

Planning and Implementation of Guidance and Counseling Activities in Secondary Schools: A Case of Kamariny Division of Keiyo District, Kenya

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Abstract

Guidance and Counseling programme in Kenya has become increasingly important in recent years because the country is faced with new psychological and social challenges that require guidance and counseling (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). The Government of Kenya has reinforced guidance and counseling services by encouraging teachers to take specialized courses in guidance and counseling (GoK, 2009). This service should be offered in all learning institutions and especially in secondary schools to enable students cope with daily challenges since the incidents of drug abuse and related problems have led to students indiscipline that have caused devastating effects on students' personal lives, school structures and the entire society (Ochieng, 1986). This study therefore aimed at establishing whether the guidance and counseling activities are implemented as planned in secondary schools in Kamariny Division of Keiyo District. The author employed a descriptive survey design. The study targeted the head teachers, teacher counselors and students. The population of the study was 3,160 students, 10 head teachers and 10 teacher counselors. An accessible population of 1,455 students, drawn from Form Three and Four classes was used to determine the sample size of student respondents from each of the ten schools. Questionnaires and interview schedule were used to collect the data. A sample of 230 respondents was drawn from the population. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. The study findings indicated that guidance and counseling activities are not implemented as scheduled in the schools. The paper recommends that the Ministry of Education should integrate guidance and counseling into the school programme and regularly inspect quality through the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. The government should provide the necessary resources and policy structure on the implementation of the guidance and counseling programme in schools. The study is expected to reveal the implementation of guidance and counseling programme in Kamariny Division. The findings from this study may be of importance to the education stakeholders in the District in formulating policies and giving necessary advice on how guidance and counseling can be effectively implemented in secondary schools.

Keywords: Planning, Implementation, Guidance and Counseling, Activities, Secondary school

Introduction

An organized guidance and counseling programme is essential in assisting students cope with the stresses they face while in and out of school. Some of these stresses according to Melgosa (2001) include physical and psychological changes they face due to adolescence. The challenges of adolescents according to Melgosa (1997) include adapting to their new image, facing the growing academic demands, establishing vocational goals, learning to control sexuality, emotional and psychological independence from their parents. Some of the learners in secondary schools are at an adolescence stage and an effective guidance and counseling programme in schools must be availed to assist these students (Melgosa, 2001).

The changing complexity of society due to rapid change in technology and the effect of HIV/AIDS has caused undue demand on students (Mutie and Ndambuki, 1999). The threats of unemployment after school, children headed households and general insecurity threats cause a lot of stress to students. According to Makinde (1984), students ought to be helped on how to cope with these stresses, acquire life skills and career choices. This will contribute to high academic standards in schools and students are expected to make proper choices in preparation to enter and progress in a career after school. They therefore need to be informed about different jobs and available opportunities and qualifications needed and the responsibilities involved in the nature of work (Makinde, 1984; Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). Students face problems at home and these are manifested by their poor academic performance and frequent indiscipline cases experienced in schools (NACADA, 2002).

Most schools in Kenya, according to Ndirangu (2002), are facing a problem of properly implemented guidance and counseling service and for those that have established the department, they are not well organized in terms of time allocation and infrastructure. This may be prevailing situation in Keiyo District and therefore, there was need to establish the implementation of guidance and counseling programmes in Kamariny Division of Keiyo District.

1.1 Problems in Planning and Implementation of Guidance and Counseling in Schools

According to Creed, Patton and Prideaux (2007), individuals are reluctant to relinquish the security of the old and familiar ways for unknown and interesting ones. An important condition that constitutes a major impediment to any change is the counselor's failure to engage in careful diagnosis of organizational problems. The implementation of the new innovation might conflict with other aspects of the school interests and programmes and cause threats or serious difficulties. For example, when the students start flocking into the office of the counselor and not the deputy head teacher or head teachers, it is likely to be mistaken for rivalry on the job. Funding for innovative efforts of the counselor might not be forthcoming and this makes the counselor lose interest and takes up other jobs. Besides this, the promotion to administrative position might also interfere with effectiveness of the counselor.

Some head teachers and parents believe counseling is the invasion of their privacy and that of their children and therefore they might attempt to sabotage its development. They therefore influence their children's view towards the role of guidance and counseling in schools. Also, Counselors who are not fully committed to their profession constitute a major impediment. They attend to their roles halfheartedly hence not able to identify the real underlying problems of the learners. The way innovation is introduced could have critical bearing on staff reaction and their motivation to support counseling implementation. Implementers of such innovations should first of all solicit views from staff on how such innovations should be designed and subsequently implemented. In the unlikely event that the counselor fails to involve teachers, parents and the administrators thoroughly, there is a possibility of failure (Diemer, 2007).

2. Materials and Methods

The study employed descriptive survey design. This research design enables a researcher to obtain information and gives a description concerning the current status of a phenomenon and to valid conclusions from the phenomena (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The study was conducted in 10 selected schools in Kamariny Division, Keiyo District of Rift Valley province in Kenya.

The focus of the study was on the head teachers, teacher counselors and students of all the ten schools in Kamariny Division. Out of these ten secondary schools, six were co-educational; two were girls' schools and two were boys' schools. The study anticipated that each school had one teacher in-charge of guidance and counseling and one head teacher. This gave a total of ten guidance and counseling teachers and ten head teachers. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to obtain the required information.

Data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics.

3. Results and Discussions

The objective of the study sought to establish whether guidance and counseling activities are implemented as planned in secondary schools in Kamariny division of Keiyo district Table 1 and 2 captured the responses of the teacher counselors and the students respectively.

