

The Impact of Head teachers Support in Implementing the Guidance and Counseling Programme (GCP) for Promotion of the Hearing Impaired Pupils' Development in Selected Counties, Kenya

Dorcas Njeri Githaiga¹, Gladys Kiptiony², Owen Ngumi³

^{1,2} Kabarak University, Kenya

³ Egerton University, Kenya

*Corresponding Author:

Dorcas Njeri Githaiga

Email: dnjeri02@yahoo.com

Abstract: This study investigated the impact of head teachers' support in implementing the guidance and counseling programme (GCP) in schools for the hearing-impaired pupils in the counties of Nakuru, Nairobi, Kiambu and Machakos. These counties have a total population of 776 pupils, 90 teachers and 9 head teachers. Pupils in class six to eight who comprised 243 were selected for the study. This ex-post facto descriptive survey used self-administered questionnaires and interview guide for data collection. A pilot study preceded the main study to ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire items. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha method was used to measure the internal consistency of items. The results yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.77, 0.70 and 0.71 for the pupils' questionnaire, teacher counselors' questionnaire and head teachers' questionnaire respectively. Descriptive statistics and chi-square test were used to analyse the data using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings revealed that the head teachers did not offer adequate support to the guidance and counseling programme and this coupled with challenges facing teacher counselors makes the guidance and counseling programme not to achieve the intended purposes. The study recommends that Head teachers provide required resources for the guidance and counseling programme to ensure full implementation and purpose to create awareness to teachers and parents with hearing impaired child on the importance of collaborating with them in ensuring overall development of the children through the guidance and counseling programme.

Keywords: Guidance and Counseling Programme, Hearing Impaired

INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counseling programmes in educational systems play a significant role in an individual's life. Mapfumo and Nkoma [1] describe it as programmes of services for individuals based on needs and depending on the influence of the various environments in which they live. Availability of formal school guidance and counseling programmes for learners with disabilities will enable them gain self-acceptance, enhance their self-esteem and appreciative abilities, and ultimately find joy in life [2]. Hearing impaired learners will also become aware of the various opportunities that will help them adjust to their environment maximally and work towards living a more satisfying and enjoyable life [3]. A functional guidance and counseling programme therefore has a pivotal role in providing the hearing-impaired learners with life skills to enable them to live effective lives despite their handicap. Effective guidance and counseling programmes have been observed as helping the hearing-impaired children fulfill their potential in academic achievement, establish social acceptable levels of social care, develop realistic self- concepts,

and improve interpersonal relationships and progress in vocational self-sustenance [4]. In one study done in Kenya on impact of guidance and counseling on children with hearing impairment, it was observed that use of Hearing Aids by learners with hearing impairment improved greatly after they were guided and counseled on the use of Hearing Aids and their maintenance [5].

The ministry of education MOEST [6] recognized the need to provide guidance and counseling services to students in special institutions. However, a review of policies and laws affecting deaf children in Kenya observed that the implementation of the SNE policy 2009 was hampered by lack of clear implementation guidelines, coordination and monitoring of the education accessed by deaf children. Despite the commitment of MoE in ensuring that guidance and counseling is offered in all Kenyan schools, several studies have indicated challenges such as lack of training for teacher counselors, inadequate facilities and resources, heavy workload and lack of support by head teachers as factors that affect the

effectiveness of guidance and counseling programmes [7]. The head teacher as the head of the school is responsible for the overview of the systems, processes and resources and how they influence overall pupils' development. The success or failure of the guidance and counseling programme is therefore determined by decisions made by the head teacher.

