Teacher Counsellors' Perception on the Effectiveness of Peer Counselling Services in Management of Discipline among Public Secondary School Students in Nakuru East Sub-County

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Abstract
Teacher counsellors and other educationists have developed strategies for managing discipline. Some approaches to student indiscipline focus on prevention through behaviour change skills. Peer counselling has been adopted as a method of behaviour management. This study aimed to establish teacher counsellors' perceptions of the effectiveness of peer counselling services in managing discipline in public secondary schools in Nakuru East Sub-County, Kenya. The study was guided by the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which posits that learning occurs in a social context through dynamic, reciprocal interactions among the person, environment, and behaviour. The study used a descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised 19 teacher counsellors from 19 public secondary schools in Nakuru East Sub-County. The 19 secondary schools were stratified by type (single-sex [boys and girls] and coeducational), and simple random sampling was used to select the teacher counsellors. Teacher Counsellor Questionnaires (TCQ) were used to collect data. The instruments were pilot-tested in one public secondary school with two teacher counsellors to establish validity and reliability. The scale measuring teacher counsellors' perceptions had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.907. The questionnaire items were considered reliable if they yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Teacher counsellors gave an aggregate effectiveness rating (mean = 2.56). Based on these findings, the study concludes that peer counselling services have a moderate effect on the management of discipline in public secondary schools in Nakuru East. The study also concludes that teacher counsellors and peer mentors in high schools should receive professional training in counselling and in the supervision of peer counsellors. Peer counselling is rarely evaluated, which perpetuates a persistent status quo of inefficiency in high schools. The study recommends that, to improve the effectiveness of peer counselling, the relationship between teacher counsellors and peer counsellors should be enhanced, and the training of peer counsellors improved.

Keywords: Counselling clubs, discipline, peer counsellors, perceptions, teacher counsellor

Introduction

Discipline is the willingness to accept rules and regulations laid down for guidance and the ability to act in accordance with society's expectations of the individual (Temitayo et al., 2013). Students' misconduct in the classroom interferes with teaching and learning and is thought to be a precursor to later school dropout and similar social outcomes. Indiscipline has been reported in countries such as India, the Republic of Korea, Swaziland, and the United States. These include, inter alia, not doing homework, arriving late to class, writing in a textbook, making noise in class, and being absent from school (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2017). Lack of discipline in

schools makes effective teaching difficult. Without effective teaching, schools cannot achieve their educational goals. Schools spend much time on indiscipline cases, leaving less time for teaching. As a result, teachers do not cover the content, leaving students inadequately prepared for examinations and learning (Nakpodia, 2010; Alemayehu, 2012).

Indiscipline cases vary across African countries. Temitayo (2013) indicates that indiscipline is a prevailing problem in Nigerian schools and a major issue among students in public secondary schools. Temitayo also notes that indiscipline is a concern for schools, parents, and fellow students, whose education may be adversely affected. Therefore, disruptive behaviour cannot be ignored, and schools must adopt a well-understood, sound discipline policy. In Zimbabwe, for example, such indiscipline results in emotional and psychological trauma for children and adolescents. Cases of indiscipline in Zimbabwean secondary schools are widespread, ranging from minor cases like lateness, bullying, and stealing to major cases like rape, murder, and drug abuse (Ncube, 2013).

The Peer Approach Counselling by Teens (PACT) was found to be effective in other countries; hence, the Government of Kenya (2009) recommended that peer counselling services be introduced in educational and training institutions throughout the country. Peer counsellors could be entrusted with the task of disseminating the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they had acquired to their peers in school and the community (UNESCO, 2000). GoK (2001) recommended that peer counselling services be set up in every school and that peer counsellors be given the necessary skills and knowledge to assist students who may need guidance and counselling services. The development plan (1997-2000) also recommended that counselling be enhanced in learning institutions. In response, Peer Education and Counselling Clubs (PECC) have been established in schools and training colleges (Jemutai, 2013). Despite the establishment of peer counselling services in schools, serious cases of indiscipline were still reported, raising concerns about whether these services are in place and being implemented correctly (Choge et al., 2011). This study therefore sought to establish teacher counsellors' perceptions of the effectiveness of peer counselling services in the management of discipline among public secondary school students in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

