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Teacher Perceptions on the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Addressing School Dropout in Primary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract:
Despite the government's provision of free primary education (FPE), school dropout in primary schools is an issue of concern in Kenya. According to the Ministry of Education (MoE) guidance and counselling is provided in all primary schools and its role is to address pupils' concerns such as personal, social, academic and emotional problems. A considerable number of primary school children in Ainabkoi Division dropout of school before completing the primary school education system. Statistics from Ministry of Education (MoE) office in Ainabkoi indicate that 25% of the pupils drop out of school before completing their primary education. This study investigated teacher perceptions on the role of guidance and counselling in addressing school drop-outs in primary schools in Ainabkoi Division. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population of the study consisted of 38 head teachers and 320 teachers drawn from 38 primary schools in the Division. Proportional sampling method was used to select schools from Ainabkoi and Kipkabus zones. Purposive sampling was used to identify Head teachers while simple random sampling technique was used to select the teachers. Steins method was used to select the sample size. This gave a sample size of 11 head teachers and 167 teachers that is; 178 respondents. A Questionnaire and an interview guide were utilized in collecting information from teachers and head teachers respectfully. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics which included frequencies and percentages. The study established that schools have guidance and counselling programme that are used to address cases of absenteeism, indiscipline, truant behaviour, bullying, illness, academic performance while school dropouts was largely ignored. The results established that teachers perceived that the role of guidance and counselling is to diagnose potential dropouts in primary schools Ainabkoi Division. The study found out that guidance and counselling is used to identify potential dropouts, feelings of potential dropouts, pupils abusing drugs and those from abusive homes. Based on the findings, the study recommended that, guidance and counselling should be used to address school dropout right from pre- primary level and be made a continuous process to primary level.

Keywords: Teacher perception, Guidance and Counselling, Dropout, Potential Dropout, Diagnosis

1. Introduction

Education is regarded as one of the most effective instruments for social development in the society. Formal education exposes people to social life in and outside the family; providing entry into other opportunities for example political offices and social fields (Galimaka, 2008). Globally, policy makers see schooling as an essential prerequisite for sustained economic growth and democratic participation (Boyden, 1991). According to the UN Convention on Child Rights of 1990 every child has the right to education that develops their personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. In Kenya, education equips the Pupils with requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them manipulate the environment in which they live (Momanyi, 2009). Momanyi further observes that the government through the Ministry of Education (MoE) provides Free Primary Education (FPE) programme to improve access to education by children from all backgrounds, reduce drop-out rates and improve quality education.

Idowu (1986) defines counselling as a process whereby an individual is helped through a relationship with a professionally prepared person to voluntarily change behaviour, clarify attitudes and goals in order to solve problems. Guidance and counselling assists pupils to understand themselves and their social environment, cope with academic demands, as well as realize their full potential and interests (Mutie and Ndambuki, 1999). Today schools guidance and counselling programmes with definite plans that provide adequate time for counsellors to assist the growing numbers of pupils with special needs (Idowu, 1986). These are pupils who are abusing

substances, teenage parents, and victims of abuse and neglect, the depressed, the suicidal, the educationally disadvantaged, the disabled, and the potential dropouts (Mason, Dyal and Meadows, 1999) contend that these pupils need competent counsellors with caring attitudes and who allocate a specific amount of their time each day for responsive services. Mason et.al (1999), continue to indicate that school counsellors are often not able to plan and implement comprehensive developmental guidance programmes that provide pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to become well-adjusted, self-supporting citizens.

Rao (202) indicates the role of guidance and counselling as to help students clarify their goals, values, strengthen their interests and aspirations, appreciate their philosophies and cognitions, and adjust to the norms of the society. For many programmes to achieve their goals, their roles should be taken into account (Rao, 2002). According to Ponec and Brock (2000) the role of guidance and counselling is to assist pupils adjust in their transition from one level to the next. Ajowi and Simatwa (2010) points that that the role of guidance counselling is to promote and manage discipline, and retain children in schools. According to UNESCO (1997), the role of guidance and counselling is to motivate teachers, pupils and parents towards education of their pupils. Ajowi and Simatwa further states that heads and senior teachers should be trained to handle guidance and counselling. A study carried out by Alexander, Entwisle and Horsey (2001) shows that from early 1960s into the twenty-first century, individuals drop-out of school prior to primary or secondary school completion in the world. School dropout in the world is an issue that educationists, education researchers and policy makers are concerned with (Alexander et al., 2001). An estimated 1.3 million American high school students drop out of school every year Schargel and Smink (2001). Schargel and Smink further point out that dropping out of school in America is considered by the government as a signal that a young person has not succeeded in school and may not succeed in adult life.

