

Influence of Guidance and Counselling Services on Students emotional adjustment in Secondary Schools in Kenya

By

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Counselling as a process through which students who need help are assisted by a teacher counsellor who is professionally prepared so that they can make necessary adjustments to life and his environment. Therefore, this study investigates influence of guidance and counselling services on students' emotional adjustment in secondary schools in Kenya. The study targeted students from 21 secondary schools in Keiyo Sub County, Kenya. The sample size consisted of 184 were boys and 183 students sampled from, 3 single sex boarding schools, 1 mixed boarding school, and 3 mixed day schools. The study collected data through use of questionnaire and interview schedule. Analysis of data collected was done through quantitative and qualitative methods. Findings showed that there existed significant difference on students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services and students' emotional adjustment in secondary schools. The study concluded that that guidance and counselling services was fairly effective ($M=2.51$ and $SD=0.70$) in assisting students with emotional needs in secondary schools. The study recommends that all schools should have a functional guidance and counselling department with trained counsellors to assist students who have emotional challenges.

Key words: guidance, counselling, students, emotional and adjustments

Introduction

Students in secondary schools are confronted with problems ranging from withdrawal, unhappiness, annoyance, anger, anxiety, and hyperactivity (Ndichu, 2005). Nasibi (2003) adds that students who are at the adolescent stage suffer more stress than any other group. This is because of the physiological and psychological changes they undergo. The latter include questioning of family values, of self concept, personality development, and emotional experiences. Physiological changes include development of primary and secondary sexual characteristics, endocrine change, and alterations in physical appearances. In school, adolescents also experience social changes, because they are so dependent upon their relationship with others. All the variations can generate high levels of stress because the adolescents are adapting to the new changes. Due to this social emotional challenges that majority of students have been experiencing in schools, governments across the world saw the need for introduction of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools.

In India, informal guidance can be traced back to the ancient times. However, formal guidance movement was first introduced in Culcutta University in 1938 to conduct research on the field of educational and vocational guidance (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). Formal guidance and counselling in Ghana began in the late 1960s as a result of the outcry of Ghanaians for meaningful education for their children which did not neglect the manpower needs of their country (Essuman, 1999). In Ethiopia, formal guidance and counselling was first introduced in the higher education curriculum of Addis Ababa University in 1967 (Alemu, 2013). Since then, the course has been given to university students at the department of Psychology and graduates have been assigned to schools and other settings to provide guidance and counselling services. In Tanzania, professional counselling in schools were implemented following the Arusha National Conference that took place in 1984 where guidance and counselling services were endorsed by the government as an integral part of the country's education system (Biswalo, 1996). Formal guidance in Nigeria started in 1959 at St. Theresa's College, Oke-Ado in Ibadan. This was done by some missionary sisters who, out of sympathy and concern for products of their school, felt that school leavers would have a problem seeking admission, employment and adjusting to the conditions in society (Ebochukwu & Alika, 2010). In Kenya, secondary schools have established guidance and counselling departments (Ndirangu, 2007). This could possibly be because of the stringent measures that have been put in place by the Quality Assurance Officers from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). However, the guidance and counselling services face a number of challenges. Auni, Songok, Odhiambo & Lyanda (2014) note that majority of the heads of department do not have adequate training that would help them to handle the varied issues affecting students in schools since the short term workshops and seminars that the majority of them had attended were not sufficient in empowering them to effectively guide and counsel students. The guidance and counselling teachers also had other responsibilities in schools with heavy subject loads and therefore not able to run the programme well. The same study also reported that some students had a poor attitude towards the programme and were not willing to confide in teachers doubling up in the guidance and counselling activities and being a member of the disciplinary committee.

The offering of guidance and counselling services in schools has several goals. These goals include helping the individual access a greater part of their personal resources. The offering of these services is thus seen as a means of enabling the individuals to regain their lost energy and get back on track (Egan, 2002). Secondly is to enable the individual to live more competently and with contentment (McGuinness, 1998) and thirdly is to improve the mental health and reduce psychological disturbances (Egan, 2002; McGuinness, 1998) among other goals. Guidance and counselling services therefore play an important role in preventing educational, social, mental emotional and similar problems. The reduction or elimination of such problems among students assures them of a better life and subsequent achievement of their full potential. When such a state is achieved, the student is said to have attained school adjustment. The way students respond to and perceive the influence of guidance and counselling services on their adjustment to school will, to a great extent determine whether or not guidance and counselling services are needed or will be effectively utilized in schools (Eyo, Joshua, & Esuong, 2010). When students have a negative

perception of the influence of guidance and counselling services, the consumption of the services will be minimal thus many cases of maladjustment are likely to be evident among the students and vice versa. It is due to the above reasons that the research investigates the influence of provision of guidance and counselling on students emotional adjustments in secondary schools in Kenya.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions on the influence of guidance and counselling on students emotional adjustment in secondary schools in Keiyo Sub County, Kenya.

