

# Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Services in Enhancing Students' Adjustment to School Social Environment in Public Boarding Secondary Schools in Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

School adjustment is the process of coping in a new school environment in order to attain the individual and school's set goals and aspirations. The government, education managers and parents have expressed the need to strengthen school Guidance and Counselling services in order to enhance students' adjustment to the school environment. Public boarding secondary schools are expected to implement Guidance and Counselling policy of the Ministry of Education and help students adjust to secondary school environment. This study investigated the effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling services in enhancing students' adjustment to school social environment in public boarding secondary schools in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research survey design. The study target population was 36,671 comprising of 35,659 form 3 students, 506 Form 3 class teachers and 506 teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling from boarding secondary schools in Kitui, Nyeri and Nairobi counties in Kenya. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 756 respondents comprising of 720 Form 3 students, 18 Form 3 class teachers and 18 teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling from 18 secondary schools for the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data from Form 3 students and their class teachers while an interview schedule was used to collect data from teachers in charge of Guidance and Counseling. Using Spearman Brown Prophecy formula by split half technique reliability coefficient of 0.745, 0.746 and 0.736 were realized for students, class teachers and teachers In charge of Guidance and Counseling respectfully. This was accepted because an alpha value of 0.7 and above is considered suitable for making group inferences that are accurate. The data was analyzed by use of inferential and descriptive statistics with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 for windows and presented in frequency distribution Tables and percentages. The findings of this study provide information to school administrators, policy makers, parents and other stakeholders on various issues that need to be addressed in Guidance and Counseling to enables students adjust to school environment. the study further suggest ways of ways of improving Guidance and Counselling services in order to make it more effective in public boarding secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Guidance and Counselling, student adjustment, social environment, school environment

## Introduction

Students' adjustment to the school social environment is also important. In United States of America school social environment incorporates communication and interaction between teachers and students, parents and teachers as well as other stakeholders in the community (New Detroit, 2003). Students who transit to public boarding secondary schools find themselves in a new social environment, that is, amidst new teachers, new students and new systems of relationship patterns (Bragget, Morris & Day, 1999). According to Frydenberg (2002) who did studies in Britain students who transit to secondary school are received differently by the teachers and students they meet in secondary school. Students' poor reception in the school can be associated with their increased anxiety and depression (Isakson & Jarvis, 1999) and also with aggression, self-esteem, feelings of personal autonomy and perceived competence (Frydenberg, 2002). In Zimbabwe school social environment is taken to includes constructs like peer relationship, school norms, classroom culture and school culture (Regis, 2006). This therefore, means that students who transit to boarding secondary schools have a challenge of adjusting to new norms, school culture, students and teachers that are very different from what they were used to in primary school for learning to take place.

In his studies in New Zealand, Richardson (2002) observes that adjustment to social environment involves the students coming to terms with the loss of old friends and adjusting to new ones. Students who are well adjusted to the school social environment will relate well with teachers and other students. Adjustment of students to the school social environment is also indicated by their love for the school, adhering to the school rules and regulations, participating in co- curricular activities, helping the needy students and participating in class activities. In Kenya absenteeism, school dropout, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, violence, aggressive behavior, school phobia and withdrawal from school activities are reported in secondary schools (Republic of

Kenya, 2001). This suggests that students are maladjusted to the school social environment. Students' maladjustment to the school social environment leads to poor academic performance and education wastage.

Guidance and Counselling services began in America in early 1900 to help students in their educational development and career aspirations (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). In Hong Kong Guidance and Counselling services were introduced to address the increased developmental, personal and social challenges, lack of motivation towards work, disruptive behavior and the rise of juvenile delinquency (Yuk Yee & Brennan, 2004). School Guidance and counseling was introduced in Botswana to help students navigate through their personal and interpersonal challenges (Navin, 1989). Maluwa – Banda, (1998) states that Malawi introduced Guidance and Counselling in secondary schools to address the many social, personal, educational and vocational issues and concerns that had arisen. In Zimbabwe student Guidance and Counseling services were introduced to help students overcome problems which would lead to better school adjustment and improved academic achievement (Regis, 2006). The Government of Kenya emphasizes on Guidance and Counselling as a means of assisting students adjust to the school environment and the society (Republic of Kenya, 2009). The goal of Counselling service is to change the learner's behavior, beliefs and values, coping skills, decision making and emotional distress (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

