

Abstract

Students in institutions of higher learning encounter challenges in their daily living which leaves many of them devastated, not able to make realistic academic choices and unable to cope with life. Guidance and counselling services are usually provided in public and private universities in Kenya. These services are meant to promote the students well being within a learning set up. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services on development of students' academic competence in public and private universities in Kenya. The study employed ex post facto casual comparative design. Quantitative data was collected by use of a questionnaire that was administered to 369 third and fourth year full-time undergraduate students enrolled in three public and three private universities in Kenya. In addition, qualitative data was collected through an interview conducted among ten (10) student counsellors and a focus group discussion involving thirty six (36) peer counsellors from the universities studied. Purposive, proportionate and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. t-test was used to test the significance and determine whether to reject or accept the study hypotheses. All tests were based on the 0.05 level of significance. An analysis of the findings indicated significant differences in the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services on development of students' academic competence between those enrolled in public and private universities. The findings showed that through effective guidance and counselling services, students in private universities had better growth in the academic competence than those enrolled in public universities. The findings also indicated no significant gender differences in effectiveness of guidance and counselling services on students' development of academic competence in both public and private universities. It was recommended that the university authorities should establish clear policies that would improve and strengthen guidance and counselling services to make them effective for the attainment of students' academic competence.