Research Questions

1. Are there significant statistical differences in secondary school students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their emotional adjustment?

Research Hypothesis

Ho₁: There are no significant statistical differences in secondary school students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their emotional adjustment.

Literature Review

It was also important in this study to establish students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their emotional adjustment. Emotions are known to play a leading role in controlling and directing one's behaviour and providing a definite shape to his or her personality make up. According to Rao (2002), emotions have positive and negative aspects. Guidance and counselling services can help clarify to the learner the role of positive emotions that are constructive and integrative and the role of negative emotions that are disruptive and disintegrative. He emphasizes that an emotionally well adjusted student should minimize the role negative and disintegrative emotions while magnifying the role of the positive and integrative emotions. At school, students can display a range of reactions to experiences of grief (Heath, Leavy, Hansen, Ryan, Lawrence & Gerritson - Sontag, 2008; McGlaulin, 1998). Students who have difficulty coping with this experience may exhibit behaviour such as lack of concentration, inability to complete tasks, fatigue, and excessive display of emotion, withdrawal, and aggressiveness (McGlaulin, 1998). In fact it is noted that all losses that face adolescents should be treated as a potential source of grief McGlaulin (1998). Such losses include various changes in peer associations and the loss of a romantic relationship.

It follows therefore that an individual who is capable of expressing his emotions in a proper way at a proper time may be termed as emotionally adjusted. The acquisition of such emotional adjustment may automatically help an individual to act and behave in a desired way, face life situations properly and feel adjusted in the personal and social life (Mangal, 2007). According to Ndondo (2004), all secondary school students seem to experience anger at different times as a result of poor performance, and conflicts between them and teachers. Desocio and Hootman (2004), note that students whose personal or emotional guidance and counselling needs are not satisfied in school suffer for an extended period and the student may break from school completely. The teacher

counsellor needs to help these students who are faced with emotional challenges to understand their feelings, acknowledge those feelings, and try to overcome them and be happy and if possible avoid situations that trigger such feelings in future.

Research studies show that emotional support which is given through services that include guidance and counselling is linked to good psychological adjustment and generally fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety (Maly, Umezawa Leake & Silliman, 2005; Wills & Fegan, 2001). Furthermore, Corey (2008) posited that psychological counselling helps clients to resolve the unfinished earlier life experiences like what might have resulted into the students' current status and has influence in their current way of life. By doing this, counselling helps student clients discover and develop their potentials that can assist them overcome future problems like life skills of managing stress that might result from hassles of school life.

School guidance and counselling services have also been noted to have a significant influence on discipline problems. This is by tackling the psychological issues that are the underlying causes of indiscipline among secondary school students. For instance (Baker & Gerler, 2001) reported that students who participated in school counselling programmes and services had significantly less inappropriate behaviour and more positive attitudes towards school than those who did not participate in the program. Another study reported that group counselling provided by school counsellors significantly decreased participants' aggressive and hostile behaviour (Omizo, Hershberger & Omizo, 1988). School counsellors have also been found to be effective in reducing victimization by assisting victimized children, reducing bullying behaviours, and modifying the school climate and structure (Hanish & Guerra, 2000).

Further, it has been reported that students whose needs are met through guidance and counselling are also better able to cope with test anxiety (Kesici, 2007). Test anxiety refers to the appraisal of a test or other evaluative situations as threatening and consists of distinct cognitive, affective-physiological and behavioural components (Zeidner & Matthews, 2005). The cognitive component is the worrisome thoughts and concerns about the consequences of failing the test, the affective-physiological components are the physical sensations that accompany anxiety for example trembling, headaches and sweating and the behavioural include actions indicating lack of concentration during an exam such as playing with the writing material and looking around. Test anxiety is an emotion that is consistently reported by children and adolescents as worrisome and stressful (McDonald, 2001; Owen-Yeates, 2005). Students frequently become concerned with the consequences of failure. This is especially so since their self-worth has become tied with external achievement whereby there is a possibility of negative judgement from others such as family members and friends. Moreover, educational as well as occupational aspirations rest on achievement in a test. It is no wonder that in Kenya, many of the student unrests are reported towards or during the examination periods.