Despite the emphasis given to Guidance and Counselling in schools there are indicators that maladjustment still remains a challenge in public boarding secondary schools. This has casted doubts on the role being played by Guidance and Counselling in helping students to adjust to the school environment. There was therefore, need to assess the effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling services in enhancing student adjustment to the school environment. This study investigated the effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling services in enhancing students' adjustment to the school environment in public boarding secondary schools in Kenya.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Transitions of learners from primary to secondary school create adjustment needs in its social environment. Guidance and Counselling has been introduced in all secondary schools in Kenya to help learners adjust to the diverse environments. Cases of indiscipline, drug abuse, school dropout, school unrest, absenteeism and violence are on the rise in Kenyan secondary schools. These are blamed on students' maladjustment to the school environment. This raises the question on the effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling in enhancing students' adjustment. Students who are maladjusted often miss a critical stage of interaction with peers and minimize academic progress and success. This can undermine the Kenya Vision 2030 overall goal of providing a globally competitive and adapting human resources base to meet the requirement of a rapid industrialized economy through lifelong education and training. The current study therefore, sought to determine the effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling services in enhancing students' adjustment to school social environment in public boarding secondary schools in Kenya.

### **Objective**

The objective of this study was to find out the effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling services in enhancing students' adjustment to school social environment in public boarding secondary schools in Kenya.

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study sought to establish the effectiveness of guidance and Counseling services in enhancing students' adjustment to school social environment. Survey aimed at obtaining information that can be analyzed, pattern extracted and comparisons made. The study focused on studying the variables as they are and there were no attempts to manipulate them.

### **Sampling Procedures and Sample Size**

This study adopted purposive as well as simple random sampling techniques in selection of the respondents. Three counties were purposively sampled for this study, that is, Nairobi, Kitui and Nyeri to represent urban, rural marginal and rural potential public secondary schools strata respectively. Purposive sampling design was also used in selection of Form 3 students because they have been in secondary school for a relatively longer period and so are likely to have been counselled on school adjustment. They are also likely to have information about their friends who have been counselled on adjustment issues. Taking that the enrolment is 40 students per class and that in every school sampled the study used 1 class teacher and 1 teacher in charge of Guidance and Counselling as respondents, the number of schools would be 379 divided by 42 which gives 9 schools. However, for this study, the sample was doubled so as to minimize errors associated with sampling. So the number of schools was 18 with 756 respondents comprising of 720 Form 3 students, 18 form 3 class teachers and 18 teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling.

Non proportionate sampling was used to select 240 students from each stratum, that is, urban, rural marginal and rural potential school strata. This means that 6 boarding secondary schools were selected from each

of the three strata through Simple random sampling designs comprising of three girls school and three boys schools representing national, extra- county and county schools. Simple random sampling was also used in selecting one Form 3 stream from schools with more than one stream.

### Instruments

This study utilized questionnaires and interview schedule as instruments in data collection. This study used two sets of questionnaires which were administered to the Form 3 students and Form 3 class teachers. Interview schedule was used to collect data from teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling. The interview schedule had both open and closed ended questions to guide the researcher in getting the in-depth impressions from the teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling

### Data Analysis Procedures

Data collected from the field were edited and categorized. Data was inspected to identify the items not responded to, such as blank spaces left unfilled by the respondents. The data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics. Data from the questionnaires was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 computer programme. The data generated from the research involved both qualitative and quantitative analysis procedures. Qualitative data was analyzed by establishing common themes, whereby similar responses were tallied to come up with frequency counts. Percentages were calculated based on the total number of responses from the tallies.

### Results of the Study

The study sought information from students, class teachers and teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling on whether Guidance and Counselling was effective in enhancing students' adjustment to the school social environment. The data collected from students is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Responses of students on Effectiveness of Guidance Counselling in Enhancing Students' Adjustment to School Social Environment

Counseling issues	N	SA %	A %	U %	D %	%
Guidance on the role of Guidance and Counselling helped me adjust to the school social environment	720	39.3	47.9	12.8	0	0
Regular class and dormitory meetings helped me adjust to the school's social environment	720	40.6	49.8	9.6	0	0
Family group for Counselling and mentoring helped me adjust to the school social environment	720	46.4	34.4	18.2	0	0
timely orientation program done to me on admission helped adjust to the school social environment	720	37.1	48.5	14.4	0	0
Guidance and Counselling done by peer counsellors helped me adjust to the school social environment	720	38.9	49.0	12.1	0	0
Guidance to participate co-curricular activities helped in adjust to the school social environment	720	41.4	44.9	13.8	0	0
Regular Counselling on moral values helped me adjust to the school social environment	720	43.9	44.7	11.4	0	0
Guidance on choosing good friends helped me adjust to the school social environment	720	48.6	41.1	10.3	0	0
Guidance given on how to interact with teachers is helped me adjust to the school social environment	720	41.8	44.2	14.0	0	0
Guidance and Counselling on how to develop positive self-esteem helped adjust to the school social environment	720	58.1	33.1	8.8	0	0
Overall	720	43.6	43.8	12.5	0	0

