

# Headteachers' Use of Guidance and Counseling on Students' Retention in Secondary School Education in Masinga Sub County, Kenya

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## Abstract

Improving retention in education has been accorded a high priority in the policies of most third world countries which clearly reflects a global recognition of the contribution that only education makes to development. Non completion of secondary schooling continues to be a matter of concern for policy makers and practioners worldwide. The purpose of this study was therefore to establish the influence of head teachers' use of guidance and counselling on students' retention in secondary school education in Masinga Sub County, Machakos County. The study used descriptive survey design and was guided by open systems theory. Data was collected from 25 head teachers and a target of form 3 and 4 population of 5022. A sample size of 370 students' was used in this study. Simple random sampling was used to determine the male and female students while purposive sampling was used on the head teachers and deputy head teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis guides. Reliability was ascertained through test – retest method and a reliability co-efficient of 0.70 was realized. In order to ensure face validity of the instruments, the researcher sought expert judgement from university lectures. Descriptive statistics and correlational analysis were used to analyze quantitative data while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic framework. The findings showed that guidance and counselling has a positive influence on student retention ( $r = 0.746$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ) hence the hypothesis was rejected and an alternative hypothesis accepted. This suggests that increase in effective use of guidance and counseling by the head teachers' will be associated with high rate of students' retention. The study concluded that head teachers' use of guidance and counselling influence student retention in secondary school education. The study recommended that head teachers should create supportive school environment where students' feel comfortable seeking guidance and support. The study recommended that guidance and counselling in secondary schools should be supported by providing teacher counselors with resources needed for effective guidance and counselling.

**Key words:** guidance and counseling, head teachers, students' retention, secondary school.

**DOI:** 10.7176/JEP/15-11-12

**Publication date:** October 30th 2024

## 1. Introduction

Guidance and counselling are essential factors in shaping a child's orientation and discarding negative ideas from the surrounding environment, therefore the role of school counselors is significant in helping shape the child's future through counselling therapy. School counselors are recognized as role models for children and are highly respected by students (Smith and Gillon, 2021). Guidance and Counselling programmes are essential in supporting the development and realization of individual and community potential. School guidance and counselling aim to encourage optimal student development. This is supported by Kathawa & Arora (2020) who state that this program aims to develop student intellectual abilities, build a balanced personality and shape individuals intellectually, spiritually, morally and socially. Guidance and Counselling programmes help students align their talents, interests and values to reach their full potential.

Wang et al (2024) asserted that the academic counselling needs of China's higher vocational art and design students mainly focused on the learning relocated construct such as understanding the courses and course systems they were majoring in setting and realizing academic goals, coping with setback, pressure and other students' comprehensive evaluation.

Banda (2018) established that there are no trained guidance and counselling teachers in guidance and counselling section in schools. The school managers support the guidance and counselling department for instance sending

teachers in guidance and counselling department for workshops and seminars.

Eremie and Jackson (2019) asserted that there are many services that the professional guidance and counseling renders to the students such as educational, vocational and personal-social services among others. According to them, the educational services is a service which takes care of all issues associated with education as they relate to the physical environment of the school, activities within the school, the structural make-up of the school, students' intake, students' progress and adaptability within the school. They discussed vocational services as the process of assisting the students in choosing occupation preparing them to enter into it and make progress.

Ndanu et al (2022) in a study found out that the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme enhanced students' retention by helping students deal with challenges affecting personal and social life as well as academic achievement.

Njoroge (2014) establishment that the major roles of the school head teacher in provision of guidance and counselling services in school were recommending and supporting in service training for guidance and counselling teachers, ensuring that there is a trained teacher, that the guidance and counselling programme is allocated time in the school timetable, providing resources and materials ensuring that there was a counselling room in the school and motivating the teacher counselor for their good efforts.

According to Rasoha (2021) for effective guidance and counselling the school head teachers were required to vail adequate Guidance and Counselling resources, invite guest speakers and provide a good room for guidance and counselling department. If all the requirements were provided in secondary schools, the expected outcome would be improved student behavior, good academic performance, punctuality in students' proper utilization of time set for Guidance and Counselling, obedience to school rules and regulations improved students esteem and existence of unity among students.

## 2. Methodology

According to Orodho (2009) research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in the procedure. This study employed a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey research design is used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification. (Orodho,2002).

The study had a target population of 5122 participants. Target population refers to the entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate (Sekara & Bougie, 2010). The target population is obtained by refining the general population to be left with individuals with specific attributes of interest and relevance (Cresswell, 2003). The target population for this study included 50 head teachers, 50 deputy head teachers and 5022 form 3 and 4 students from the 50 public secondary schools in Masinga Sub County. Form 3 and 4 students were chosen because they had spent more time in the school than other students and therefore had more information.

Table 1 below shows the samples sizes.