More studies show that school counsellors have proven effective in preventing students from committing suicide. The most effective programs start with younger students and portray suicide as a mental problem, not a dramatic way of ending life (Jones, 2001). Only an emotionally disturbed person can decide to end his or her life. It should be noted that if the difficulties and stresses are addressed in a preventative manner this can improve not only the students' ability to perform in school, but also their interpersonal relationship with peers, parents and teachers, and can also impact their sense of worth and self-efficacy (Akos, 2005; Kesici, 2007). However, there are studies that report the ineffectiveness of guidance and counselling services in helping individuals with psychological problems. For example a study carried out by Ileri and Muola (2010) reported that many pupils are still beset with physical and psychological problems as well as indiscipline yet the guidance and counselling programmes are running in the schools. The sample for the study was 234 respondents selected from a population of 10 000 primary school teachers in Nairobi City through stratified and random sampling. Ng'eno (2012) reported that students were uncertain on the impact of guidance and counselling services on emotional needs of students. Again very few studies on guidance and counselling services and influence on emotional adjustment have been done in Kenya. Therefore this study aims to fill this literature gap by comparing students' perceptions of the influence perceptions of guidance and counselling services depending on the nature of the services provided in their schools.

Materials and Methods

The research was a causal comparative one that determined if there existed differences in students' perceptions on the role of guidance and counselling towards emotional adjustment in secondary schools. This design was chosen because it is a design that allows a researcher to investigate the possibility of a causal relationship among variables. It is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the researcher has no ability to control the independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred and therefore cannot be manipulated by the researcher. The sample respondents for the research consisted of 367 respondents were selected of which 184 were boys and 183 were girls. The study employed stratified sampling in selecting respondents to participate in the study. Data was collected through the use of questionnaire and interview schedule. The questionnaires were closed ended designed in a Likert scale format. Data collected was analysed using qualitative and quantitative approaches. The descriptive statistics included the mean, frequencies, percentages and SD. The inferential statistics included the t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The hypothesis was tested at 95% confidence level or $\alpha = .05$.

Results

Gender of Respondents

The study sought to find out the gender of respondents who participated in the study. The results are presented in Figure 1.

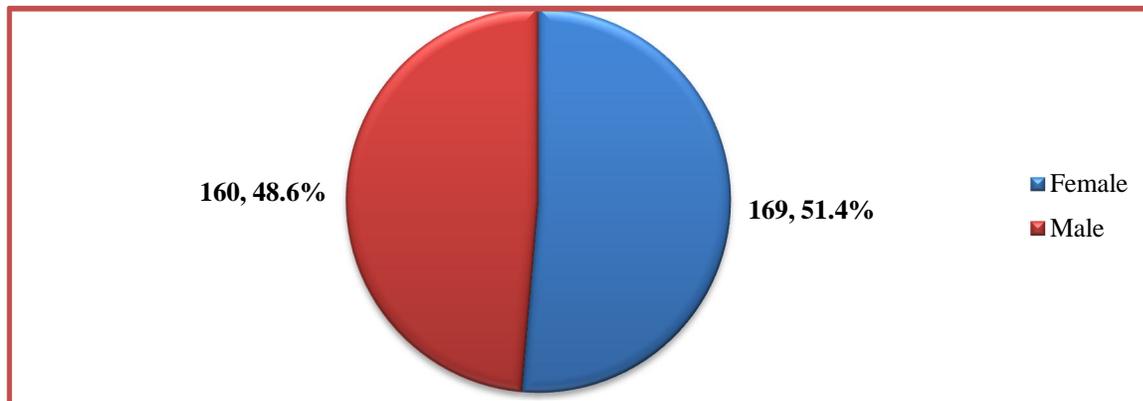


Figure 1: Gender of Students

Findings show that 169 (51.4%) of students were female while 160 (48.6%) were male. This ensured a balance in responses among male and female students. This was helpful in determining their perceptions on the influence of guidance and counselling services on their emotional adjustment in relation of gender in Keiyo Sub-county.