From Table 1 it was found that on the overall a total of 87.4% respondents agreed and strongly agreed

that Guidance and Counselling was effective in enhancing student adjustment to the school social environment. Responses on all the ten items that were put in the questionnaire indicated that 90.4% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that regular class and dormitory meeting helped students adjust to the school social environment. The item with the least total responses of 80.8% strongly agreeing and agreeing with it is the one that stated that organizing students into families for mentoring enabled them to adjust to the school social environment.

The study also sought information from form 3 class teachers. Table 22 shows their responses. The questionnaire had eleven items on various aspects of Guidance and Counselling that enhance adjustment to school social environment. The overall responses had a total percentage of 96.4% that agreed and strongly agreed that guidance and Counseling was effective in enhancing students' adjustment to the school social environment. Respondents were unanimous (100%) strongly agreed and agreed in 5 of the 11 items that is, regular class and dormitory meetings, Counselling on peer pressure, orientation of new students, Counselling on moral values and helping students interact with teachers enabled them adjust to school social environment. Two items that is, guidance on choosing helpful friends and Guidance and Counselling on self-esteem enabled students adjust to the school social environment had 94.5% responses each. Another 3 items that is, guidance on the role of Guidance and Counselling, use of peer counsellors and guidance on involvement in co-curricular activities enabled students adjust to the school social environment had 94.4% responses each. The item with the lowest (89.9%) responses was the one that stated that or organizing students to families for group Counselling and mentorship enabled students adjust to the school social environment. table 2 shows all the responses from class teachers.

Table 2Responses of Class Teacher to Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling in Enhancing students' Adjustment to the School Social Environment

Counseling issues	N	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD
Guidance on the role of Guidance and Counselling enabled our students adjust to school's social environment	18	44.4	50.0	5.6	0	0
Regular class and dormitory meetings enabled our students adjust to school's social environment	18	50.0	50.0	0	0	0
Organizing our students into families for group Counselling and mentoring has enabled them adjust to school's social environment	18	38.9	50.0	11.1	0	0
Counselling on ways of handling peer pressure has helped our students adjust to school social environment	18	38.9	61.1	0	0	0
Timely orientation has helped our students adjust to school's social environment	18	55.6	44.4	0	0	0
our peer Counselling program has enhanced students adjustment to school's social environment	18	33.3	61.1	5.6	0	0
Guidance and Counselling on involvement in co-curricular activities has enabled our students adjust to school's social environment	18	44.4	50.0	5.67	0	0
Counselling on moral values has helped our students adjust to school's social environment	18	38.9	61.1	0	0	0
guidance given on choosing helpful friends is helpful in adjust to school's social environment	18	38.9	55.6	5.6	0	0
Helping students to interact with teachers has enabled them adjust to school's social environment	18	33.3	66.7	0	0	0
Guidance and Counselling on how to develop a positive self-esteem has enabled our student adjust to school's social environment	18	33.3	61.1	5.6	0	0
Overall	18	40.9	55.5	3.6	0	0

The study also sought for information from teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling on the effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling in enhancing students' adjustment to school social environment using an interview schedule. Their responses were grouped in themes and the analysis is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 Responses of Teachers In Charge of Guidance and Counselling to Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling on Students' adjustment to School Social Environment**

Social issues	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Organising Mentorship Families	17	94.4
Involvement Peer Counsellors	15	83.3
Importance of Clubs and Societies	15	83.3
Adherence to School Routine	15	83.3
Developing Healthy relationships	14	77.8
Involvement in Co-curricular Activities	14	77.8
Adherence to School Rules	14	77.8
How to Resist Peer Pressure	12	66.7
Involvement in Inter School Activities	10	55.6
How to develop Life skills	9	50
Dangers of ADA	8	44.4
Conflict resolution	7	38.9
Individual Counselling	6	33.3
overall	18	68.25