Despite the implementation of guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Kenya, indiscipline issues persist. Wangai (1994) points out that youth indulge in pleasure and luxury. Parents, teachers, church leaders, and politicians often blame one another for failing to teach students good behaviour. School guidance and counselling programs are intended to help students rediscover themselves and overcome psychological challenges. This intention is undermined by beliefs, judgments, images, attitudes, or opinions often held by students, based on previous experiences and assumptions about the functionality of the secondary school guidance and counselling programme (SSGCP). Despite the existence of guidance and counselling in schools, there is little documented information about teacher counsellors' perceptions of the effectiveness of peer counselling services in the management of discipline in public schools. This study therefore sought to establish teacher counsellors' perceptions of the effectiveness of peer counselling services in the management of discipline among public secondary school students in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed in the 2001. Originally called Social Learning Theory (SLT), it was renamed Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) in 2001. SCT proposes that behaviour, environment, and the individual interact dynamically and reciprocally in a social context during the learning process. SCT's focus on social impact and internal and external social reinforcement makes it unique. SCT takes into account both the particular way that each person acquires and maintains behaviour and the social context in which

it is practised. The theory considers how an individual's past experiences affect the likelihood of a behavioural response. A person's likelihood of exhibiting a particular action, and the reasons behind it, depends on reinforcement, expectations, and expectancies shaped by past experiences.

This idea was relevant because students learn by observing their role models. If students remembered positive lessons, they would behave appropriately; if they remembered negative ones, they would behave inappropriately. The core ideas of this theory were used to explain how students and teacher counsellors perceived the value of peer counselling services in maintaining discipline in public secondary schools. According to the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), learning occurs in a social setting where people interact dynamically and reciprocally with one another, their surroundings, and their behaviour. SCT is distinguished by its focus on social impact, including both internal and external social reinforcement. In addition to considering the social context in which people engage in particular behaviours, SCT accounts for the distinct ways in which people learn and retain those behaviours.

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design; it sought to explain, determine, and report how things are. Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) defined a descriptive survey as an attempt to collect data from population members to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. This design can be used to explain and explore the status of two or more variables at a given time. This is because during the study, the researcher did not manipulate peer counselling services to bring about students' and teacher counsellors' perceptions of its effectiveness in the management of discipline among secondary school students.

The study was conducted in Nakuru East sub-county, Nakuru County, Kenya. Nakuru is both an agricultural and a business area, attracting people from diverse social, cultural, and educational backgrounds. It comprises Biashara, Flamingo, Kivumbini, Menengai, and Nakuru East. These locations were selected because they provide a clear distribution of schools across Kenya's geographical characteristics. The study population was drawn from teacher counsellors. The 19 teacher counsellors from the 19 public secondary schools participated in the study. The researcher included all 19 secondary school teacher counsellors.

The data were collected using the Teacher Counsellors Questionnaire (TCQ), which the researcher designed. TCQ has two sections. Section A contains background information, while Section B addresses the effectiveness of peer counselling services in managing discipline. The study used Likert-type items to measure perceptions. Supervisors and psychology experts from the Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations at Egerton University reviewed the questionnaires to establish face and content validity and align the items with the objectives. A pilot study was conducted to assess the instrument's reliability, improve it, and make necessary adjustments.

Results

The analysis was based on themes derived from the study objective, which was to determine teacher counsellors' perceptions of the effectiveness of peer counselling services in the management of discipline among secondary school students in Nakuru East sub-county.

Respondents' Background Information

The study examined respondents' background information, including teachers' gender and school type, as well as students' encounters with peer counselling services. This information helped assess the sample's representativeness and respondents' ability to provide the information needed for the study. Table 1 presents the results.

Table 1*:* Respondents' Background Information

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Teacher Counsellors' Gender	Male	10	52.6
	Female	9	47.4
School Type	Boys only	10	2.9
	Girls only	219	63.3
	Mixed schools	117	33.8

Results in Table 1 show that 10 teachers, representing 52.6 percent of the sample of teacher counsellors, were male, while the remaining 9, representing 47.4 percent of the sample, were female. The results suggest that there are almost as many male teacher counsellors as female teacher counsellors across the secondary schools in Nakuru East.

Teacher Counsellors' Perception of the Effectiveness of Peer Counselling Services

The objective of the study was to determine teacher counsellors' perceptions of the effectiveness of peer counselling services in managing discipline in public secondary schools. To address this objective, the sample of teachers was presented with a set of 23 statements related to peer counselling and asked to rate the effectiveness of each on a five-point scale: 5 = Very Effective, 4 = Effective, 3 = Moderately Effective, 2 = Somewhat Effective, and 1 = Ineffective. Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2: Teacher Counsellors' Perception of the Effectiveness of Peer Counselling Services