Ratings of Services in Relation to Gender

Gender was one of the important variables in this study so it was necessary to gender. The analysis shows that the percentage of girls who rated guidance and counselling services as poor was 11.2% as compared 41.3% of the boys rated it as poor. The percentage of girls who rated the services as average was 37.2% while 28.7% were boys. On the other hand 51.4% of the girls rated the services as good whereas only 30% of the boys rated the services as poor. It is clear that more girls than boys describe the students' ratings of guidance and counselling services in relation to in Keiyo Sub-county tend to rate guidance and counselling as good. The implication of these findings is that girls' schools have improved or better services' provision. The findings are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Description of Gender and Ratings of G&C Services

Gender	Ratings of G&C services			N
	Poor	Average	Good	
Female	19 (11.2%)	63 (37.2%)	87 (51.4%)	169
Male	66 (41.3%)	46 (28.7%)	48 (30%)	160
Total	85 (25.8%)	109 (33.1%)	135 (41.0%)	329

Perceptions of the Influence of Services on Emotional Adjustment

The objective of the study was to establish the students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their emotional adjustment. To achieve this objective, the following research question was asked: Are there significant statistical differences in secondary school students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling on their emotional adjustment? The null hypothesis stated; there are no significant statistical differences in secondary school students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their emotional

adjustment. In answering the research question, the participants were asked to respond to ten statements that were measuring their perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their emotional adjustment. The results of the descriptive analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Description of the Influence of Services on Emotional Adjustment

Perceptions on Influence of Services on Emotional Adjustment	Negative		Undecided		Positive	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Feeling confident to make decisions	44	13.4	35	10.6	250	76.0
Controlling anger	83	25.2	39	11.9	207	62.9
Feeling happy most of the time	94	28.6	48	14.6	187	56.8
Feeling independent more easily	103	31.3	45	13.7	181	55.0
Avoiding worry most of the time	108	32.8	44	13.4	177	53.8
Relieving tension and nervousness	98	29.8	60	18.2	171	52.0
Feeling calm and energetic	121	36.8	52	15.8	156	47.4
Feel enthusiastic all the time	100	30.4	85	25.8	144	43.8
Sleep well and soundly at bed time	139	42.2	47	14.3	143	43.5
Feeling relaxed most of the time	148	45.0	63	19.1	118	35.9

Majority, 250 (76.0%) of the students agreed that after seeking guidance and counselling services, they felt confident enough to make their own decision on life issues, 44 (13.4%) disagreed while 35 (10.6%) were undecided. The result implies that learners develop confidence on tackling real issues in life after benefitting from guidance and counselling services in their schools. Secondly, most of the respondents, 207 (62.9%) tended to agree that counselling services help them to control their anger. Anger is identified as one of the emotions that normally lead to indiscipline cases in secondary schools, nonetheless, the rest of the respondents were either undecided or disagreed on the statement. The responses also show that 187 (56.8%) of students agreed, 94 (28.6%) disagreed while 48 (14.6%) were undecided on the statement that guidance and counselling helps them to be happy most of the time. It is also evident that 181 (55.0%) of respondents acknowledged that they felt more independent after receiving guidance and counselling services, 103 (31.3%) did not while 45 (13.7%) were undecided. This shows that most students' feelings of independence improve after receiving guidance and counselling services in schools.

It was also clear that 177 (53.8%) of respondents agreed that guidance and counselling services assisted them not to worry a lot most of the time but 108 (32.8%) disagreed with the statement. This shows that guidance and counselling services are perceived by a majority of students as helpful towards helping them cope with worry and fear. However, the number of respondents who perceive otherwise is quite large. Results also revealed that at least 171 (52.0%) of students agreed that once they have been offered guidance and counselling services, the nervousness and tension is controlled. Only 98 (29.8%) disagreed with the statement while 60 (18.2%) were undecided. This implies that students tend to feel relaxed after receiving guidance and counselling services. The responses also showed divided opinion concerning the next statement where 156 (47.4%) of the respondents

