

Relationship Between the Location of Guidance and Counselling Offices and The Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Services in Public Secondary Schools in Ainamoi Sub-County, Kericho County, Kenya

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Abstract

Students' unrest resulting in loss of life, disruption of learning and destruction of the school property, among other effects is still witnessed despite the provision of guidance and counselling services in public schools. The study sought to determine the relationship between location of guidance and counselling office and effectiveness of guidance and counselling services. The study employed a descriptive research design. The target population was 61 respondents, 31 principals and 31 heads of departments. A sample of 10 principals and 10 heads of departments guidance and counselling were selected. The counselling teacher and the principal were purposively selected from every school. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire and observation checklist. The researcher established the validity of the instruments by seeking expert judgment from supervisors and other experts. Reliability was determined by subjecting the instruments to a pilot study in schools that were not part of the participants where a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.82 was actualized hence the instruments were deemed reliable. The data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The findings were presented in form of tables. The findings indicate that respondents generally perceive the location and physical environment of the guidance and counselling office as important factors influencing the effectiveness and utilization of counselling services since 85% of the respondents agreed that it should be in a conducive place, 85% said that the office being hidden encourages students to seek help. The study recommends that schools establish and equip guidance and counselling office in location that guarantee privacy, confidentiality and accessibility.

Key Words: *Guidance and Counselling, Effectiveness in guidance and counselling services, location of Guidance and counselling office*

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I. Introduction

Secondary school students are faced with challenging issues which may influence negatively their performance. These challenges could be academic, personal, emotional, social, among others. Some of the challenges if unattended could lead to undesirable behaviour. Challenges such as living in distressed families for instance in case of parental separation or divorce, exposure to drug and substance abuse, incurable diseases may lead development of psychosocial problems among the students. Guidance and Counselling (G&C) services help to reduce school dropouts resulting from such challenges. Studies have shown that students are faced with many challenges, some of which include social, economic, and psychological problems contributing negatively to academic performance (Mapfumo & Nkoma, 2013).

Nyambegera (2018) observed that students' unrest led to disruption of learning, destruction of property negatively affects academic performance. Drugs and gambling topped the list for causes of student unrests in some secondary schools (Oduor, 2019). It was also reported that 14000 girls sat for national examination in 2018 while heavily pregnant or immediately after delivery (Oketch, 2019). This trend highlighted the growing challenge of teenage pregnancy and its implication for girls' education (Ochunge, 2019). This brings to attention the need for effective G&C services to help teenage mothers on how to cope with the situations and their academics. The teenage mothers need guidance on effective time management and study skills to help them balance their academic responsibilities with childcare duties.

National Crime Research Centre (2017) reports that major cause of student unrests and violence in schools was attributed to lack of professionalism in counselling. The report cited that some counsellors were not trained and had no experience in counselling. The study sought to find out if the counselling teachers are trained and have experience in G&C services. The range of psychological, emotional, and physical effects includes stress, depression, confusion, anger, frustration, and fear of unknown, among others on students (Ministry of Education,

2020). Effective guidance and counselling services help maintain emotional balances, promote well-being, create self-awareness, deal with challenges effectively with maladjusted behaviour (MOE, 2020).

In Kericho county, learning has constantly been disrupted due to students' unrest in schools for example burning of dormitories, disturbances, and destruction of school's properties. Different schools in Kericho have witnessed cases like strike, bullying and drug abuse (Chemutai, Onkware, & Iteyo, 2020). Earlier in September 2025, serious unrest was reported at Litein Boys High in school in Bureti, Kericho county, where students vandalized school property and set building on fire. The key issues noted were inadequate counselling and psychosocial support. There is need for education stakeholders to emphasize the need for effective G&C services, psychosocial support and improvement of learner welfare.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Cases of students' unrest have been frequently witnessed in Kenyan schools, students go on strikes, burn schools, destroy property as means to air their grievances. This is likely an indication that they may be lacking a better way to air their challenges. Guidance and counselling services are the means through which students can be guided to cope with day-to-day issues. This study was premised on the assumption that despite the government's introduction of guidance and counselling program in schools, students still go on rampage. Earlier in September 2025, Cases of students' unrest witnessed in schools have resulted in disruption of learning. The key issues noted was inadequate counselling and psychosocial support This study sought to determine the relationship between location of guidance and counselling office and effectiveness of guidance and counselling services. It was expected that the findings of the study may shed light on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in schools in Ainamoi, Kericho, Kenya

II. Literature Review

Location of G&C office refers to a physical place where the physical structure or counselling room is situated. The factors to consider when setting up the counselling room include a place with minimal distractions either from staff or students. The physical structure should be placed in a conducive environment and in a psychologically safe space. The environment should be conducive to allow the clients feel comfortable and secure.

