours such as strikes, lesbianism, drug and substance abuse, sexual perversion, devil worship and HIV/Aids infections are widespread among secondary school students (GOK, 2001). The task force observed that students have personal problems which include inability to disclose their problems, poor interpersonal

relationships, inability to make informed decisions, hopelessness after completing form four and difficulties balancing time for extra-curricular and academic work. This is an indication of inadequate personal, career and academic competencies among Kenyan secondary students including those in Nyamira District, hence the essence of this study.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Although guidance and counselling programme in Kenya was established to assist students develop competencies needed to overcome academic, career and personal challenges, there are indications that students in Nyamira District secondary schools lack academic, career and personal competencies found in guidance and counselling programme. Cases of student disturbances and destructive behaviours continue unabated. Students cheat in National Examinations and academic performance remain dismissal. Besides, Skepticism plague the guidance and counselling programme in secondary schools. The question then is: has school guidance and counselling programme been effective in enhancing students' academic, career and personal competencies? This study was therefore intended to investigate whether the guidance and counselling programme in Nyamira District secondary schools, differentially enhances students' academic, career and personal competencies.

1.2 Research Question

The study sought to answer the following question:

What are students' teacher counsellors' and head teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme in enhancing students' academic, career and personal competencies in Nyamira District public secondary schools?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at analyzing the stakeholders' perception on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme in enhancing secondary school students' academic, career and personal competencies in Nyamira District, Kenya.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The future of every society is in its youth. The youth are at the adolescent stage, which is a transition from childhood to adulthood. Failure to attend to the adolescents' biological and psychological challenges may lead to indecisiveness, insecurity, conflicts, impulsiveness, criminal behaviour, alcoholism, career confusion and sexual perversion (Mutie & Ndambuki, 2011). When this is coupled with academic burden, teacher, parental and peer demands and expectations, it creates insurmountable problems for the adolescent. This justifies the need to equip the youth with the competencies required to overcome academic, career and personal challenges through the guidance and counselling programme in secondary schools. Thus an assessment of stakeholders' perceptions on the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme in enhancing secondary school students' academic, career and personal competencies is of paramount importance, hence the need for this study. The results from this study may act as a useful indicator to education officials, parents, teacher counsellors, school managers and other interested parties in education, of the crucial role that guidance and counselling is serving in secondary schools. The results may also enlighten secondary school stakeholders on the significant role that school guidance and counselling programme has had on students' academic, career and personal competencies.

2. Methodology

This survey research utilized an *ex-post facto* causal comparative design which was found suitable in analyzing perceptions which had already been formed. The perceptions served as indicators of the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme in enhancing students' academic, career and personal competencies. Both random and purposive sampling techniques were employed in obtaining the sample for the study. In all there were 18 head teachers, 18 teacher counsellors and 302 students drawn from 3752 form three students, 47 head teachers and 47 teacher counsellors. The overall sample size was 338 respondents.

2.1 Instrumentation

Open and closed-ended questionnaires and interview schedules were used in this study to elicit the required data from the respondents. All the questionnaires: student Questionnaire (SQ), head teacher Questionnaire (HTQ); and Teacher Counsellor Questionnaire (TCQ) had 42 items each. The items for academic, career and personal competencies were developed based on the objectives of this study. The respondents were required to indicate the degree to which guidance and counselling programme in school has influenced students on the stated competencies. The interview schedule had one question which was used to record general opinions and views of the interviewed respondents regarding the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme in enhancing students' academic, career and personal competencies.

2.1.1 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Both construct and face validity of the instruments was established. Coefficient alpha statistic was used to estimate the reliability coefficient. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.87, 0.92 and 0.60 for students', head teachers' and teacher counsellors' questionnaires were obtained respectively.

2.1.2 Administration of Instruments

The permit for the study was obtained from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST). The County Education Officer, Nyamira was then contacted to allow the researcher proceed to the secondary schools in the sub-District to collect data. At the schools, the head teachers' permission was sought and as soon as it was granted, the researcher gave the head teacher the Head Teacher Questionnaire (HTQ), Teacher counsellor Questionnaire (TCQ) and student Questionnaire (SQ). Clear instructions were then given on how the questionnaires would be filled and when they will be collected. The researcher also made arrangements with head teachers, and teacher counsellors who were purposively selected for interviewing when they were available for the interview. The interviews were done using the interview schedule. The researcher concealed the identities of the respondents and schools which helped to make respondents respond freely to the questionnaires and interviews without fear.

2.1.3 Analysis of Data

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Some of the data obtained was nominal and the chi-square test was used for analysis. The chi-square was performed at a significance level of 5%.

