

EFFECTIVENESS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' ADJUSTMENT TO SCHOOL PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT IN PUBLIC BOARDING SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Students who transit from primary schools to public boarding secondary schools find themselves in a new and challenging physical. Orientation is conducted in schools to introduce the new students to the school physical environment. 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 physical 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 enable students adjust to school physical environment. The study further suggests ways of ways of improving Guidance and Counselling services in order to make it more effective in public boarding secondary schools.

Key Words; School Adjustment, Student Adjustment, School Guidance and Counselling, Orientation

Introduction

American Association of School Administrators observe that a school environment has physical, social and academic aspects (Gonder & Hymes, 1994). The physical environment includes school buildings, the noise levels, text books, recreational facilities and the neighborhood (New Detroit, 2003). Adeyemo (2001) in his studies in Nigeria postulates that when students join secondary schools they find themselves in a more expansive school environment, larger classroom and an environment that has more noise than what they were used to in their relatively smaller primary schools. In Britain it was observed that students who transit from primary to secondary schools are faced with difficulties in adjusting to new environment (Galton, Grey & Ruddock, 1999). In New Zealand Cottrell (1982) observes that school adjustments imply some form of orientation between a child's perception of the school environment and the abilities they bring to the situation. Students therefore, need to adjust to this new, expansive and challenging environment in order to get maximum benefit from the school.

According to Adeyemo (2001) students' adjustment to the new and challenging school physical environment in Nigeria involves knowing the location and the purpose of the various school building, fitting and coping with the large classroom plus the increased level of noise. In England schools organize orientation programmes to help the new learners to know the available school physical resources like the library, books, school canteen, dormitories, double decker beds and how to use them (Frydenberg, 2002). According to Bates (1998) in New Zealand students who are well adjusted to the school physical environment endeavor to keep the school environment clean, give proper use and care of school property like furniture, books, dormitories, school bus, laboratory and library. In Kenya there are reports of school disturbances that lead to unrest, burning of dormitories, breaking of window panes, stealing of school property as well as other students' property in public boarding secondary schools (Republic of Kenya, 2001). This suggests that there is students' maladjustment in these secondary schools.

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 of the increased developmental, personal and social challenges, lack of motivation towards work, disruptive behavior and the rise of juvenile delinquency (Yuk Yee & Brennam, 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 physical environment in public boarding secondary schools in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Transitions of learners from primary to secondary school create adjustment needs in physical, social and academic 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 physical environment in public boarding secondary schools in Kenya.

Objective of the Study

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

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive research studies are designed to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning status of the phenomena and whenever possible to draw valid conclusions from facts discovered (Lockesh, 1984). Best and Khan (1993) observes that in descriptive survey research design the researcher merely selects the relevant variables for analysis of their relationship. This study sought to establish the effectiveness of guidance and Counseling services in enhancing students' adjustment to school environment. Survey aims at obtaining information that can be analyzed, pattern extracted and comparisons made (Bell, 1994). 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 be 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 Counseling. 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. The researcher coded the data from the questionnaires and analyzed it 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 calculated based on the total number of responses from the tallies.

Results of the Study

The study sought to establish the effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling on students' adjustment to the school physical environment. Focus was laid on ten aspects of Guidance and Counselling which schools used to help students adjust to the school physical environment. The response by students' on these items is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Student Responses to Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling in Enhancing Students' Adjustment to School Physical Environment

issues	N	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Guidance on use of every school building helped me adjust to the school's physical environment	720	41.6	46.9		0	0
Orientation on proper use of school library helped me adjust to the school's physical environment	720	46.3	41.7	12.1	0	0
Guidance on uses of facilities enabled me to adjust to the school's physical environment	720	52.9	34.4	12.4	0	0
G& C on keeping the compound clean helped me adjust to the school physical environment	720	42.5	46.4	11.1	0	0
G&C on how to store and maintain textbooks helped to adjusting to school's physical environment	720	48.9	40.3	10.8	0	0
Assurance of safety is helped me to adjust school's physical environment	720	43.9	45.3	10.8	0	0
Being shown the Guidance and Counselling room helped me adjust to the school physical environment	720	40.7	42.6	16.7	0	0
Guidance on safety precautions helped me to adjust to the school's physical environment	720	46.1	36.4	17.5	0	0
Guidance on how to be orderly in dormitory helped me adjust to school's physical environment	720	47.5	41.7	10.8	0	0
Guidance on classroom organization helped me adjust to school's physical environment	720	43.6	43.9	12.5	0	0
Overall	720	45.4	42	12.6	0	0