agreed that after receiving guidance and counselling services, they usually feel calm and energetic while 121 (36.8%) disagreed with the statement. This shows that some students despite the fact that many students perceive guidance and counselling as making them feel calm and energetic; there is quite a large number that reported no change. This therefore calls for teacher counsellors to make follow-ups after students have received guidance and counselling services. The students were also required to give their opinion on the feeling of being enthusiastic after receiving guidance and counselling services. 144 (43.8%) agreed, 100 (30.4%) disagreed whereas 85 (25.8%) were undecided. Moreover, students were asked to report about their sleeping habits after receiving guidance and counselling services. Some 143 (43.5%) of respondents agreed, 47 (14.3%) were undecided while 139 (42.2%) disagreed that they slept well and soundly at bed time after receiving guidance and counselling services. Lastly, 148 (45.0%) of respondents reported that they were not feeling relaxed most of the time after receiving guidance and counselling services and only 118 (35.9%) reported to be relaxed. The results shown above suggest that though many students perceive that guidance and counselling services are important in addressing student emotional needs however there are many who are undecided or do not feel that the services are helpful.

Interview Responses on Influence of Services on Emotional Adjustment

The interview schedule sought to establish the respondents' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their emotional adjustments). The responses were both positive and negative. The respondents who gave positive responses were 75% (12/16) whereas those who gave negative responses were 25% (4/16). There were various reasons given by each of these respondents. Those who gave positive responses cited issues like assistance in better management of stress, managing anger and other difficult moods thus avoiding conflicts, Also students' felt that their frustrations that result from every day hassles are addressed as well as the nervousness and anxiety that are common during exam times managing despair and hopelessness and overcoming anxiety thus remaining calm and composed most of the time. Again it was noted by these respondents that a generally happy mood engulfs them whenever a motivational speaker is invited to address the students. A male respondent from a mixed boarding school had this to say concerning management of negative emotions: *I have seen students who would have ended up fighting but ended up by forgiving one another after receiving guidance and counselling on how to express their emotions appropriately.*

The reasons given by respondents for their negative responses included unavailability of the teacher counsellor in the office when needed and the worry about what others may think when they see them going for counselling. The reason that featured prominently, however, is that the students are not convinced that the counsellor is on their side or can understand their emotions and is there to assist them. In such cases students kept their emotions bottled up and their emotional adjustment is affected negatively. A male student from a mixed boarding school gave this response:

I have witnessed cases where students cry but do not want to reveal the reason for the crying as they would rather suffer silently than seek counselling. Others would exhibit obvious signs of restlessness and anxiety but refuse to seek assistance through counselling because they don't think the teacher counsellor will understand.

As indicated in chapter three students' information on guidance and counselling services was scored as follows; poor (10-25), not sure (26-34) and good (35-50). To arrive at the results, a cross tabulation analysis was computed and the descriptive results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Ratings of Services Influence on Emotional Adjustment

Perceptions of Influence on Emotional Adjustment				
Students' Ratings	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Poor	85	2.5176	1.21118	.13137
Average	109	3.2752	.70542	.06757
Good	135	3.8000	.65563	.05643
Total	329	3.2948	.98835	.05449

Findings in Table 3 revealed that for those students who rated the provision of guidance and counselling services as poor, their mean score value for perceptions on the influence on emotional adjustment was below average ($M=2.51$ and $SD=1.12$) whereas those who rated it as average (109) scored higher mean on perceptions of the influence emotional adjustment scores ($M=3.27$ and $SD=0.70$) while those who rated it as good (135) scored the highest mean score ($M=3.8$ and $SD=0.65$). The results are graphically summarised in Figure 2.