SN	Statement	N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. D
B1	The rapport between me and the peer counsellor is	19	21.1	47.4	15.8	15.8	0.0	2.26	.991
B2	I would rate peer counsellors' willingness to confer with me regarding students in my class as	19	26.3	36.8	21.1	15.0	0.0	2.26	1.046
B3	I would rate the selection of peer counsellors in my school as	19	26.3	36.8	15.8	15.8	5.3	2.37	1.212
B4	I would rate the support of peer counselling services by school administration as	19	42.1	26.3	15.8	15.8	0.0	2.05	1.129
B5	Peer counsellors training in my school is	19	21.1	31.6	36.8	10.5	0.0	2.37	.955
B6	Time allocated for peer counsellors' sessions in my is	19	21.1	15.8	36.8	15.8	10.5	2.79	1.273
B7	I would rate the financial support by the school management towards peer counselling services as	19	0.0	42.1	36.8	15.8	5.3	2.84	.898
B8	I would rate the availability of peer counselling services in my school as	19	10.5	31.6	47.4	5.3	5.3	2.63	.955
B9	Group and individual peer counselling services provided to students in my school	19	15.8	31.6	31.6	15.8	5.3	2.63	1.116
B10	I feel the way peer counsellors are selected in my school is	19	15.8	31.6	42.1	5.3	5.3	2.53	1.020
B11	I feel the resources in the form of books on peer counselling services in my school is	19	15.8	15.8	47.4	15.8	5.3	2.79	1.084
B12	I feel that peer counselling services interactions in my school to reduce indiscipline cases is	19	5.3	31.6	42.1	15.8	5.3	2.84	.958
B13	I would rate confidentiality during peer counselling services sessions as	19	21.1	36.8	21.1	10.5	10.5	2.53	1.264
B14	I feel peer counselling services' efforts to reduce the frequent occurrence of students' unrest is	19	10.5	47.4	31.6	10.5	0.0	2.42	.838
B15	I feel trained personnel who are normally invited to train peer counsellors in my school are	19	26.3	21.1	26.3	10.5	15.8	2.68	1.416
B16	I would rate peer counselling services in behaviour change as	19	5.3	57.9	15.8	15.8	5.3	2.58	1.017
B17	I would rate peer counselling services' effort to reduce students' anxiety as	19	0.0	57.9	21.1	15.8	5.3	2.68	.946
B18	I feel that the facilities utilized during peer counselling services sessions are	19	5.3	52.6	26.3	10.5	5.3	2.58	.961
B19	I would rate the effort by peer counsellors to reduce illicit boy/girl relationship as	19	26.3	15.8	31.6	21.1	5.3	2.63	1.257
B20	I would rate the effort by peer counsellors to reduce drug and substance abuse among students as	19	21.1	31.6	31.6	15.8	0.0	2.42	1.017

SN	Statement	N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S. D
B21	I feel that peer counsellors' ability to impart time management skills to other students is	19	15.8	36.8	31.6	10.5	5.3	2.53	1.073
B22	I feel students' active participation during peer counselling services is	19	21.1	15.8	31.6	15.8	15.8	2.89	1.370
B23	I would rate the accessibility of peer counselling services rooms in my school as	19	31.6	15.8	21.1	21.1	10.5	2.63	1.422
	Aggregate Teacher Counsellor Perception Score	**19**						**2.56**	**.776**

Table 2 indicates that, on average, teacher counsellors perceive the rapport between them and peer counsellors as somewhat effective (B1, mean= 2.26). The standard deviation is less than 1 (SD = 0.991), suggesting little dispersion in respondents' views from the average. These findings imply that teacher counsellors perceive the rapport between them and peer counsellors to be less effective. This is likely to reduce the impact of peer counselling services on students' discipline. This perception can be a major hindrance to the effectiveness of peer counselling services. Similarly, teacher counsellors rated peer counsellors' willingness to confer with them regarding students in their classes as somewhat effective (B2, mean = 2.26, SD = 1.046). However, the standard deviation indicates that respondents held divergent views on this issue.

Regarding school input, the sampled teacher counsellors rated the selection of peer counsellors in their school as somewhat effective (B3, mean= 2.37, SD= 1.212). This result suggests that most teacher counsellors in public secondary schools are not impressed with the process used to select peer counsellors. This finding aligns with the study by Munyasya et al. (2020), which found that one of the challenges hampering the effectiveness of peer counselling programmes in public secondary schools in Matungulu Sub-County is the use of unpopular and poor criteria for selecting students for peer counselling roles. The teacher counsellors also rated the support for peer counselling services by school administration as somewhat effective (B4, mean= 2.05, SD= 1.129).

In addition, the teacher counsellors rated peer counselling training in their schools as somewhat effective (B5, mean = 2.37, SD = .955). These results suggest that most teacher counsellors perceived the processes for selecting peer counsellors, the support provided to them, and the training in peer counselling within their schools to be below par. If this is the case, the impact of peer counselling services on students' discipline is likely to diminish.