From Table 1 it was found that majority (a total of 87.4%) that on the overall agreed that Guidance and Counselling helped them adjust to the school physical environment. The questionnaire had ten items on targeting different Guidance and Counselling issues that when addressed help students' to adjust to the school environment. The responses indicate that all the items had over 80% respondents agreeing and strongly agreeing.

Three items had the majority (89.3) respondents in total strongly agreeing and agreeing, these are Guidance and Counselling on cleaning the school compound, safety and order in the dormitories.

The item with the lowest (82.5%) total respondents agreeing and strongly agreeing was guidance on safety precautions enabled them adjust to school physical environment.

Form three class teachers questionnaire had the similar items with that of the students' on whether Guidance and Counselling was effective enhancing students to the school physical environment. The study found out that the response of class teachers was similar to the responses by students. On the overall (91.2%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Guidance and Counselling helped students' adjust to the school physical environment.

Four out of the ten items a total of 100% respondents unanimously agreed and strongly agree that Guidance and Counselling enabled students' adjust to the school physical environment. These items included guidance and the use of school buildings, use of library, use of school facilities and guidance on keeping the school compound clean. The item that had the least (66.7%) respondents agreeing and strongly agreeing with was that assuring students of their safety enabled them adjust to school physical environment. All the other item Responses was above 80%.all the response from class teachers are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Response of Class Teachers to Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling in Enhancing Students' Adjustment to the School Physical Environment

Issues	N	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD
Guidance given on use of every school building enabled our students adjust to school's physical environment	18	50.0	50.0	0	0	0
Orientation given on proper use of school library enabled our students adjust to school's physical environment	18	44.4	55.6	0	0	0
Guidance given on use of school facilities is enabled our students adjust to school's physical environment	18	39.9	61.1	0	0	0
Encouraging students to keeping the school compound clean has enabled them adjust to school's physical environment	18	44.4	55.6	0	0	0
Guidance on how to store and maintain textbooks enabled our students adjust to school's physical environment	18	16.7	66.7	16.6	0	0
Assurance our students of safety has enabled them adjust to school's physical environment	18	22.3	44.4	11.1	11.1	11.1
Showing our students the Guidance and Counselling room has enabled them adjust to school's physical environment	18	44.4	44.4	5.6	5.6	0

Guiding our students on safety precautions has enabled them adjust to school's physical environment	18	16.7	72.2	11.1	0	0
Guidance our students maintain order and cleanliness in dormitory enabled them adjust to school's physical environment	18	38.8	55.6	5.6	0	0
Guidance on classroom organization enabled our students adjust to school's physical environment	18	27.7	61.1	5.6	5.6	0
Overall	18	34.5	56.7	8.3	5.5	2.2

Data was collected from teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling on effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling in enhancing students' adjustment using an interview schedule. The data collected was coded in themes and the analysis is shown in Table 20. From the analyses the study established that majority (77.8%) of respondents suggested that guidance on uses of schools building enhanced students' adjustment to school physical environment. 72.2% of respondents indicated that guiding students on uses of school facilities and maintenance of their exercise books enhanced their adjustment to the physical environment. The least (50%) respondents indicated that encouraging the students to keep their environment clean helped them adjust to the school environment as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Response of Teachers In Charge of Guidance and Counselling to Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Students' Adjustment To the School Physical Environment

issues	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Guidance on uses of school buildings	14	77.8
Guidance on uses of school facilities	13	72.2
Guidance on maintenance of exercise books	13	72.2
Guiding students on to use the library	12	66.7
Assuring students of safety in the school	12	66.7
Guiding students on safety precautions	11	61.1
Introducing students to Guidance and Counselling teachers and counselling	10	55.6
Guiding and Counselling student on personal and classroom organisation	10	55.6
Guidance to keep order and cleanliness in dormitories	10	55.6
Encouraging students to keep school environment clean	9	50
Overall		63.6

