



An assessment on the relationship between individuals counselling services and students' academic performance in Nandi South Sub-county, Kenya



Research article



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Abstract

Much has been reported about guidance and counselling in schools in Kenya. However, despite the presence of guidance counselling services in secondary schools, there is still poor performance amongst the students. The purpose of this study was to undertake an assessment on the relationship between individuals counselling services and Students' Academic Performance in Nandi South Sub-County, Nandi County, Kenya. Questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis were the methods used to collect data. Method of analysis included descriptive statistics involving measures of central tendencies and inferential statistics such as Pearson Correlation Coefficient and regression analysis. Data presentation was in form of tables, pie charts and bar graphs. The findings of this study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between individual counselling services and students' academic performance in Nandi South Sub-County. The study therefore recommended various stakeholders in the education ministry including the principals, Teachers Service Commission and Department of Basic Education to ensure privacy in the provision of guidance and counselling in secondary schools and establish departments that are in charge of guidance and counselling.

Keywords: Guidance, peer group, counselling service, academic performance, influence.



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1.0 Introduction

Education is a critical sector in any country which yearns to develop human capital and improve the well-being of its citizens (Battle & Lewis, 2002). According to Saxton (2000), education leads to increased productivity and widen sources of earning which fasten rural development and the overall development of the economy. Crosnoe, Johnson and Elder (2004) assert that higher academic performance is a top priority for educators. In a Tanzanian study, Komba, Hizza and Jonathan (2013) examined factors influencing student performance of schools in Moshi district and Moshi municipality. The study found out the factors to include lack of conducive teaching and learning environment, high number of students per class, shortage of teaching and learning materials and limited number of teachers per subject. Further, Karue and Amukowa (2013) studied factors that that contribute to poor performance in the national secondary schools examinations in Embu district. The study found out that family backgrounds and unfavourable home environments affected students' academic performance. Additionally, Kyei and Nemaorani (2014) in South Africa found out that parents' socioeconomic status, sex, age, location of the school, influenced negatively the students' high school grades. Counsellors are the most important persons when it comes to the implementation of counselling policies in schools. They are the closest people to students who can help them deal with emotional and psychological problems which are threat to their academic performance. Studies have shown that students who seek guidance and counselling services get better grades than their counterparts (Carey & Harrington, 2010).

Omotosho (2004) argued that counsellors are better placed to help students in the choice of their careers and other interests in life. In the same note, Egbule (2006) asserted that through counselling services, students are equipped with ability to utilize the available educational opportunities. It improves their capability to plan their studies, which in turn, contribute to academic competencies in schools. Moreover, Adeoye (2016) declared that student academic problems and healthy heterosexual relationships among students is facilitated by educational guidance and counselling service. By keeping the proper record of students counselling assessment, counsellors are in position to offer continuous educational counselling that will better student's academic performance. According to Yusuf (2004), educational counsellors are able to mitigate on academic deficiencies that can hinder student success including lack of attention, poor concentration, lack of attention, slow learning etc.

2.0 Literature Review

Academic work is the most important aspect that students use to define themselves. This is because the feelings of the students influence academic work and thus would always identifying themselves with it (Bell, 2011). Allan (2014) noted that academic success that students achieve is vulnerable to moderating factors that include hope and confidence in

one's abilities. Lyanda, Jepchirchir and Ong'unya (2012) alleges that the individuals who are in cognisance of their abilities and responsibilities are capable to tackle issues related to learning process including setting up of goals and laying out strategies to achieve the goals. Students who are thought in a poor learning environment registers reduced learning rate and high avoidance behaviour (Iraki, 2009).

Students' progressive achievement in performance is facilitated by academic competency. With academic competency, student is able to perform different tasks and solve different academic problems. In his part Mohanty (2003) argues that students with academic competence are able to choose right path of education which in in line with the manpower needed in the economy. Counselling programmes come in hand to help secondary school and university students to choose appropriate courses that will make them accomplished citizens in future. Students who receive academic guidance and counselling are in better position to earnest educational available opportunities. Such programs will not only refine them to grow well educationally but also prepare them to have life services that will be personally satisfying and socially useful. Through such opportunities students are able to discover and utilize their own abilities (Whiston, 2007).

In a study of Missouri high schools Lapan, Gysbers and Sun (1997) reported that schools which had fully established guidance and counselling programs presented students who were more likely perform better in examinations. The guidance and counselling programs created conducive climate for education preparing students for their future endeavours. With other variables affecting student performance constant, positive program effects were identifiable. Their finding showed important roles counsellors were promoting the attainment of education goals and the support of the comprehensive guidance program that played central role in student growth and well-being (Gysbers & Sun, 1997).