Table 1: Teacher Counselors responses on Implementation of the planned Guidance and Counseling activities in the School

Statement	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Existence of guidance and counseling committee	10	100
Yes	1	10
Frequency of group counseling.		
Once per week	3	30
Fortnightly	2	20
Termly	3	30
Rarely	2	20
Invitation of external resource persons		
Yes	9	90
No	1	10
Presence of peer counselors		
Yes	7	77.8
No	2	22.22
Training of peer counselors		
Yes	8	80
No	2	20

According to the teacher counselors, all the ten (100%) schools had guidance and counseling departments in place. It became evident from the study that on group counseling, it emerged that schools invited external speakers. This was according to the 90% of the teacher counselors. For proper implementation of the guidance and counseling programme, the needed resources should be availed by the school to be able to keep a

record of each student (Dondo, 2005).

Individual counseling is often done on a daily basis while group counseling is done variedly among the schools. According to the teacher counselors, 10% of the schools carried out a programmed exercise once per week. Other teacher counselors pointed out that they organize group counseling fortnightly (30%), termly (20%), on demand (30%) and rarely (20%). Five (50%) head teachers in the Catholic sponsored schools in particular cited that counseling of students was done during 'Mass' and that the Priest was instrumental in instilling accepted virtues on the students.

The analysis indicated that 77.8% of the teacher counselors showed that their schools have peer counseling programmes with 80% of them having been trained. These statistics show that peer counselors are adequately trained and this view is supported by the head teachers' responses. During the interviews, all the 10 (100%) head teachers expressed that they lacked finances to facilitate peer counselors training programmes in future.

Table 2: Students responses on Implementation of the planned Guidance and Counseling activities in the school

Statement	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Presence of teacher counselor in-charge of the guidance and counseling programme		
Yes	200	95.7
No	9	4.3
Total	209	100
Existence of guidance and counseling committee		
Yes	157	78.5
No	43	21.5
Total	200	100
Frequency of group counseling		
Once per week	9	4.5
Fortnightly	100	50
Termly	62	31
On demand	27	13.5
Rarely	2	1.0
Total	200	100
Invitation of external resource persons		
Yes	187	89
No	18	11
Total	205	100
Have attended a counseling session (s) with the teacher counselor		
Yes	89	42.8
No	119	57.2
Total	208	100

According to Table 2, 95% of the students pointed out that the schools had guidance and counseling teacher in charge of the guidance and counseling department in the school. 78.5% of the students further pointed out that there is guidance and counseling committee in the school. According to the students, 4.5% of the schools carried out a programmed exercise once per week. Other teacher counselors pointed out that they organize group counseling fortnightly (50%), termly (31%), on demand (13.5%) and rarely (1%). The students are counseled sometimes on need basis such as when there is an emergency and thus provide an erratic mode of counseling, which is unreliable. On group counseling, it emerged that schools external speakers were invited according to 89.0% of the students.

The analysis indicated that 57.2% of the students have not attended counseling session(s) with the teacher counselors. The reasons they gave for not attending were:

There was no programme in the school

- i. The quality of the service was poor because they thought some teacher counselors were rude, not confidential and others had a bad attitude towards the students. The students therefore felt that they were not welcome
- ii. The day scholars preferred counseling by parents at home while other students preferred peer counseling as compared to teacher counseling,
- iii. Some students lacked the opportunity since the programme was rarely offered,
- iv. Others claimed that they did not have time to go for counseling since they preferred doing other activities like games.
- v. Some students were shy and feared going for counseling due to lack of a counseling office and in cases where there was one; they were concerned with lack of privacy in such offices. Cases of the guidance

and counseling office being located within the administration block and near the head teachers and deputy head teachers office made the students fear attending counseling sessions.

According to the interviews conducted on the head teachers, all of them (100%) expressed that the guidance and counseling activities were being undertaken. However, due to lack of finances to facilitate the implementation of the programme and interference by other activities like games, the implementation has not been fully undertaken. Both student and teacher counselors concurred that group counseling is offered in their schools and it is done based on each school's individual programme. 2 out of 10 teacher counselors said that their schools had no peer counselors and was further alluded by 23.3% of the students. This shows that two secondary schools in the division do not have peer counseling programmes.

The counselor also serves as a link between the school and the community so as to work together to assist the student. The teacher counselor is therefore a consultant because he/she works with parents, teachers, head teachers, school workers and medical professionals to help the students to be successful in the education system and social life. The teacher counselor has the responsibility of coordinating the guidance and counseling programmes. This is through organizing, managing and evaluating the school counseling activities (Kiriswa, 1988).

The guidance and counseling 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. According Mutie and Ndambuki (1999), a guidance and counseling 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 counseling, orientation of form ones, parents guidance, teachers, seminars and guidance and counseling related clubs like peer counseling (GoK, 2009).

4. Conclusion

Guidance and counseling activities are not implemented as scheduled in the schools. The activities are mainly interfered by other school activities like games, clubs and other co-curricular activities.

5. Recommendations

The Ministry of Education should integrate guidance and counseling into the school programme and regularly inspect quality through the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers.

The Ministry of Education ought to provide the necessary resources to be used in the implementation of the programme. These resources include finances and recommending reference materials which will benefit the implementation of the counseling programme.

There is need to carry out a similar study on the implementation of guidance and counseling in a larger study area like a province or the whole country so as to be more representative for making inferences.

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