3.1 Findings of the Study

Data obtained from the questionnaires and interview schedules were systematically analyzed and presented as follows.

Table 1: Students' Perceptions on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling in Enhancing their Academic Competencies (n = 302)

Effectiveness	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Less effective	13	4.3
Moderately effective	112	37.1
Effective	177	58.6
Total	302	100.0

Findings in table 1 indicate that majority of the students 58.6% perceived guidance and counselling programme in their schools to have effectively enhanced their academic competencies. This finding is in agreement with the observations made by Education Report (GOK, 2001) that teachers concentrate mainly on academic concerns of students. This is supported by the findings by Njagi (2002) who established that majority of students were willing to seek academic help more than personal help. Moreover, Kimathi (2002) asserted that the guidance and counselling programme has contributed to effective learning and high academic performance and that it is a service to the school system.

Table 2: Student's Perceptions on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing their Career Competencies (n = 302)

Effectiveness	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Less effective	27	8.9
Moderately effective	109	36.1
Effective	166	55.0
Total	302	100.0

The results in table 2 clearly show that majority of the students sampled (55%) generally agreed that the guidance and counselling programme in the schools is effective in enabling them to attain the required career competencies. These findings concur with those of Berger (1997) who concluded in his study that career counselling must become an integral part of educational activities for this is the only way students can connect what they are being taught in school and the realities of life and the job market. Moreover, Makinde (1984) noted that career competencies involve providing a student with information on job requirement, employment opportunities, necessary training, how to apply for employment, writing of curriculum vitae and preparation for job interviews.

Table 3: Students' Perception on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing their Personal Competencies (n = 302)

Effectiveness	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Less effective	13	4.3
Moderately effective	140	46.3
Effective	149	49.3
Total	302	100.0

From table 3, it is clear that majority of the students sampled (49.3%) perceived the guidance and counselling programme to be assisting them acquire their personal competencies. Personal competencies are student's requisite abilities, skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values considered necessary to solve problems, manage life

events, assess social situations, adjust and behave adaptively so as to live a self-fulfilling and responsible life in school and society. These findings agree with Mutie and Ndambuki (2011) who assert that guidance and counselling equip students with skills which enable them to handle day-to day personal challenges in school and out of school.

Table 4: Students' Perception Mean Scores and Standard Deviation on the Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing their Academic, Career and Personal Competencies

Competency Area	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Academic	302	56.5	8.2263
Career	302	41.9	7.713
Personal	302	54.6	7.258

Based on examination of findings as shown in table 4, the perceptions mean scores were $\bar{X} = 56.5$, $\bar{X} = 54.6$ and $\bar{X} = 41.9$ for academic, career and personal competencies respectively. This finding indicates that there is a general consensus among students that guidance and counselling programme in school has been effective in enhancing their academic, career and personal competencies. There were slight variations in student deviations (8.2, 7.7 and 7.2) which may be indicative of the small range of disagreement and agreement among the students on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme in enhancing their academic, career and personal competencies. Thus the student perceptions mean scores in table 4 are indicative of the students' agreement that the guidance and counselling programme in school has assisted them to acquire the competencies required to achieve academic, career and personal development.

Table 5: Teacher Counsellor's Perceptions on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing the Students' Academic Competencies (n= 18)

Effectiveness	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Less effective	2	11.1
Moderately effective	6	33.3
Effective	10	55.6
Total	18	100.0

The results in table 5 reveal a common consensus among teacher counsellors sampled, that the school guidance and counselling programme has been effective in enhancing the students stated academic competencies. These findings are supported by the observation by Biswalo (1996) who noted that guidance and counselling assist students in planning an effective study and revision programme, subject choice, study skills, information on higher education, reduce test anxiety, and assists in all aspects relevant to the pursuit of education in school and after school. Besides, these findings also agree with those of Okama (2003) who found that guidance and counselling enhance students academic competencies in that the students who received counselling reported better grades and progress in post-high school endeavours.

Table 6: Teacher Counsellors' Perceptions on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing Students' Career Competencies (n = 18)

Effectiveness	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Less effective	2	11.1
Moderately effective	8	44.4
Effective	8	44.4
Total	18	100.0

Table 6 above shows that 44.4% of the teacher counsellors perceive the guidance and counselling programme in school as effective in enhancing students' career competencies. Equal percentages (44.4%) perceive the guidance and counselling programme as moderately effective in assisting students achieve career competencies. These findings are supported by those of Peterson et al (1999) who demonstrated that the level of career intervention administered to students had a direct impact on students' abilities to understand the importance of their future educational choices related to post-secondary education and future career choice. These findings agree with those of students in table 2 in which majority (55.0%) perceived the guidance and counselling programme in school as effective in enhancing students' career competencies.