Statement of the Problem

The Ministry of Education recommends that specialized guidance and counseling programmes be established in all special schools in Kenya to cater for the varied needs of learners with special needs. The programme was meant to promote overall pupils' development and success. This can be categorized as personal, social, educational and career development. For this to be realized there was need for a well-coordinated and effectively implemented guidance and counseling programme. Despite the above efforts, implementation of this policy was hampered by lack of clear implementation guidelines, coordination and monitoring of the education accessed by deaf children. Studies on implementation of guidance and counseling programmes in Kenyan schools have indicated several challenges in provision of these services and specifically lack of support from the school administration. This has been observed as negatively affecting the nature of services provided by the teacher counselors and overall development of the hearing-impaired pupils. This study therefore sought to find out the impact of head teachers support in implementing the guidance and counseling programme. This was meant to establish the impact of head teachers' support in implementing the guidance and counseling programme in schools for the hearing-impaired pupils in the counties of Nakuru, Nairobi, Kiambu and Machakos.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Guidance and counseling in the Kenyan Education System

The government's initiative to establish formal guidance and counseling in Kenyan education system dates back to the period immediately after independence in 1963, which saw the formation of a commission to review the education system in Kenya. The Ominde Report [8] recommended that schools should provide guidance and counseling to all children in Kenya in order ensure that children were given courses of education and training best fitted for their needs. The MoE policy in Kenya on guidance and counseling in the Kenyan education system indicates the important role played by the head teachers in the implementation of guidance and counseling programme in schools. Republic of Kenya [9] recommended the expansion of guidance and counseling and the head teachers were instructed to appoint a member of staff to be responsible.

Republic of Kenya [10] further stressed that the head of the school was to be responsible to ensure that guidance and counseling services were offered to the children and that each school was to establish guidance and counseling committee headed by a teacher appointed by the head teacher. Concerning the implementation of this programme in schools, Wango and Mungai [11] argue that the head teacher and the staff should formulate and implement the guidance and counseling policy in the school in line with the MoE guidance and counseling policy, which has rules, regulations and code of ethics. For learners with disabilities, the MoE through the National Special Needs Education Policy of 2009 [12] recommended the establishment of guidance and counseling programmes in special education institutions. This was to provide services to the learners and their families and to develop self-reliance and confidence in the students in order to improve placement.

The Role of the school Administration in the GCP

The role of the school administration in promoting guidance and counseling programme has been emphasized the world over. Gysbers and Henderson [13], state that in America school administrators spell out policy of school guidance and counseling services as a value and an equal partner in the education system and provide reasons why students need to acquire competencies. ASCA [14] concurs by pointing out the importance of the school principals and school counselors working together to overcome the challenges experienced by students and prepare them for college. Mallory and Jackson [15] suggest that the principle and the school counselor should explicitly discuss appropriate roles and responsibilities.

A survey done in New Zealand schools on guidance and counseling [16] revealed that school leaders tended to refer to guidance and counseling as part of their wider pastoral care system. Oye, Obi, Mohd and Bernic [17] agree that in Nigeria, guidance and counseling has become an integral and essential component of the Nigerian educational process for all students as they progress through the education system. They outline some of the roles of the principles to include; encouraging board participation, arranging guidance activities in the timetable, recommending competent individuals for in service training in guidance and counseling and providing for expenditure in the budget.

For learners with disabilities, Wamocho, Karugu and Nwoye [18] suggest that special education institutions in Kenya must contain resources that complement those which the students can find available in their homes; particularly those that enable them to gain self-acceptance, enhance their self-esteem and

appreciative abilities, and ultimately to find joy in life. This implies that head teachers being the managers in their schools must ensure that guidance and counseling programmes are established and have the necessary facilities for effectiveness. ASCA [19] recommends that all schools in America encourage and support the academic, career, personal and social development for all students through comprehensive school counseling programmes regardless of challenges resulting from disabilities and other special needs. The above requirements need the support of the school principles for full implementation.

KIE [20] argues that the head teacher is the chief counselor responsible for all guidance and counseling programmes in the school. MOEST [21] contend that the head teacher is the overall authority in the school. The role of the head teacher is necessary for approval and support of guidance and counseling activities, for material support, to be able to identify referral/placement points, for he/she is the link between the guidance and counseling panel and the community. He/she is also in a key position to facilitate study leave for further training of personnel. Hasnain (2004) concur that the head teacher of a school occupies a key position in the school guidance and counseling programme, which can succeed only if it has his/her support.