According to UNESCO (2011), the total number of school-age children not in primary or secondary school was estimated to have fallen by 21% between 2007 and 2010 compared to only 5% between 1997 and 2002. In spite of these promising trends, sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 45% of all out-of-school children (over 72 million globally in 2005) (UNESCO, 2007). UNESCO (2006) observes that poverty is the most common factor affecting retention. UNESCO further points out that unless measures to alleviate poverty are taken it will be very difficult to improve retention. Early marriages and pregnancies are significant factors affecting school enrolment as well as dropouts in schools (UNICEF, 2003). UNICEF (2003) adds that these factors are very sensitive as they are closely related to culture and religion and innovative approach need to be pursued to overcome these factors without jeopardizing their cultural and religious importance. School dropout in Kenya is an issue of concern. Children dropout of school before completing primary or secondary school education system due to school factors or out of school factors such as truancy, teenage pregnancies, drug abuse and early marriages among others (Were, 2007). In Ainabkoi Division, the Divisional Education office documents that over 300 pupils have dropped out of school every year between 2010 and 2013 as indicated in the Table 1.

Year	Enrolment per Year	Dropout per year
2010	962	303
2011	1057	308
2012	1278	312
2013	1439	337

Table 1: Enrolment and Dropout Rate in Primary Schools in Ainabkoi
Source: MOEST Ainabkoi (2013)

Dropping out of school is associated with a multitude of negative consequences for both the pupils and society. Over the years, a variety of dropout-prevention roles and interventions have been recommended for both school counsellors and educators in general (Were, 2007). The dropout role and interventions include counselling, coordination, and consultation. Guidance and counselling is an integral part of any educational system and one of the issues it should address in an educational system is school dropout. According to the Ministry of Education Policy (2002), guidance and counselling should be provided in all schools to help in addressing pupil concerns. With respect to relevant interventions, services, and programmes for dropout prevention, school counsellors have been instructed to provide a variety of such services. However, it has been noted by the Ministry of Education that a number of pupils still dropout of school before the completing primary school system. The control or resolution of these problems is always channelled mainly to school authorities and teachers while the seeking of counsellors' attention is sometimes ignored. The purpose of the study was to investigate teacher perception on the role of guidance and counselling in addressing school dropout in primary schools in Ainabkoi Division Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

2. Materials and Methods

The study utilized descriptive survey design. The design was deemed most appropriate since it facilitated understanding by collecting information at one point and gave opinions on teacher perceptions on the role of guidance and counselling in addressing school dropouts according to Orodho (2009) such design is useful in collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, perceptions, habits, views or any of the issues of education and social issues. The study was carried out in Ainabkoi Division, Uasin Gishu County, covering an area of 3,056 kilometres square. The area was considered appropriate for the study because this area experienced high school dropout compared to the other parts of the county. The target population for this study was all the primary school teachers in Ainabkoi Division in Uasin Gishu County. Where according to MOEST (2013) there were 38 primary schools with a teacher population of 38 head teachers and 320 teachers spread over two educsional zones. The study targeted 38 head teachers and 320 teachers. Ainabkoi Division comprise of two zones .The sample was drawn from both zones Ainabkoi and Kipkabus Kathuri and Pals (1993), postulates that 30% of the target population is adequate. This guided the selection of schools for the study. A total of 11

schools were included in the study. Stein's method by Stephan (1945) in Nassiuma (2000) was used to select 167 teachers. This gave a total of 167 respondents as indicated in Table 3. The sample size was determined by employing Stein's method by Stephan (1945) in Nassiuma (2000) as shown below.

$$n = \frac{4N\ t_{a/2}^2 s_1^2}{NL_0^2 + 4t_{a/2}^2 s_1^2}$$

Where
$s^2 1 = 6$
$t^2 \alpha/2 = 3.8416$
$N = 167$
$L^2 o = 0.25$

The sample size was found to be 167 for teachers and 11 for head teachers. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers while proportional and simple random sampling technique was used to select the teachers.