From Table 3 it was found that on the overall 68.25% respondents suggested that Guidance and Counselling was effective in helping students' adjust to the school social environment. Majority 94.4% of the respondents indicated that organizing students into families for mentorship was effective in enhancing student adjustment to the school social environment. The second rated item was Counselling on self-esteem with 88.9%. Three items had equal responses of 83.3%. These are guidance on the role of Guidance and Counselling, use of peer Counsellor to help student adjust, and Counselling done during dormitory and class meeting help students to adjust to school social environment. 77.8% of respondents indicated that helping student to develop healthy relationship, participate in co-curricular activities and orientation of new students' were effective in enhancing students' adjustment to the school social environment. Counselling on peer pressure had 66.7% respondents, Counselling on moral values 56.6% life skills training 50%. The item of Guidance and Counselling on the Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ADA) had 44.4% despondences, Guidance and Counselling on conflict resolution had 38.9% while individual Counselling had the lowest response of 33.3%.

### Discussion

The study found out that Guidance and Counselling helped students adjust to the school social environment. Response from student, class teachers and teachers in charge of Guidance and Counseling agreed that Guidance and Counselling was effective in helping students to adjust to the school social environment. Findings presented above implies that majority of students, class teachers and teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling agreed that Guidance and Counselling was effective in helping students adjust to the school social environment. Schools therefore need to intensify Guidance and Counselling programs. As suggested by Koech Report of 1999 if schools consistently guided and counselled students against the use of violence as a solution to counter problems and challenges (Republic of Kenya, 1999) we would minimize the issues of student unrests and destruction of property in our schools.

Related studies have similar findings that suggest a favorable and social school climate makes students enjoy schooling experience and adjust favorably to the school social environment (Sunitha, 2005). A positive school social environment impacts on students' sense of belonging and self-esteem (Huggins & Knight, 1997). Students who join secondary schools that are cohesive adjust easily as a result of prosocial motivation, empathy, self-esteem, conflict resolution and altruism behaviour (Ferguson & Fraser, 1998). Guidance and Counselling help the students anxieties of coping in a new school environment to fade away and get replaced by long term concerns about schooling (Delamont & Calton, 1987) student who develop self-esteem adjust well to the school social environment (Darmody et el, 1989). Students adjust well in school with a supportive and encouraging climate (Irven & Broadus, 2001).

## Conclusion

Guidance and Counselling is effective in enhancing student adjustment to school social environment in public boarding secondary schools. This was reflected by improved relationship between students and staff members as well as students and their fellow students. Students' adjustment was also reflected by their independence in decision making and ability to contain peer pressure. Teacher in charge of Guidance and Counselling endeavored to make Guidance and Counselling timely by drawing termly programmes. However, timelines of the Guidance and Counselling program may not be assured because only a few school had a written program of Guidance and Counselling. Though the study was carried out towards the end of the term even some school that claimed to have termly programs could not produce them nor were they mounted on the notice boards. Schools also lacked formal assessment tools to evaluate the usefulness of the Guidance and Counselling services as a way of improving their effectiveness. Schools did not have needs assessment tools. This implies that if guidance and counseling on social issues is well established students would be better socialized, develop positive self-esteem and this would minimize bullying, alcohol and drug abuse and all acts of lawlessness in secondary schools.

## Recommendations

From the findings, it is evident that though teachers, school management have confidence in the ability of Guidance and Counselling services to help student adjust to school environment the services have weaknesses that need to be address in order to make them more effective.

- i. This study found that schools do not have elaborate and organized mechanism to ensure Guidance and Counselling services relevant, timely and useful to maximize its effectiveness in enhancing students' adjustment to school social adjustments, there is need for the ministry of education to make a policy to strengthen these services mechanism in three key areas.

First, the policy may find it necessary to emphasis and advocate for a comprehensive needs assessment in every school. Data for this assessment should be collected from all the stake holders with a bigger emphasis on the students because they are the recipients of the Counselling services.

Secondly, to ensure timeliness of Guidance and Counselling services, the Ministry of Education may find it necessary to have a policy that require all schools to draw a Guidance and Counselling program at the beginning of every term and a copy be given to the nearest quality assurance and standards officers (QASO) office, and another posted not only on the school notice boards but also on all classes notice boards.

- ii. Thirdly the policy should ensure that there is a clear Guidance and Counselling procedure and tools to evaluate the usefulness of the service. This evaluation should focus more on the students as the key beneficiaries of the service. The findings of this evaluation should inform the preparation of the next Guidance and Counselling program and address the weaknesses pointed out in the evaluation.

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