Gathuthi, Wambui and Kimengi [22] in their study in Keiyo District Kenya identified some of the

roles of head teachers that would contribute to a successful guidance and counseling programme. They include provision of material resources, ensuring students' awareness, ensuring teacher counselor competency and involving other teachers in the programme. Nyaga [23] outlines other roles of head teachers as; formulating guidance and counseling policies, assigning duties and supervision, timetabling of guidance and counseling programmes and evaluating guidance and counseling activities. The above discussion shows the key role of the head teachers in the success of any guidance and counseling programme in a school. Nkala [24] in a study done in Zimbabwe argues that the attitudes and perceptions of heads of schools towards the implementation of guidance and counseling services play a significant role in the extent to which the intended goals are achieved. This information makes it necessary to assess whether the head teachers support guidance and counseling programmes in primary schools for the hearing impaired and the impact in promoting hearing-impaired pupils' development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study were organized and presented based on study objectives. Head teachers who had been sampled for this study were asked to indicate the role they played in supporting guidance and counseling programme in their school. The findings are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Role of Head Teachers in Supporting GCP

Head teachers' Support for Guidance and Counseling	Always	Very often	Often	Seldom
Use qualification as criteria for appointment of the teacher counselor	25%	25%	25%	25%
Encouraging pupils to seek guidance and counseling services	0%	25%	75%	0%
Setting aside a specific time to enable students to go for guidance and counseling services	0%	25%	50%	25%
Having a budget for the guidance and counseling programme	0%	0%	100%	0%
Ensuring that the teacher counselor has adequate resources to carry out their duties	0%	25%	0%	75%
Organizing for parents/guardians' meetings to discuss pupils' difficulties	0%	50%	25%	25%
Liaising with agencies that deal with deaf issues in order to assist pupils	25%	25%	25%	25%

Results in Table 1 indicate that 25% of the sampled head teachers 'Always', 'Very Often', 'Often' and 'seldom' used a teacher's qualification as the criteria for appointment for the position of teacher counselor respectively. It was also established that 25% of respondents indicated they helped support the guidance and counseling programme by encouraging pupils to seek guidance and counseling services 'Very Often' while 75% did it 'Often'. Head teachers who indicated they set aside time to enable students to go for guidance and counseling services 'Often' accounted for 25% with a similar percentage 'Seldom' doing it and

50% indicating they 'Often' did it. It was also established that 75% of head teachers 'Seldom' ensured that their teacher counselors had adequate resources to carry out their duties with 25% indicating they did so 'Very Often'. All (100%) head teachers were observed to 'Often' have a budget for the guidance and counseling programme. In addition, 50% 'Very Often' organized parents and guardians' meetings to discuss pupils' difficulties as a way of supporting guidance programme compared to 25% who 'Often' and 'Seldom' did it. Lastly, 25% of sampled head teachers indicated they supported the guidance and counseling

programme ‘often’ by liaising with agencies that deal with deaf issues in order to assist their pupils while 25% did it ‘always.’

Head teacher’s Support of the GCP as perceived by teacher counselors

Teacher counselors were asked to indicate the role they perceived that their school administration played in supporting guidance and counseling programme in their school. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Head teacher’s Support of the GCP as perceived by teacher counselors

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The head teacher always provides all resources	0%	41.7%	16.7%	16.7	25%
The head teacher has appointed a guidance and counseling committee	41.7%	50%	8.3%	0%	0%
Head teacher attends guidance and counseling departmental meetings	0%	41.7%	0%	16.7%	41.7%
Reduces teaching load to create time for guidance and counseling	0%	8.3%	8.3%	33.3%	50%
Refers students for guidance and counseling	16.7%	58.3%	16.7%	0%	8.3%
Sponsors in-service training	8.3%	16.7%	8.3%	25%	41.7%
Organizes for parents/guardians meeting to consult over pupils' difficulties	25%	58.3%	0%	16.7%	0%
Head teacher liaises with agencies that deal with hearing problems	16.7%	25%	25%	8.3%	25%