Discussion

The study established that Guidance and Counselling was effective in enhancing students' adjustment to the school physical environment. Majority of the student respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Guidance and Counselling helped them adjust to the school physical environment. Class teachers and teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling strongly agreed and agreed that Guidance and Counselling programs in their school helped students adjust to school physical environment.

From the above responses we realize that students and teachers value Guidance and Counselling in our public boarding secondary schools. Guidance and Counselling is an essential service which facilitates students' adjustment to the school physical environment. The findings of this study show that the government of Kenya was right in insisting that Guidance and Counselling be strengthened to become an active and available service on day to day basis to students (republic of Kenya, 1999). The finding in the study agrees with findings by other related studies from other parts of the world. Lonburg and Bowen (2004) observed that in America Guidance and Counselling services helped in creating safe schools. Lee (1993) observed that students who participated in Guidance and Counselling in American schools were well adjusted to the school environment. According to Adeyemo (2001) students' adjusted well to the new and challenging school environment when they were helped to know the location and purpose of various school buildings. Potter (2001) asserts that students adjusted better in school where they were well oriented on school physical environment including being assisted to know the location all the school buildings and the rules that govern their use. Bails and Rossi (2001) found that students adjusted better in schools where they were well oriented on school physical environment including being assisted to know the location all the school buildings and the rule that govern their use. The study also agrees with the findings of Stewart (2001) that students were able to adjust to the school environment better when they were guided to understand the regulations that govern library and laboratories. Bails and Rossi (2001) found that students adjusted faster in a school physical environment that is clean, hygienic and attractive.

Conclusion

Guidance and Counselling service are very effective in enhancing student adjustment to the school physical environment. Students, adjustment to school physical environment was reflected by their adherence to the school programmes, improved discipline, reduction of cases of truancy and reduction of cases of alcohol and drug abuse. Peer Counselling is well established in schools though their competence and skill is not assured. They are mainly used to help in students' orientation, give Counselling first aid to students who approach them for Counselling and refer them to either the class teacher or teacher in charge of Guidance and Counselling. Guidance and Counselling services in secondary schools were dominated by group guidance with almost no individual Counselling. Majority of students preferred either to go for Counselling to a colleague or not go for it at all. Class teachers indicated that the rate of students going for Counselling was largely moderate, low and very low. This may explain why despite the much emphasis in Guidance and Counselling indiscipline and unrests remains a challenge in public secondary school. There are personal maladjustment issues that are not addressed in group Counselling.

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. The findings of this study have shown that Guidance and Counselling is effective in enhancing students' adjustment to school physical environment. Schools used peer counsellors to supplement the efforts of teachers in helping student adjust to school physical environment. There is therefore need strengthen and empower the peer counsellors to play a more effective role in helping students' adjust to the school environment and the society at large. The Ministry of Education can enhance the achievement of this by developing a training syllabus and a clear policy on the role of peer counsellors in schools.
- ii. This study found that whereas group guidance was well established as a means of enhancing students' adjustment to the school physical environment very little of individual counseling was taking place. It is therefore necessary to strengthen individual Counselling in secondary school. This can be done by reducing the teaching load of teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling so that they can spend more time provoking students' to seek for individualized Counselling. With less teaching load the teachers in charge of Guidance and Counselling will be able to attend to the students who need Counselling.

Secondly, to strengthen individualized Guidance and Counselling, the school curriculum need be decongested so that the school routine can be relaxed. This will give students more free time and therefore enable those with Counselling issues to attend Counselling sessions. A relaxed school routine will also give class teachers and other teachers' ample time to attend to the students' need. It is therefore prudent for the ministry of education to consider reviewing the curriculum to reduce the content.

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