The site should be free from interruptions to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Another factor is safety of the environment. It was found that 70% of respondents did not agree on G&C rooms were strategically located (Ruto et al., 2017). The same study also found out that counselling sessions were conducted in staffrooms and others near the staffrooms, which discourages students from seeking help. The counselling office should be accessible to all students including those who are physically challenged. The counselling rooms should be soundproof and in a separate place (Suhag, 2017). This is to ensure comfort during counselling session and confidentiality of client' information. A peaceful, safe, and comfortable environment is likely to encourage many students to seek counselling.

It was reported that there were inadequate resources on the calibre of counselling services offered (Cheruiyot & Orodho, 2015). For G&C services to be effective physical and human resources should be available. The goal of the current study was to ascertain how the location of physical facility is influencing the effectiveness of G&C services. A healthy environment is required for the child's growth and development (Egbo, 2013). By placing the counselling room in a conducive location, the identity of the students seeking counselling would be ensured. The goal of the current study was to highlight the factors influencing the location of counselling offices.

It was revealed that counselling relationship requires safety of the clients and confidentiality of their information (Neukrug, 2012). Effectiveness of counselling services to be achieved there is need to have conducive environment for the comfort of the client and the counsellor. The study tried to guide the schools to consider the factors affecting the location of counselling office. Facilities which are physically and emotionally safe ensure productive outcome (Pearson & Wilson (2012). Students with counselling needs their comfort and safety should be ensured. It was noted that conducive environments promote healing (Dellinger, 2010). The environment has both positive and negative impact on therapeutic relationship. Environmental factors influence effectiveness of counselling and contribute to behaviour change.

Insecure place interferes with the interaction between counsellor and counselee (Phelp, 2008). For effective G&C services to be offered there is need to consider the environment surrounding the office. Privacy and confidentiality in counselling room may result in high levels of disclosure. There is need to create healing environments (Malkin, 2008). This study tried to explain the importance of a healthy and safe environment in enhancing effectiveness of the counselling services.

The challenges facing students include personal issues that cannot be expressed in the common room or staff room (Lutomia & Sikolia, 2006). Therefore, counselling room should be strategically located away from distractors. Students who are HIV positive and those suffering from STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) should be protected from other students including the friends. Location of counselling room is essential in protecting the client's identity therefore, counselling office should be situated in a protected place. Confidentiality should

therefore be upheld by not exposing the identity of the client. Guidance and counselling room should be away from the administration block, principal office, class or other HOD offices (Lutomia et al, 2002) reason being students fear meeting the principal so they prefer a place where they can sneak in unnoticed. Location of guidance and counselling office is a factor to consider when setting up the office. There is need for conducive environment for the students to open up and be assisted. The study sought to determine how location of G&C offices influence effectiveness in guidance and counselling services in schools in Ainamoi sub county, Kericho County.

III. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design. The research design used descriptive data to examine the relationship between variables. The study was conducted in Ainamoi sub county in Kericho county Kenya. The target population was drawn from thirty-one public secondary schools in Ainamoi Sub County. The study targeted thirteen mixed day secondary schools, five girls boarding schools, three boys boarding schools and ten mixed day and boarding secondary schools. The target population was 62 respondents comprising thirty-one (31) principals and thirty-one (31) HODs. The study sampled ten public secondary schools, ten principals and ten heads of departments. Purposive sampling was used to select the principals and heads of departments.

The study used questionnaires and an observation checklist in data collection which was responded by the principals and HODs. The researcher completed the observation checklist at each sampled school. Quantitative data obtained using a structured questionnaire was analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and observation schedule findings were categorized into topics and subtopics. The data was processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences software version 27 (SPSS v 27). The findings were presented using tables.

IV. Findings and Discussions

The study sought to determine the relationship between location of guidance and counselling office and effectiveness of guidance and counselling services. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement on the location of guidance and counselling office and effectiveness of guidance and counselling in your school. The responses were on a Likert Scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 is Disagree (D), 3 is Undecided (U), 4 is Agree (A) and 5 is Strongly Agree (SA) as per Table 1.