Table 7: Teacher Counsellors Perceptions on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing Student's Personal Competencies (n = 18)

Effectiveness	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Less effective	2	11.1
Moderately effective	7	38.9
Effective	9	50.0
Total	18	100.0

It is evident from the findings in Table 7 that majority of the teacher counsellors (50.0%) perceived the school guidance and counselling programme as effective in enhancing the students' personal competencies. This finding is in agreement with a commission of inquiry into the Education system of Kenya's Report (GOK, 1999) which espoused that guidance and counselling programme in schools aid the development and growth of youth and ensure their appropriate integration into the values and productive activities of society.

Table 8: Teacher Counsellors' Perception mean Scores and Standard deviation of the Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing Students' Academic, Career and Personal Competencies

Competency Area	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Academic	18	54.83	91.666
Career	18	39.94	8.474
Personal	19	52.78	8.667

Based on the findings as indicated in Table 8, it is evident that academic competencies had the highest perceptions mean score ($X = 54.83$) followed by personal competencies ($X = 52.78$). Career competencies received the least perception score ($X = 39.94$) which imply that teacher counsellors perceive school guidance and counseling programme to have inadequately addressed student career competencies. There were slight variations in student deviations which may be indicative of the range of disagreement and agreement among the teacher counsellors on the role of guidance and counseling programme in enhancing students' academic, career and personal competencies. These findings concur with those of Killeen and White (2000) who indicated that guidance and counselling had a positive impact on many aspects of education and training and enable students to make connections between what they are taught in school and the realities of life and the job market.

Table 9: Head Teachers' Perceptions on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing Students Academic Competencies (n = 18)

Effectiveness	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Less effective	0	0.0
Moderately effective	8	44.0
Effective	10	55.6
Total	18	100.0

The results in Table 9 reveal a general agreement among head teachers sampled (55.6%) that the school guidance and counselling programme has been effective in enhancing the students' academic competencies. This implies that academic competencies are the most effective enhanced by guidance and counselling programme in school as perceived by all the respondents of the study, that is students, teacher counsellors and Head Teachers. These findings are supported by Sink (2005) who found that guidance and counselling interventions were effective in students' academic pursuits while they were in school and in educational accomplishments after school.

Table 10: Head teachers' Perceptions on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Program in Enhancing Students' Career Competencies (n = 18)

Effectiveness	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Less effective	1	5.6
Moderately effective	10	55.6
Effective	7	38.8
Total	18	100.0

Table 10 shows that majority of head teachers (55.6%) perceive school guidance and counselling programme as moderately effective in enhancing students' career competencies. This perception rating in the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in enhancing students career competencies is similar to that of teacher counsellors. This implies that head teachers and teacher counsellors are abit pessimistic about the programme's effectiveness in assisting students attain career competencies.

Table 11: Head Teachers' Perception on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing Students Personal Competencies (n = 18)

Effectiveness	Frequency (f)	Percentage %
Less effective	0	0.0
Moderately effective	9	50.0
Effective	9	50.0
Total	18	100.0

From table 11, it is evident that an equal number of head teachers indicated that guidance and counselling programme in school was moderately effective (50.0%) and effective (50.0%) in enhancing students personal competencies. These findings confirm those from studies by Lapan, et al (1997), Littrel (1995) and DeRosier (2004). These studies show that guidance and counselling programme offers students a variety of competencies required for personal growth and development.

Table 12: Head Teachers' Perception Mean Scores and Standard Deviation on the Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing Students' Academic, Career and Personal Competencies

Competency Area	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Academic	18	56.89	7.307
Career	18	40.22	5.765
Personal	18	53.78	6.311

The results in table 12 clearly show that majority of the head teacher's perceived guidance and counselling programme in school as having enhanced students' academic, career and personal competencies. Academic competencies received the highest perceptions mean score ($X = 56.89$), personal competencies had a medium perceptions mean score ($\bar{X} = 53.78$), and career competencies received the lowest perceptions mean score ($\bar{X} = 40.22$). These findings are in agreement with those of students and teacher counsellors in Table 4 and 8 respectively who had favourable perception mean scores regarding the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in enhancing personal competencies. These findings are supported by those of Clark and Amatea (2004) who posited that equipping a student with personal competencies found in guidance and counselling results in increased academic achievement, decreased problem behaviour and improved interpersonal relations.