In another perspective Gitonga (2007) laments that parents especially in Kenya are faced with tough economic and educational challenges and thus have no time to guide and mentor their children. The result of this is children growing waywardly both academically and in other aspects of life. There are studies which have proved that those who attended the counselling showed improvement in their grades as compared to those who did not (Dahir & Campbell, 2003). Apart from assisting students with their academic achievement, counsellors also help student increase interpersonal competencies. Counselling units are better place departments in education department which can positively influence different parts of student lives including emotional, social, intellectual, and physical aspects.

Professional school counsellors are able to meet the needs of students in various domains ranging from academic to social and personal development (Shaterloo & Mohammadyari, 2011). Knowledge is developed from these domains through counselling, collaboration, appraisal consultation and classroom instruction. For appraisal purposes, a

variety of career and personality assessment methods are used to explore students' needs and interests (Shaterloo & Mohammadyari, 2011). The main constituents of school counsellor interventions include the classroom academic development lessons as well as annual academic access planning K-12. Other important area concern to the school counsellors are topics dealing with diversity, character education and multiculturalism (Portman, 2009). Counsellors are also often involved in coordinating and teaching student needs outside academics such as drugs and child abuse through on-stage drama (Poulou, 2005). There is evidence among many researchers that school counselling interventions to serve to promote academic success (Whiston & Quinby, 2009). These interventions are termed strategic as they are based on empirical evidence and match the therapeutic needs of the students (Brown & Trusty, 2005). Various programs can be delivered in varied ways including individual counselling, small group work and large classroom guidance. This study assessed the influence of selected counselling services on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nandi South Sub-County.

3.0 Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was employed in this size. Of the 1549 respondents, 306 respondents were selected as the sample size. Questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis were the methods used to collect data. Validity of the research instruments was tested through expert judgment by the lecturers in the department of Psychology, Laikipia University while reliability was tested through piloting and use of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The instruments were tested high reliable with a reliability coefficient of 0.78. After data was collected, it was fed to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0 for analysis. Method of analysis included descriptive statistics involving measures of central tendencies and inferential statistics such as Pearson Correlation Coefficient and regression analysis. Data presentation was in form of tables, pie charts and bar graphs.

4.0 Results

4.1 The Relationship of Individual Counselling Services and Students' Academic Performance

This study aimed at assessing the relationship between individuals counselling services and Students' Academic Performance in Nandi South Sub-County, Nandi County, Kenya. The participants were asked to rank their degree of agreement on a five-point Likert scale in order to achieve this objective of the study. The results is analysed in the Table 1.

Table 1: Students' Responses on the relationship of individual counselling services and students' academic performance

Statement	SD		D		UD		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Counselling assists me to meet my educational opportunities	26	11.0	17	7.2	20	8.4	123	51.9	51	21.5
Counselling offers opportunities for me to discover my own educational abilities	21	8.9	35	14.8	38	16.0	52	21.9	91	38.4
Counselling makes me have appropriate educational and vocational plans	19	8.0	47	19.8	18	7.6	89	37.6	64	27.0
School counselling helps me to realize and do my class work assignments in time.	13	5.5	2	.8	20	8.4	111	46.8	91	38.4
School counselling has enabled me to define my career	3	1.3	35	14.8	13	5.5	78	32.9	108	45.6
Students are willing to reveal their problems to Counsellors during individual counselling and therefore their challenges are addressed at individual level	28	11.8	26	11.0	21	8.9	78	32.9	84	35.4
Counselling has helped me to always work hard in my studies	25	10.5	65	27.4	21	8.9	74	31.2	52	21.9
Counselling has enabled me improve in my academic performance	0	0.0	37	15.6	10	4.2	65	27.4	125	52.7

Table 1 shows that 123(51.9%) respondents agreed with the statement that counselling assisted them to meet their educational opportunities, 51(21.5%) students were strongly in agreement with the statement, 26(11.0%) students were strongly in disagreement with the statement and 20(8.4%) students were uncertain while 17(7.2%) students were in disagreement with the statement. The majority (73.4%) of the students in secondary schools in Nandi South Sub County opined that counselling assisted them to meet their educational opportunities. This therefore showed that students embraced individual counselling as it assisted them meet their educational opportunities. This finding agreed with (Egbo, 2013) who indicated that counselling helps an individual to learn about the environments and themselves. Further, 91(38.4%) students were strongly in agreement with the statement that counselling offered them opportunities to discover their own educational abilities, 52(21.9%) students were in agreement with the statement, 38(16.0%) students were uncertain and 35(14.8%) students were in disagreement with the statement while 21(8.9%) students were strongly disagreed with the statement. The majority (60.3%) of the students in the region as shown in the responses were of the view that Counselling offers opportunities for me to discover their own educational abilities. Schools need counselling for them to harness opportunities that can enable them to discover their own educational abilities. This implied that counselling influenced student academic performance in secondary schools.