Zone	Teachers	
	Male	Female
Ainabkoi	**43**	**49**
Kipkabus	**33**	**42**
Total	**76**	**91**

Table 2: Distribution of Sample Size in Public Primary Schools in Ainabkoi Division
Source: Eldoret East District Education Office (2013)

The sample size for the study was 167 respondents of whom 76 of teachers selected were male while 91 were female. The 167 teachers arrived from 11 primary schools in Ainabkoi and Kipkabus zones.

3. Results and Discussion

The purpose of the study was to investigate teacher perceptions on the role in addressing school dropouts in primary schools in Ainabkoi Division. To address this, teachers were presented with a questionnaire and an interview guide that addressed teacher perceptions regarding the role of guidance and counselling in diagnosis of potential dropouts, providing targeted intervention to potential dropouts and providing school wide intervention to potential dropouts. The study involved 178 respondents. That is 167 teachers and 11 head teachers of the primary schools in the divisions.

3.1. The Role of Guidance and Counselling in Diagnosis of Potential Dropouts in Primary Schools in Ainabkoi Division
The study sought to establish teacher perceptions on the role of guidance and counselling in diagnosis of potential dropouts in Ainabkoi division. Through interview sessions with head teachers of selected primary schools in Ainabkoi division, the head teachers were asked to give their perception on the role of guidance and counselling in providing diagnosis to potential dropouts in their schools. Their perceptions were as follows: Headteachers 1, 2, and 9 indicated that:
- Guidance and counselling helps in identifying pupil's weaknesses in academics and find ways of assistance."
This statement was supported by statements made by head teachers 4 and 7 indicated that:
- "It helps in identifying pupil's behaviours like fighting, absenteeism and substance use".
Another head teacher 3 supported this statement by indicating that:
- "Guidance and counselling help…to find out the child problem and how to overcome the problem the child is undergoing."
While Head teachers 5, 6 and 8 also concurred with the statement by adding that"
- "Guidance and counselling helps in "Knowing pupils problems and counselling them".
The responses given by the head teachers were an indication that guidance and counselling has a role in diagnosis of potential dropout in primary schools in Ainabkoi Division. The results concurs with Sang et al., (2013) research who suggested that there is need to step up guidance and counselling as a measure to curb high dropout rate in Kericho district secondary schools. Using a Likert scale of five, the teachers were required to indicate whether they; Strongly Agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree or Strongly Disagree on the statements. The results are presented in Table 3.

Statement	Responses									
	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Identifies potential dropouts	32	19.2	70	41.9	5	3.0	42	25.1	18	10.8
Identifies feelings of potential dropouts	41	24.6	64	38.3	14	8.4	30	18.0	18	10.8
Identifies pupils abusing drugs	20	12.0	53	31.7	26	15.6	42	25.1	26	15.6
Identifies pupils from abusive homes	27	16.2	40	24.0	12	7.2	53	31.7	35	21.0
Identifies ill pupils	26	15.6	30	18.0	16	9.6	70	41.9	25	15.0

Table 3: Teacher Perceptions on the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Diagnosis of Potential Dropouts
Source: Field Data

The results in Table 3 show that 61.1% of teachers perceived that guidance and counselling assists in identifying potential dropouts while 35.9% disagreed with the statement. This implies that guidance and counselling plays a big role in diagnosing pupils who are at risk of dropping out of school. Through guidance and counselling teachers can identify pupils who are potential dropouts. These results concur with those studies of Dynarski et al., (2008) and Rao (2002) who found out that the role of guidance and counselling is to diagnose pupils' problems that may result into dropout. Furthermore, Sabates *et al.,* (2010) added that guidance and counselling implements strategies that target reduction of school dropout rates. Moreover, 62.9% of respondents perceived that guidance and counselling identifies feelings of potential dropouts since pupils are given a chance to express themselves on issues concerning education. The results are in agreement with Korkut (2004) who found out that guidance and counselling helps in identifying pupils, weaknesses in education hence assistance is provided such as tutoring in the specific areas as mentioned. Moreover, ASCA (2003) found out that mentorship to pupils by teachers assisted in addressing specific needs such as reading, or writing and math competencies hence promoted social and personal life, and career development among pupils.