Results from Table 2 indicate that the majority of the teacher counselors (90.1%) indicated that the head teacher had appointed a guidance and counseling committee. However, 58.4% indicated that the head teacher did not attend guidance and counseling departmental meetings while 41.7% indicated that the head teacher did not always provide all the required resources for guidance and counseling. 66.7% indicated that the head teachers did not sponsor them for in-service training compared to 83.3% who indicated that teaching load was not reduced to create time for guidance and counseling. It was also observed that 75% of respondents indicated that the head teacher referred students for guidance and counseling, 83.3% indicated that their head teacher organizes for parents/guardians meeting to consult over pupils' difficulties compared to 41.7% who indicated that the head teacher liaises with agencies that deal with hearing problems.

These results in general reveal that most head teachers had appointed a guidance and counseling committee as indicated by 90.1% of the teacher counselors. These findings agree with Odera [25] that primary school head teachers were positive towards implementing the guidance and counseling programme in their school. However, the majority of them (57.7%) did not attend the guidance and counseling meetings, 83.3% did not reduce teaching load to create time for guidance and counseling. This could be attributed to poor perception of the programme. The head teacher

being the chief counselor in the school and being responsible for all guidance and counseling programmes in the school is required to attend the meetings [26]. The results concur with Nkala [27] that the attitudes and perceptions of head teachers towards implementation of guidance and counseling services play a significant role in the extent to which the intended goals are achieved.

Concerning the training of teacher counselors, 50 % of the head teachers indicated that they used qualification as criteria for appointment of the guidance and counseling teacher but 50% indicated that qualification was not necessarily used as criteria for appointment. 66.7% of the teacher counselors also indicated that the head teachers did not sponsor them for in-service training. These findings confirm Ondima, et al. [28] study that there was low training of teachers in guidance and counseling in Kenya and that it was handled by teachers without professional training which in turn affected teachers’ attitude towards practicing guidance and counseling.

Role of Guidance and Counseling as Perceived by Head teachers

To establish the benefits of the guidance and counseling programme, head teachers were asked to indicate how they perceived its impact on the lives of the hearing-impaired pupils in their schools. The findings are presented in Figure 1.