Table 1
Location of Guidance and Counselling Office and Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Services

Location of guidance and counselling office	SD	D	U	A	SA
Confidentiality of the clients is ensured by a strategically located guidance and counselling office	1 (5.0%)	3 (15.0%)	1 (5.0%)	6 (30.0%)	9 (45.0%)
The type of physical structure of the counselling office influences the effectiveness of counselling services	3 (15.0%)	3 (15.0%)	2 (10.0%)	2 (10.0%)	10 (50.0%)
Counselling room is in a conducive place to minimize the disruption	1 (5.0%)	1 (5.0%)	1 (5.0%)	7 (35.0%)	10 (50.0%)
Location of guidance and counselling office influences the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in your school	2 (10.0%)	1 (5.0%)	1 (5.0%)	8 (40.0%)	8 (40.0%)
Guidance and counselling office is hidden, and this encourages students to seek help	1 (5.0%)	2 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (25.0%)	12 (60.0%)
Location of counselling office helps improved the comfort of the counsellor and counselee	2 (10.0%)	2 (10.0%)	1 (5.0%)	5 (25.0%)	10 (50.0%)
Teachers sharing the same office with guidance and counselling has hindered students to seek guidance and counselling service	2 (10.0%)	2 (10.0%)	1 (5.0%)	4 (20.0%)	11 (55.0%)
Guidance and Counselling office is accessible to all the students including those abled differently	2 (10.0%)	3 (15.0%)	2 (10.0%)	3 (15.0%)	10 (50.0%)

Source: Research Data (2026)

The findings in Table 1 reveals that most respondents who were 9 (45.0%) strongly agreed together 6 (15.0%) with who agreed that confidentiality of the clients was ensured by a strategically located guidance and counselling office. The respondents who were 3 (15.0%) disagreed together with 1 (5.0%) respondent who strongly disagreed that confidentiality of the clients is ensured by a strategically located guidance and counselling office while 1 (5.0%) were undecided. This implies that the confidentiality of the clients is ensured by a strategically located guidance and counselling. This agrees with Neukrug, (2012), who revealed that counselling relationship requires safety of the clients and confidentiality of their information.

The respondents who were 10 (50.0%) strongly agreed as well as 2 (10.0%) who agreed that the type of physical structure of the counselling office influences the effectiveness of counselling services. The respondents who were 3 (15.0%) disagreed as well as 3 (15.0%) respondents who strongly disagreed that the type of physical structure of the counselling office influences the effectiveness of counselling services while 2 (10.0%) were

undecided. This reveals that the type of physical structure of the counselling office influences the effectiveness of counselling services. This finding concurs with Ruto et al., (2017), who reported that there were inadequate physical structures and the constructed structures were located in the right places.

Respondents who were 10 (50.0%) strongly agreed together with 7 (35.0%) respondents who agreed that counselling room is in a conducive place to minimize the disruption. The respondents who were 1 representing (5.0%) strongly disagreed as well as 1 (5.0%) disagreed while 1 (5.0%) were undecided on counselling room being in a conducive place to minimize the disruption. This reveals that counselling room should be in a conducive place to minimize the disruption. This concurs with Phelp (2008), who noted that insecure place interferes with the interaction between counsellor and counselee.

Majority of the respondents who were 8 (40.0%) agreed as well as 8 (40.0%) strongly agreed that the location of guidance and counselling office influences the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in your school. The respondents who were 2 (10.0%) strongly disagreed as well as 1 (5.0%) respondent who disagreed that the location of guidance and counselling office influences the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in your school. The respondents who were 1 (5.0%) were undecided. The findings imply that the location of a guidance and counselling office is key. This agrees with Phelp (2008), who noted that insecure place interferes with the interaction between counsellor and counselee hence the location of the guidance and counselling office is key.

Guidance and counselling office was hidden, and this encouraged students to seek help. This was true since majority of the respondents who were 12 (60.0%) strongly agreed as well as 5 (25.0%) respondents who agreed. The respondents who were 2 (10.0%) disagreed together with 1 (5.0%) respondent who strongly disagreed that guidance and counselling office was hidden and this encouraged students to seek help. This means that guidance and counselling office need to be in a hidden place so as to encourage students to sneak in any time without anyone seeing them. This agrees with Lutomia et al, (2002), who noted that guidance and counselling room should be away from the administration block, principal office, class or other HOD offices to encourage learners to seek counselling service.