The results also indicated that the respondents had mixed perceptions on the statement that Guidance and Counselling identifies pupils abusing drugs where, 40.7% disagreed, 15.6% were uncertain while 43.7% agreed with the statement. This implies that some teachers perceived that guidance and counselling sessions opens a forum whereby they can identify pupils at risk of abusing drugs while others perceive that it cannot. This statement is supported by the studies of Mutie and Ndambuki (1999) who found out that the role of guidance and counselling is preventive, developmental, remedial and supportive. A study by Rodes (2007) further supports this statement when it found out that inclusion of pupils and stakeholders in guidance and counselling is a more effective approach in dealing with child concerns that may result into dropout(dealing with dropout).The guidance and counselling sessions opens forms whereby teachers, teacher- counsellors, parents, guardians and other members of the community participate in meetings to discuss about school pupils' life in and out of school in matters pertaining academic, social and emotional development. Studies by Shaterloo and Mohammadyari (2011) supports this statement by finding out that through diagnosis, guidance and counselling collaborates with students, school staff, and school community. It is by parenting workshops that a child's behaviour, academic, personal, social and career developments are diagnosed thus reducing cases of dropout.

In addition, 52.7% of respondents perceived that guidance and counselling does not help in identifying pupils from abusive homes with only 40.2% supporting the statement. This is an implication that a small number of pupils come from homes where they are subjected to abuse or some of the pupils do not raise such abuses whenever they are abused due to fear. On perception of the role of guidance and counselling in identifying ill pupils, 56.9% disagreed and only 33.6% agreed. This implies that the teachers perceived that identification of ill pupils is difficult for a teacher since they have not been trained on diagnosis. Other statements that the respondents reported included guidance and counselling identifies abused children like rape cases, bullied and mentally abused, potential immorality among pupils.

3.2. The Role of Guidance and Counselling in Addressing School Dropout
The study sought to establish teacher perceptions on the role of guidance and counselling in addressing school dropout. The results are given in Table 4.

Statement	Responses									
	Strongly agree		**Agree**		**Uncertain**		**Disagree**		**Strongly disagree**	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
It helps to develop a free and friendly atmosphere	93	55.7	62	37.1	12	7.2	0	0	0	0
It allows pupils to voice out any built-up anger that would have been let loose on fellow pupils or school property	23	13.8	131	78.4	13	7.8	0	0	0	0
It help diffuse tension in school	40	24.0	103	61.7	11	6.6	0	0	13	7.8
It would improve on the behaviour of the pupils	95	56.9	61	36.5	11	6.6	0	0	0	0
It helps pupils to cope with change on their daily lives and environment	64	38.3	103	61.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assisting pupils with personal/social problems	46	27.5	121	72.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Helping pupils with studying skills	33	19.8	123	73.7	11	6.6	0	0	0	0
Referring pupils whose concerns are beyond counsellors capacity	9	5.4	117	70.1	**0**	**0**	41	24.6	**0**	**0**
Report back to head teacher on school guidance and counselling services issues	41	24.6	75	44.9	22	13.2	29	17.4	0	0
Group discussions with parents and teachers on learner problems	22	13.2	132	79.0	13	7.8	0	0	0	0
Provide in- service training to teachers	32	19.2	94	56.3	41	24.6	0	0	0	0
Creating awareness on guidance and counselling services in the school	26	15.6	59	35.3	20	12.0	37	22.2	25	15.0
Handle indiscipline cases in school	28	16.8	42	25.1	6	3.6	60	35.9	31	18.6

Table 4: The Role of Guidance and Counselling in Addressing School Dropout
Source: Field Data

The results in Table 4 show that over 70% of the teachers perceived that the role of guidance and counselling assists pupils in holding group discussions with teachers and parents on learners' problems that would have resulted in to dropouts hence limiting the chances of pupils dropping out of school. This statement is supported by the studies of (Dynarski et al., 2008; Cobb, 2008; Egrene, 2011) which indicated that in school- wide interventions school counsellor uses guidance and counselling provides support to students, parents and teachers by holding group meetings. Furthermore, 73.7% of the teachers perceived that guidance and counselling helps pupils with study skills. The studies of Scottish Government Publications (2005), supports this statement by indicating that the second key role of guidance and counselling is the development of curricular programme which is developmental, preventive and appropriate to the needs of the students. Study skills is one of the students needs and is within the curricular development.