4.0 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to assess the stakeholders' perceptions on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme in the enhancement of selected competencies among secondary school students in Nyamira District. The findings of this study revealed that the stakeholders felt that guidance and counselling programme was effective in varying degrees in boosting secondary school students' personal, career and academic competencies.

4.1 Students Perception on the Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling in Enhancing their Personal, Career and Academic Competencies

From the findings of this study, it is evident that majority of students (58.6%) perceived guidance and counselling programme in schools to have effectively enhanced their academic competencies by Stone and Bradley (1994) who observed that guidance and counselling is part and parcel of education component and it makes education succeed and that guidance and counselling is vital service in the education system. The findings also show that majority of students (55.0%) felt that guidance and counselling contributed towards enhancing their career competencies as it enabled them connect what they learnt in school and the realities of life and the job market. These findings concur with Gathari (2003) who contended that guidance and counselling plays a great role in preparing students for life after school. It is also clear from the results of the study that a greater percentage of students (more than 90%) view guidance and counselling as being moderately effective (46.4%) and effective (49.3%) in enhancing students personal competencies such as ability to make informed decisions, boosting an individual's self-esteem, behaving adaptively and ability to manage the day-to-day challenges of life.

4.2 Teacher Counsellors' Perception on the Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling in Enhancing students' Academic, Career and Personal Competencies

The findings of the study indicates that from the teacher counsellor's perspective, guidance and counselling is effective in enhancing students academic, career and personal competencies. Table 5 clearly shows that 55% of the teacher counsellors view guidance and counselling as being effective in enhancing students' academic competencies; while table 6 indicates that 44.4% of the teacher counsellors sampled felt that guidance and counselling was effective in enhancing students career competencies; and from table 7, 50% of the teacher counsellors regarded guidance and counselling as effective in enhancing students personal competencies. These findings are in agreement with results from a number of studies (Biswalo, 1996; Okama, 2003; Killen & White, 2000) which contend that guidance and counselling play a critical role in enhancing secondary school students'

academic, career and personal competencies.

4.3 Head Teachers' Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling in Enhancing Students Academic, Career and Personal Competencies

Table 12 indicates that head teachers perceived guidance and counselling as being effective in enhancing students personal, academic and career competencies with perception mean scores of $X = 53.78$, $X 56.89$ and $X 40.22$ respectively. Table 11 also indicated that all the sampled head teachers felt that guidance and counselling was moderately effective (50%) and effective (50.0%) in enhancing students personal competencies while Table 9 and 10 clearly indicate perceptions of more than 50% effectiveness of guidance and counselling in enhancing students academic and career competencies. These findings are supported by a number of research findings (Sink, 2005; DeRosier, 2004; Lapan et al, 1997 and Littrel, 1995) which have established the significant role of guidance and counselling in enhancing students academic, career and personal competencies.

5.0 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study which have been discussed in the foregoing sections, the following conclusions have been drawn.

- Students in secondary schools in Nyamira District perceive guidance and counseling programme as being effective in enhancing their personal, career and academic competencies.
- Teacher counsellors in secondary schools in Nyamira view guidance and counselling programme as playing a vital role in enhancing students' career, personal and academic competencies.
- Head Teachers in Nyamira District perceive guidance and counselling as effective in enhancing their students' career, academic and personal competencies.

6.0 Recommendations

In view of the fact that guidance and counselling programme play an important role in enhancing secondary school students personal, career and academic competencies in Nyamira District, and for it to continue playing an even more effective role, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

- There is need to organize for seminars and workshops to offer continuing education in guidance and counselling. This will equip the teacher counsellors with latest theories and techniques of counselling to make them more effective counsellors.
- School administrators should endeavour to provide all resources for guidance and counselling. These include not only a counselling office equipped with reference materials, but also students' personal files and adequate career resource materials.
- There is need for school administration to offer guidance and counselling department the necessary support it deserves to make it effective such as financial and moral support.
- All stake-holders in the school should be mobilized to assist in creating awareness and advising students on the need for them to seek counselling services to help enhance their academic, career and personal competencies.
- Teacher counsellors should be relieved of some of their heavy teaching load so as to get enough time to concentrate on the provision of counselling services to students.

The researcher recommends research in guidance and counselling and especially in the following aspects:

- The role of guidance and counselling in enhancing students' self-esteem.
- The role of parents in enhancing guidance and counselling among secondary school students.
- Assessment of continuing education and training needs of teacher counsellors.
- The use of guidance and counselling in determining the career choices of secondary school students.
- The role of guidance and counselling in enhancing secondary school students' time management skills.

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