Similarly, 111(46.8%) students were in agreement with the statement that school counselling helps them to realize and do their class work assignments on time, 91(38.4%) of the students were strongly agreed with the statement, 20(8.4%) students were uncertain while 15(6.3%) students disagreed with the statement. The majority (85.2%) of the students as shown in the responses believed school counselling helped them to realize and do their class work assignments on time. This implied that students embraced counselling because it helps them to realize and work on assignments on time.

Moreover, 108(45.6%) students strongly agreed with the statement that School counselling had enabled them to define their careers, 78(32.9%) students agreed with the statement and 38(16.1%) students were in disagreement with the statement. Others 13(5.5%) were undecided. The responses indicated that the majority of the students (78.5%) stated the school counselling program to define their career. This showed School counselling enabled students to define their career. This finding is supported by Lunenburg (2010) who noted that counselling helped students in career choice to identify appropriate areas of study and choose right career path. Similarly, 84(35.4%) students were strongly in agreement with the statement that Students were willing to reveal their problems to counsellors during individual counselling and therefore their challenges were addressed at individual level, 78(32.9%) students agreed with the statement, 28(11.85) students were strongly in disagreement with the statement and 26(11.05) students were in disagreement with the statement while 21(8.9%)

students were uncertain. The study findings suggested that majority (68.3%) of the secondary school students in Nandi South Sub County reported that students were willing to reveal their problems to Counsellors during individual counselling and therefore their challenges were addressed at individual level. This implied that Students were comfortable and open to the counsellors and therefore their challenges could be addressed efficiently. This is an indication that counsellors should engage students more frequently at individual level.

Moreover, 74(31.2%) students were in agreement with the statement that Counselling had helped them to always work hard in their studies, 65(27.4%) students did not agree with the statement, 52(21.9%) students were strongly in agreement with the statement and 25(10.5%) students strongly disagreed with the statement while 21(8.9%) students were uncertain. The responses clearly pointed out that majority (53.1%) of the students in public secondary schools in the study area noted that Counselling had helped them to always work hard in my studies. This implied that Counselling encourages students work hard their studies. In addition, 125(52.7%) students were strongly in agreement with the statement that counselling has enabled them improved in their academic performance, 65(27.4%) students were in agreement with the statement and 37(15.6%) students were not in agreement with the statement while 10(4.2%) students were uncertain on the statement. It seemed therefore that majority (80.1%) of the students in public secondary schools in the study area believed that Counselling has enabled them improve in their academic performance. This implied that counselling enable student improve in my academic performance. On interviewing the teacher counsellors, it was found out that individual counselling was effective in the areas of study in improving communication skills, improving the relationship between teacher and learner and improves greatly in academic performance. In the area of time management counsellors added that individual counselling assisted in minimizing of time wastage and when students become discipline in keeping time, they improve in their academic performance.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis of this study stated that:

H₀1: There is no statistically significant relationship between individual counselling services and students' academic performance in Nandi South Sub-County.

The potential relationship between counselling and students' academic performance was established using Pearson Correlation Coefficient (simply r) as shown below:

Table 2: The Correlation Coefficient Between Individual Counselling services and Students' Academic Performance

Variables	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
Individual Counselling Services	$r = 0.559^{**}$
Student Academic performance	

$P \leq 0.01$; $N = 237$

Pearson Correlation Coefficient results suggested a significant positive relationship between Student Academic performance in secondary schools and Individual Counselling Services at $p \leq 0.01$ significance level ($r = 0.559$). This finding agreed with Oviogbodu, C., (2015) who found out that counselling individual student is very effective in the sense that students will be free and open up to share the challenges they were going through with the counsellors. Some of the students are shy to share their challenges and experiences in the presence of other students and this could be the most effective type of counselling.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The study established that there was a considerable relationship between individual counselling services and performances of student in Nandi South Sub-County. This showed that enhanced individual counselling services in secondary schools made performance to improve. The study therefore recommended that the school management in secondary schools should offer an office in which guidance and counselling services are provided at a private place. This will allow students to have a way in visiting the office to get more counselling for individual.

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