Table 1.0 Sample size

Description	Population (N)	Sample Size (n)
Headteachers	50	25
Deputy headteachers	50	25
Students	5022	370
Total	5122	420

Sampling is a method, process or procedure used to collect a subset of a population to take part in the study. It is the process of choosing a large number of people for a research in a way that ensures the chosen people accurately reflect the larger population from which they were chosen (Matula, Kyalo & Mulwa, 2018). A sample however is a more limited group or subgroup drawn from the accessible population (Nanjundeswarasmy & Divakar, 2021).

Descriptive survey was used in the study. Descriptive survey design involves careful description of education phenomenal and reports the way things are. The design was appropriate because it allowed the use of questionnaires and interview guides as research instruments for collecting data at a given point in time. The study used two sets of questionnaires for headteachers and students, document analysis and an interview guide

for deputy headteachers. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), questionnaires are preferred because they save time and uphold respondent confidentiality.

The instruments were validated. Validity assess whether content in a questionnaire is able to measure what is intended to be measured (Orodho, 2004). The researcher ensured the validity of the research instruments by establishing the face validity of the instruments. The instruments were also validated by the research experts in the department of educational management, policy and curriculum studies of the University of Nairobi.

Instrument reliability refers to the level of internal consistency or the stability of the measuring device. (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). A pilot study was conducted before the actual study to confirm the validity and reliability of the instruments. Piloting is key because it proves whether the tools or instruments that the researcher is using are to achieve the desired purpose in the research. Before proceeding to collect data the researcher first obtained an introductory letter from the university of Nairobi Department of educational management, policy and curriculum studies to be presented to the Secretary, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) for authorization to carry out research. The permit was presented to both the director of education and county commissioner, Machakos before proceeded to the office of the Sub County director of education Masinga Sub County to seek permission to carry out research within the sub county. A visit to the sampled schools was made to book appointments with the head teachers on the actual dates of data collection. The researcher then visited each sampled school to collect data. The researcher administered the questionnaires in person allowing them adequate time to respond appropriately.

### 3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents, interprets and discusses data based on descriptive and inferential analyses premised on the objective which is the influence of guidance and counselling on students' retention.

### 4. Demographic Information

Demographic information was important in this study for it was necessary for the determination of the respondent's characteristics as a representative sample of the target population for generalization of this study results (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

Table 2 Age distribution of head teachers and deputy head teachers.

AGE	Headteachers		Deputy Headteachers	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
35- 39	2	8.3	5	20.83
40- 44	9	37.5	13	54.16
45- 49	8	29.2	6	20.83
50- 55	3	12.5	1	4.18
ABOVE 55	3	12.5	0	0

Table 2 shows that 9(37.5%) of the head teachers are aged between 40 and 44 year while 8 (29.2%) of head teachers are aged between 45 and 49 years 3(12.5%) of head teachers are aged between 50 and 55 year. Richer (2011) asserted that teachers between the ages 30-49 years are keen on trying new ideas, have hope in the system and aggressively seek to produce results and are likely to be appointed for leadership.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Category	No. of Male	Percentage	No. of Female	Percentage	Total & Percentage
Headteachers	19	79.2	6	20.8	25(100%)
Deputy Headteachers	16	66.7	9	33.3	25(100%)
Students	160	42.4	210	77.77	370(100%)

The findings in Table 3 indicate that a majority 19(79.2%) of the head teachers are males while 5 (20.8%) are females. A majority 16(66.7%) of the deputy head teachers are males while 8(33.3%) are females. This finding on gender composition of the female head teachers contravenes the 2010 Kenyan constitution which sections 27 (8) and 81(6) which requires that in cases of elective and appointed posts, no single gender should be more than two-thirds majority in public offices.

#### 4.1 Influence of Guidance and Counselling Programme on Student Retention.

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of head teachers' use of guidance and counselling on student retention in Masinga Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya. To realize this objective, head teachers were requested to rank their degree of agreement on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme under the scale strongly Disagree (SD) Disagree (D), Unsure (U), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA).

Data on head teacher's responses on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling was summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 Headteachers' responses on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling on student retention.

STATEMENT	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Guidance and counseling programme prevents students from indulging in any negative activity	4	16	3	12	2	8	11	44	5	20
Guidance and counselling helps children to select the appropriate pathways to lead a successful life	2	8	4	16	1	4	10	40	8	32
Guidance and counselling builds confidence and assurance in the abilities of a child	1	4	3	12	0	0	11	64	7	28
Guidance and counselling prepares students for satisfactory adjustment in society	2	8	4	16	1	4	12	48	6	24

N=25

Table 4 shows that majority of head teachers 16(64%) either agreed or strongly agreed that guidance and counselling programme prevents students from indulging in any negative activity. Further, 7(28%) of head teachers either disagreed or strongly disagreed followed by 2(8%) head teachers who were undecided. Similarly, 18(72%) agreed or strongly agreed that guidance and counselling helps children to select the appropriate pathways to lead a successful life, 6(24%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 1(4%) was unsure.