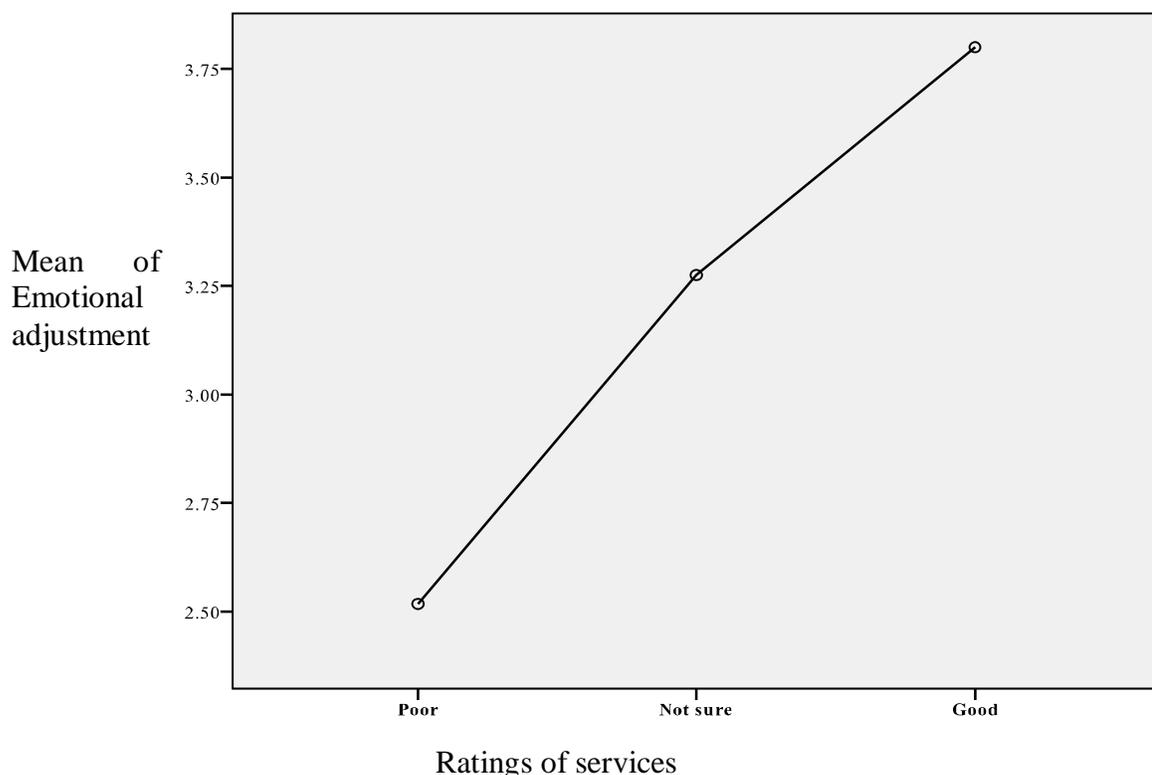


Figure 2 Ratings of Services and Influence on Emotional Adjustment.

The model in Figure 2 shows that as students' ratings of the guidance and counselling services improve their perceptions of its influence on emotional adjustment become more positive and vice versa. The significance of the result was tested using the ANOVA at 95% confidence level. A summary of the results is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 ANOVA on Influence Services on Emotional Adjustment

Emotional Adjustment					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	85.835	2	42.917	59.646	.000
Within Groups	234.567	326	.720		
Total	320.401	328			

The obtained ANOVA values were $F(2, 326) = 42.917$, $p = 0.001$ and the critical values were $F(3, 326) = 2.99$, $p = 0.05$. The calculated F values were higher than the critical values which led to rejection of null hypothesis. It was therefore concluded that there exist significant statistical differences in students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling services on their emotional adjustment. This implies that there exist significant differences in students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling on their emotional adjustment depending on whether they rated the services as poor, average or good.

Conclusion

There existed significant statistical differences in students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counselling on their emotional adjustment. Guidance and counselling services provision in secondary schools in Keiyo Sub-county was found to be fairly effective in assisting students with emotional needs as shown from responses from the participants. Responses showed that learners' habits and characters were greatly impacted upon receiving counselling. For instance, 76.0 % of students agreed that they felt confident enough to make their own decisions on life issues. Moreover, students who had difficulty in controlling their anger which could lead to all types of punishment including exclusion from school also benefited from guidance and counselling services. This showed that anger management skills were provided to students and this was found to be helpful to them. More than half (55.0%) reiterated that they usually felt more independent and less worried after receiving guidance and counselling services. The respondents also agreed that most of them feel less nervous after receiving counselling services. Those students whose teachers regularly geared their guidance services towards addressing their emotional needs perceived that the services assisted them to adjust and cope well with school life. However, for those students whose emotional needs were not met through guidance and counselling, they ended up experiencing problems and conflict situations which in most cases lead to poor learning outcomes and school unrests. The study recommends that teacher counsellors should regularly make follow-ups to examine learners' progress after they have received the guidance and counselling services. This will evaluate the services offered by the department and therefore lead to the necessary modifications resulting to

improvement of the services. If not possible assistance may be offered to students by making the necessary referrals.

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