On the other hand, the teacher counsellors rated the time allocated to peer counselling (B6, mean= 2.79, SD= 1.273) and the financial support provided by school management for peer counselling (B7, mean= 2.84, SD= .898) as moderately effective. In addition, respondents rated the effectiveness of trained personnel normally invited to train peer counsellors in their school (B15, mean= 2.68, SD= 1.416) as moderately effective. Furthermore, respondents rated the facilities used during peer counselling sessions (B18, mean= 2.58, SD= 0.961), active participation during peer counselling sessions (B22, mean= 2.89, SD= 1.370), and the accessibility of peer counselling rooms in their school (B23, mean= 2.63, SD= 1.422) as moderately effective. These results suggest that the teacher counsellors perceive the time and financial resources allocated to peer counselling services as reasonable. This is likely to have a positive effect on the effectiveness of peer counselling services in addressing students' disciplinary challenges.

Regarding the structure of peer counselling services, the teacher counsellors rated the availability of peer counselling services (B8, mean= 2.63, SD= .955), the provision of group and individual peer counselling services in their school (B9, mean= 2.63, SD= 1.116), and confidentiality during peer counselling sessions (B13, mean= 2.53, SD= 1.264) as moderately effective. In addition, the teacher counsellors felt that the resources in the form of books on peer counselling services in their school (B11, mean= 2.79, SD= 1.084) and peer counselling interactions in their school to reduce cases of indiscipline were moderately effective (B12, mean= 2.84, SD= .958). These results show that most teachers perceive peer counselling services in their schools to be well structured. This is likely to have a positive effect on the effectiveness of peer counselling services in managing school discipline.

Teacher counsellors rated peer counselling services in behaviour change (B16, mean= 2.58, SD= 1.017), peer counselling services' effort to reduce students' anxiety (B17, mean= 2.68, SD=.946), and peer counsellors' effort to reduce illicit boy/girl relationships (B19, mean= 2.63, SD= 1.257) as moderately effective. Moreover, teacher counsellors rated peer counsellors' ability to impart time management skills to other students (B21, mean= 2.53, SD= 1.073). These results suggest that most teacher counsellors perceive peer counselling to be moderately effective in managing various factors that contribute to student discipline, such as anxiety and coupling. However, teacher counsellors rated peer counsellors' effort to reduce drug and substance abuse among students (B=20, mean= 2.42, SD= 1.017) as somewhat effective. This result implies that most teacher counsellors had reservations about the effectiveness of peer counselling in managing drug and substance abuse behaviour among students.

The aggregate mean score for teacher-counsellor perceptions was 2.56, indicating that, on average, teacher-counsellors rated the effectiveness of peer counselling in their schools for managing discipline as moderate. This statistic suggests that while teachers perceive that peer counselling services have had some impact on managing discipline in their schools, they believe there is still room for improvement. Greater impact can be achieved if certain aspects of peer counselling services are improved.

Summary of the Findings

The study sought to establish teacher counsellors' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of peer counselling services in managing discipline in public secondary schools in Nakuru East sub-county. On average, teacher counsellors rated the effectiveness of peer counselling in managing discipline within public secondary schools as moderate, as indicated by the aggregate teacher counsellor perception mean score of 2.56. This finding implies that while most teacher counsellors perceive that peer counselling services have had some impact on managing discipline in their schools, more can still be done. Teachers gave certain aspects of peer counselling high effectiveness ratings, including students' active participation during peer counselling services (B22, mean= 2.89), peer counselling interactions to reduce indiscipline cases (B12, mean= 2.84), and financial support from school management towards peer counselling services (B7, mean= 2.84). Aspects that received the lowest ratings included the rapport between teacher counsellors and peer counsellors (B1, mean=2.26) and peer counsellors' willingness to confer with teacher counsellors (B2, mean= 2.26). The lowest-rated statements mainly related to the relationship between peer counsellors and teacher counsellors. These findings suggest a need to improve this relationship.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study concluded that teacher counsellors perceive the effectiveness of peer counselling in managing discipline in public secondary schools in Nakuru East as moderate. From the teachers' point of view, the schools have excelled in enhancing student participation in peer counselling, improving the interactiveness of peer counselling services, and providing financial support for peer counselling. Areas that the teachers felt had major deficiencies and needed major improvement include the rapport between teacher counsellors and peer counsellors and the engagement of teacher counsellors by peer counsellors.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommends that the counselling departments within public secondary schools cultivate a close working relationship between teacher counsellors and peer counsellors. To address this challenge, peer counsellors should be

trained to engage teacher counsellors in resolving students' challenges without compromising the confidentiality of students who seek help from them. Peer counsellors should also be trained to deliberate on cases with teacher counsellors without compromising the trust of students who confide in them.

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