The findings show that majority 21(84%) of head teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that guidance and counselling builds confidence and assurance in the abilities of 4(16%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Majority of the head teacher 18(72%) agreed or strongly agreed, 2(8%) strongly disagreed, 4(16%) disagreed that guidance and counselling prepares student for satisfactory adjustment in society.

These findings are in agreement with the study by Faaz (2019) who found out that guidance and counselling prevents students from indulging in any negative activity, helps children to select the appropriate path leads successful life, build confidence and assurance in the abilities of a child and prepares students for satisfactory adjustment in society.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for use of Guidance and Counselling by the Headteacher

Statement	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Guidance and counselling prevent students from indulging in negative activities.	25	3.4000	1.38444
Guidance and Counselling + appropriate pathways selection.	25	3.7200	1.30767
Guidance and counselling + confidence in student ability.	25	3.9200	1.07703
Guidance and counselling + satisfactory adjustment.	25	3.6400	1.25433

Table 5 presents data on the various outcomes of guidance and counselling with an emphasis on their impact on students retention rates.

The study found out that guidance and counselling prevents student from indulging in negative activities.

The mean score is 3.40 indicating that on average guidance and counselling moderately prevent student from indulging in negative activities.

The standard deviation of 1.38 suggests a moderate amount of variation in responses, indicating that students' experiences vary somewhat in this regard.

In addition, the study established that guidance and counselling enables students' in the selection of appropriate academic and career pathways. The mean score is 3.72 which suggest that guidance and counselling are effective in helping students choose suitable path ways.

The standard deviation of 1.31 indicates that there is some variation in how student perceive the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in this area. Further, it was found out that guidance and counselling enhances confidence in their own abilities.

The mean score 3.92 is relatively high, suggesting that guidance and counselling have a positive impact on boosting students confidence in their abilities.

The standard deviation of 1.08 indicates that head teachers responses are relatively consistent in this regard.

Further, findings indicate that guidance and counselling leads to satisfactory adjustment. This assesses how guidance and counselling contribute to student ability to adjust satisfactory to their environment and circumstances. The measure of 3.64 suggests that guidance and counselling moderately contribute to students' satisfactory adjustment. The standard deviation of 1.25 implies that there is some variation in how student experiences this aspect.

A single score on guidance and counselling was computed and used to conduct descriptive analysis to obtain mean and standard deviation. The Table 6 indicate the results.

Table 6 Mean and Standard Deviation for Guidance and Counselling.

	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Guidance and counselling score	25	14.6800	4.86244

Table 4.6 shows that guidance and counselling score had a mean of 14.6800 and a standard deviation of 4.86 indicating that the scores were spread away from the mean.

The researcher tested whether a relationship existed between effective use of guidance and counselling and student retention. A null hypothesis was formulated as follows;

HO1: There is no significant relationship between effective guidance and counselling and students' retention.

Hypothesis Ho1 was analyzed using Pearson correlation and the output is as given in table 7.

Table 7: Correlation between effective guidance and counselling and students' retention.

		Guidance and counselling score	Retention rate
Guidance and Counselling score	Pearson Correlation	1	0.746
	Sig. (2-tailed) N	25	25
Retention rate	Pearson correlation	746	1
	Sig. tailed	0.000	
	N	25	25

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

Results in Table 7 show that there is a significant strong correlation between effective guidance and counselling use by the head teacher and student retention ( $r_{23}=0.75, p=0.00$ ). Null hypothesis was rejected and an alternative hypothesis accepted. This suggests that increase in effective use of guidance and counselling by the head teachers will be associated with rate of students retention.

### 5. Summary of the findings

The study established that head teachers play a crucial role in student's retention through their effective use of guidance and counselling services.

The study further found out that given the importance of effective guidance and counselling, there is a need to invest in specialized training for head teachers. Such training would ensure that head teachers are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to provide high quality guidance and counselling services to student.

It was established that schools may need to enhance their existing counselling programmes to support head teachers in their efforts. This could involve hiring more counselors or providing head teachers with additional resources and to offer comprehensive counselling services.

### 6. Conclusion of the study

The study concluded that guidance and counselling play a key role in students retention by instilling confidence in student abilities.

### 7. Recommendation of the study

The study came up with the following recommendations

1. Head teachers should create supportive school environments. The positive relationship between effective guidance and counselling and students retention rates suggests the importance of creating a supportive school environment. Head teachers should work to create an atmosphere where student feel comfortable seeking guidance and support.
2. Head teachers should monitor and evaluate counselling services. They should regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their guidance and counselling programmes. This includes assessing the impact on student retention and making necessary adjustment to improve outcomes.
3. The study recommended that guidance and counselling in secondary schools should be supported by providing teacher counselors with the resources needed for effective guidance and counselling.

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