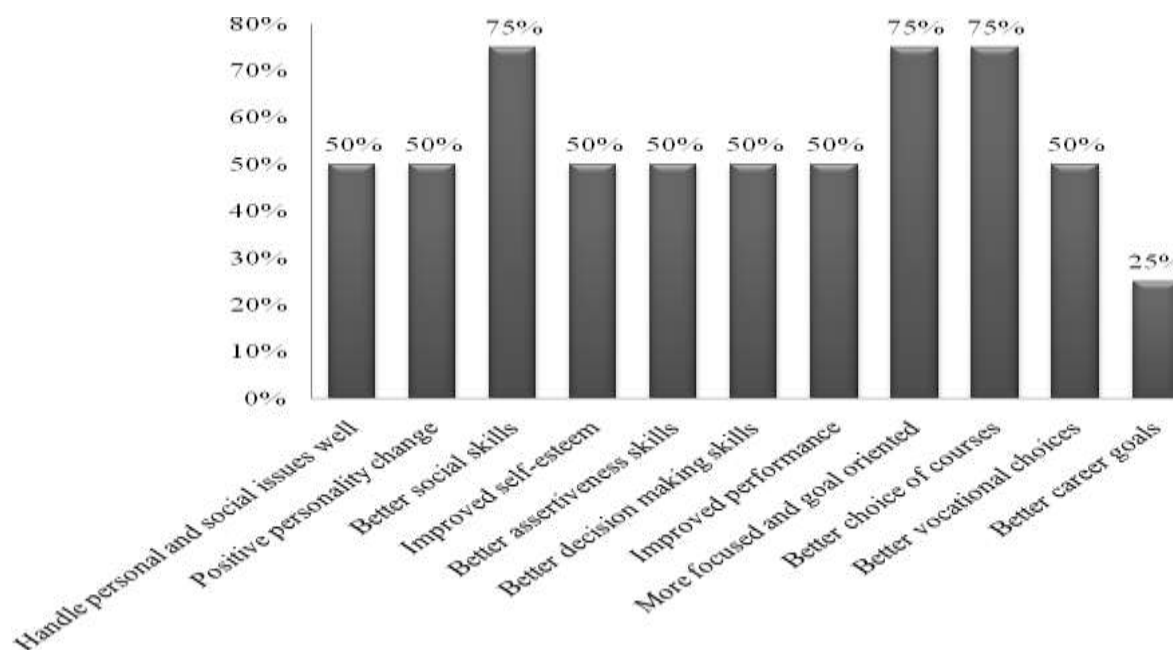


Fig-1: Head teachers Responses on the Perceived Benefits of Guidance and Counseling Programme to the Hearing impaired pupils

Figure 1 indicates that with regard on personal benefits, 50% of head teacher respondents indicated that they felt guidance and counseling had helped their pupils handle personal and social issues, gain positive personality change, improved self esteem, better assertiveness skills and better decision making skills. It was also established that 75% of the head teachers indicated they felt the guidance and counseling programme had helped their pupils gain better social skills. With regard to educational benefits, 50% of the head teacher felt that guidance and counseling had helped their pupils improve their academic performance and 75% indicated their pupils had become more focused and goal oriented in their academics. Concerning career influence of guidance and counseling, 75% of the head teachers indicated they felt it had helped their pupils have better choice of courses, while 50% indicated that their pupils had better vocational choices and 25% indicated that their pupils had better career goals.

These results indicate that pupils who have gone through the guidance and counseling programme in their schools have been assisted in their educational, personal, social and career development. These findings concur with Hasnain [29] that in schools where the guidance and counseling programme is fully implemented, students reported earning higher grades, having better relationships with teachers and feeling greater satisfaction with school. Gatua [30] also observes that guidance and counseling services provided in schools had high levels of impact on students' social and emotional adjustments. Wamocho,

Karugu, and Nwoye [31] add that when children with disabilities are offered guidance and counseling services, they gain self-acceptance, their self-esteem is enhanced and they are able to gain appreciative abilities.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. 50 % of the head teachers used qualification as criteria for appointment of the guidance and counseling teacher but 50% indicated that qualification was not necessarily used as criteria for appointment. 75% of head teachers did not ensure that their teacher counselors had adequate resources to carry out their duties. All (100%) head teachers had a budget for the guidance and counseling programme. 25% did not organize for parents and guardians' meetings to discuss pupils' difficulties as a way of supporting guidance programme. Lastly, 25% always liaised with agencies that deal with deaf issues in order to assist their pupils.
2. According to the teacher counselors, the school administration played the role of appointing guidance and counseling committee as indicated by (90.1%) but majority of the head teachers (57.7%) did not attend the guidance and counseling meetings. 75% referred pupils for guidance and counseling. However, they did not ensure adequacy of guidance and counseling resources (41.7%), were not sponsored for in-service training (66.7%) while 83.3% indicated that teaching load was not reduced to create time for guidance and counseling.

3. Most head teachers indicated that they felt guidance and counseling had helped their pupils handle personal and social issues (50%), gain positive personality change, improve self esteem, better social skills (75%) and better decision making skills, improvement in academic achievement (50%) and making better career choices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were advanced:

1. Head teachers need to be more involved in guidance and counseling in schools where children with hearing impairment are enrolled. They need to take a central role in promoting the implementation of guidance and counseling programmes through conscious efforts by equipping the counseling departments with necessary resources, time for counseling activities and adequate training for the teacher counselors in order to make it beneficial and thus promoting hearing-impaired pupils' wellbeing.
2. All schools for the hearing impaired should organize awareness seminars and counseling of parents of hearing impaired children. This is to make the parents and the public to understand the problems faced by the hearing-impaired children in the society. These activities will indicate to the parents that they are valued partners in the overall development of their child and that schools value the connection between the home and the school.

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