UNESCO (1998) continues to support this statement by saying that the role of guidance and counselling is to enable pupils to develop basic skills in learning. Basic learning skills according to UNESCO 1998 include how to study, how to plan and stick to the plan for the success of academic performance. 72.5% of the teachers perceived that guidance and counselling help pupils cope with personal and social problems. This statement is in agreement with the studies of (Dahir & Campbell, 1997; ASCA, 2005) which indicated that a professional school counsellor meets the needs of the students that are academic development, career development and personal/ social development. This statement is further supported by ASCA, (2007) that guidance and counselling services and programmes promote personal/ social, educational, and career development of all students. Moreover 70.1% of the teachers perceived that guidance and counselling enables counsellors to refer pupils whose concerns are beyond counsellors' capacity. This statement concurs with studies (Hackney & Comier, 2008, Myrick 2003) who found out that when the diverse needs of the students require specialized, intensive or long-term counselling beyond what the school counsellor can provide then appropriate referral could be made.

Results further revealed that 78.4% of the teachers perceived that guidance and counselling allows pupils to voice out any build-up anger that would have been led loose on fellow students or school property while over 60% of teachers perceived that guidance and counselling helped to diffuse tension in the schools, helped pupils to cope with change in daily lives and environment hence reduce dropouts. These statements are in agreement with the study of Fitch and Marshall, (2004) who found out that guidance and counselling provides interventions that are responsive to individual students concerns as they arise. In this case, students' concerns include tension, anxiety, anger, depression/ stress and fear, and these may lead into dropout. ASCA, (2007) further supports this point by saying that guidance and counselling is an intervention strategy that helps students to cope with problems in personal, social, academic and vocational domains and thus reduce dropouts.

Moreover, over 56% perceived that guidance and counselling assisted in improving behaviours of pupils that may result in to dropout such as fighting, truancy, delinquency, drug abuse and substance use among others. This point is supported by the studies of Egrene (2011) who found out that Counsellors offer guidance and counselling services to students on cognitive, affective, behavioural and systematic interventions. Egrene further indicate that guidance and counselling is a tool used by school counsellor to address behavioural issues of students. While 56.3% of the teachers perceived that guidance and counselling provided in- service training to teachers to enable them handle pupil concerns that lead to dropout thus reducing dropouts. This statement is in agreement with the studies of UNESCO, (1998) which indicated that guidance and counselling should be integral part in the education of children and should be included in the teacher training programmes of young Africans.

Other perceptions teachers gave included reporting to the head teacher on issues pertaining school guidance and counselling services in, creating awareness on guidance and counselling services in the school and handling indiscipline cases in the school. The findings concur with Dynarski *et al.,* (2008) who found out that the key role of guidance and counselling in schools was the school initiative of personalising the learning environment and instructional process. This creates a sense of belonging and fosters a school climate where pupils and teachers get to know one another and can provide academic, social, and behavioural encouragement aimed at addressing dropout problems.

4. Conclusions

The following conclusions were arrived at on the basis of study findings: the study established that teachers perceived that guidance and counselling plays a significant role in diagnosis of potential dropouts as a way of addressing school dropouts. They also agreed that guidance and counselling helped in identifying potential dropouts and feelings of potential dropouts, pupils abusing drugs and those from abusive homes. The study established that guidance and counselling assists pupils to hold up group discussions with teachers and parents on learners' problems, helps pupils with study skills, helps pupils cope with personal and social problems, enables pupils to develop basic skills in learning, allows pupils to voice out build- up anger and diffuse tension in schools, provided in- service training to teachers to enable them handle pupil concerns and assists pupils in improving behaviour.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, recommendations are made which if implemented can help improve the teacher perceptions on the role of guidance and counselling in addressing school dropout in primary schools in Ainabkoi Division in Uasin Gishu county, Kenya.

- Parents, guardians and the entire school community should be sensitized to create awareness on pupils who are identified as potential dropouts to ensure that they are offered guidance and counselling services to enable them remain in school.
- Guidance and counselling should be used to address school dropout right from pre- primary level and be made a continuous process throughout primary level
- The Ministry of Education through the school administrators should make follow-ups on pupils' attendance records. This will ensure monitoring and retention of potential dropouts in schools.

- Schools should put in place guidance and counselling strategies that target reduction of school dropouts.
- Schools should put in place measures through guidance and counselling that enhances identification of pupils' from abusive homes as a way of diagnosing potential dropouts.
- Schools should enhance provision of guidance and counselling that assist pupils cope with transition and help in dealing with cases of drugs and substance abuse.

6. Acknowledgement

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