Respondents who were 10 (50.0%) strongly agreed as well as 5 (25.0%) respondents who agreed that the location of counselling office helps improved the comfort of the counsellor and counselee. Respondents who were 2 (10.0%) strongly disagreed as well as 2 (10.0%) who disagreed that the location of counselling office helps improved the comfort of the counsellor and counselee. Respondents who were 1 (5.0%) were undecided. This reveals that guidance and counselling offices should be strategically located and should be away from the administration block, principal office, class or other HOD offices as proposed by Lutomia et al, (2002).

Respondents who were 11 (55.0%) strongly agreed together with 4 (20.0%) respondents who agreed that teachers shared the same office with guidance and counselling and this hindered students to seek guidance and counselling service. The respondents who were 2 (10.0%) strongly disagreed as well as 2 (10.0%) respondents who disagreed while 1 (5.0%) respondent were undecided that teachers sharing the same office with guidance and counselling had hindered students to seek guidance and counselling service. This shows that guidance and counselling office should not be shared with teachers. This will ensure confidentiality as postulated by Neukrug, (2012), who revealed that counselling relationship requires safety of the clients and confidentiality of their information.

The respondents who were 10 (50.0%) strongly agreed together with 3 (15.0%) respondents who agreed that guidance and counselling office is accessible to all the students including those abled differently. The respondents who were 3 (15.0%) disagreed as well as 2 (10.0%) respondents who strongly disagreed that guidance and counselling office is accessible to all the students including those abled differently. The respondents who were undecided were 2 (10.0%). This implies that most of the guidance and counselling offices in school were accessible by all people and agrees with Muema and Kiilu (2013) who established that 61 % of the students accessed counselling services in their respective schools in their study on factors influencing students' access to guidance and counseling services provided in secondary schools, private and public in Central Division Machakos District.

The highest level of agreement was recorded for the statement that the counselling room is in a conducive place to minimize disruption, with 85% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. Similarly, 85% agreed that the office being hidden encourages students to seek help. 80% agreed that the location of the guidance and counselling office influences the effectiveness of counselling services. 75% agreed that strategic location helps ensure confidentiality, improves comfort, and that sharing the office with teachers can hinder students from seeking counselling. The lowest agreement, at 60%, concerned the influence of the physical structure of the counselling office on counselling effectiveness. Only 65% agreed that the office is accessible to all students, including students with different abilities, suggesting a possible need to improve physical accessibility.

Overall, the results suggest that privacy, strategic location, a conducive environment, accessibility, and separation from other school offices are important considerations in establishing effective guidance and counselling services.

The study observed the location of counselling office in the schools and the findings is as per Table 2.

Table 2
Observation on the Location of Counselling Office

Location of counselling office	Responses
Administration Block	3 (30.0%)
Principal office	2 (20.0%)
Adjacent to classroom	2 (20.0%)
Next to HOD offices	2 (20.0%)
Away from other building	1 (10.0%)

Source: Research Data (2026)

The findings in Table 2 on observation on the location of the guidance and counselling office showed that 3 (30.0%) were located in administration block, 2 (20.0%) were located at the principal's office, 2 (20.0%) were located in adjacent to classroom, 2 (20.0%) were located in next to HOD offices and 1 (10.0%) were located away from other buildings. This shows that guidance and counselling offices were located in the administration block which houses the principal's office and next to classroom and HOD offices. This contradicts Lutomia et al, (2002), who established that guidance and counselling room should be away from the administration block, principal office, class or other HOD offices.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that confidentiality of the clients is ensured by a strategically located guidance and counselling office and that the type of physical structure of the counselling office influences the effectiveness of counselling services. The study also concluded that counselling room should be in a conducive place to minimize the disruption hence need to be in a hidden place so as to encourage students to sneak in any time without any one seeing them. Thus, guidance and counselling offices should be strategically located and should not be shared with teachers but be accessible by all people.

The study concludes that schools counselling office/ room should have adequate furniture; records for clients attending services; appointment book for counselling; major and minor offences books; lockable cabinets for storing counselling document; life skill programs and; resources for counselling and life skills.

The study concludes that guidance and counselling office should be soundproofed to guarantee on confidentiality of guidance and counselling services. The guidance and counselling offices should be in a secluded place away from other buildings. The schools need to establish and equip counselling office away from any distractions to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

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