STUDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KIKUYU DIVISION, KIAMBU DISTRICT

By

Rose Adhiambo Ogoda

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This study examined attitudes among public secondary school students towards guidance and counselling and the challenges faced by the teacher-counsellor. Basically, counselling is a learning-oriented process, which occurs, usually in an interactive relationship. In this relationship, one person helps another to understand and solve his/her problems. In Kenya, secondary school students are at the turbulent age of adolescence (13-19 years). This is an age in human development characterized by identity versus role confusion. As such, most secondary school students experience a lot of stress in dealing with this ambiguous stage in life. The student is therefore in danger of forming maladaptive behaviour if he fails to achieve the desired goals. Effective counselling, especially in institutions of learning, has now become important.

Counselling should empower students to participate fully in, and benefit from the economic and social development of the nation. Most students want to communicate with people who can help them. In schools, students are advised to seek help from the teacher-counsellor. However, the work of a teacher-counsellor in our present education system is very challenging.

The objectives of the study were to determine the attitudes of secondary school students towards seeking guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. To establish whether boys and girls have different attitudes towards seeking guidance and counseling services in secondary school; to determine students perception of guidance and counselling in their schools and to determine problems faced by guidance and counselling department in secondary schools in
Kikuyu Division. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. During the study, most of the students indicated the awareness of guidance and counseling services. In seeking to establish the professional qualification of the teacher counsellors, the study found that more teachers in Kikuyu division, Kiambu district have not attained the highest level of training in counselling skills though they were all professional teachers. Competency and trust in teacher-counsellor can attract many students to the counselling department. The study found that students tend to seek help more frequently from peer counsellors perhaps.

Based on the findings, the study came up with the following conclusions: most secondary school students join form one on the onset of adolescence (14-19years) when counseling services in schools should be emphasised; students need to be made aware of the importance of the teacher counsellor services; most teacher-counsellors were willing to train on counselling skills if they were given enabling incentives. The factors that hinder the success of counselling intervention other than lack of professionalism of teacher counsellors are lack of counselling offices, lack of clear time set for counselling, nonavailability of teacher counsellor, poor prior counselling experience and the negative attitudes of students towards counselling. The implication of this is that eradication of these factors will lead to more students making use of the counselling services. The recommendations were that there should be professional training of teacher-counsellors and resources and facilities should be availed by the school administration.