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**EFFECTIVENESS OF PRIMARY PREVENTIVE COUNSELLING
IN CONTROLLING PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS OF STUDENTS
IN SECONDARY SCHOOL OF ISEMBE SOUTH
SUB-COUNTY MERU COUNTY KENYA****Kiambati Henry M. & Kamoyo, John M., Phd**
Chuka University, Chuka, Kenya**ABSTRACT**

Controlling and dealing with the perennial students' problem behaviours have become a major challenge in secondary schools. The conventional counselling approaches applied deals with the students who already have developed problem behaviours. The approaches have been inadequate if any in controlling, reducing and preventing the occurrence of the problem behaviours in students. This has resulted to the recurrence of common deviant behaviours like drug and substances abuse; teenage sex and pregnancy; absenteeism, truancy and dropout; dishonesty; violence and arson. The purpose of this study was to establish the effectiveness of preventive counselling interventions in controlling and preventing the problem behaviours of secondary school students' in Igembe South Sub-County. The study adapted a descriptive survey research design and involved 42 public secondary schools with a total enrolment of 8,017 students. Accessible population of the study was 1,974 form three students from which a sample of 317 respondents was drawn to participate in the study through simple random sampling. Further 15 teacher counsellors and 15 deputy principals from the selected schools were purposively sampled to participate in the study. The study had a total sample of 347 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires. Validity of the instruments, through expert judgement and opinion from the university supervisors in determining the content, construct and face validities in addition to searching relevant literature. Piloting of the instruments was done in three sampled secondary schools in Igembe North Sub-to

establish reliability of the research instruments. The reliability coefficients of 0.903, 0.875 and 0.794 were obtained for the students, teacher counsellors and deputy principals respectively. An average reliability coefficient of alpha scale of 0.857 was arrived at indicating that the instruments used were reliable. Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The findings indicated that most of the counselling methods used in the secondary schools have a preventive approach. The study further established that effectiveness of three approaches of preventive counselling; that primary, secondary and tertiary preventive counselling was effective in various aspects of problem behaviours in students. The researcher recommends empowerment of trained teacher counsellors specifically with more emphasis on the preventive counselling approaches to students' problem behaviours. The government policy makers should work in consultation with all stakeholders to develop proper framework that ensures the students' needs are adequately addressed.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Preventive Counselling, Controlling, Problem Behaviours

1. Introduction

Guidance and counselling is a broad term that generally describes the approaches used to help solve and alleviate the problems affecting the individual's physical, emotional and mental wellbeing to bring about behaviour change and transformation of the individual or group (Mutie & Ndambuki, 2004; Wango, 2006). Conventional counsellors mainly offer corrective and rehabilitative solutions rather than preventing the problems behaviours and their consequences to the individuals or society only focus on anticipation and avoidance of human psychosocial conflicts and problems (Mutie & Ndambuki, 2004; Wango, 2006). It uses different theoretical approaches, strategies and interventions at each level targeting individuals, groups and populations depending on the behavioural or psychological wellbeing. Preventive Counselling on the other hand is mainly concerned with identifying, controlling and reducing problem behaviours that are not acceptable by the societal standards, norms, morals, values, and ethics. Such behaviours could be detrimental to the individual or society's wellbeing (Caplan, 1964, Hage & Romano 2001). Much prevention intervention focussed on enhancing human functioning and reducing psychological distress (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan & Hawkins, 2002). It promotes health and wellbeing of the individuals, community and the nation; reduces the cost of mental health care and controls occurrence of problem behaviours (Satcher, 2000; Tolan & Dodge 2005; World Health Organization, 2008). According to Bull, (2011) infusing and applying the modern technological development helps to further the benefits and effectiveness of preventive counselling interventions on problem behaviours.

Scholars like Stone & Archer, (1990); Hage & Romano, (2000); Maintin & Thomas, (2000) literally viewed prevention as the act of stopping something from happening. According to Caplan (1964) preventive counselling has primary; secondary and tertiary prevention approaches. The approaches aim to control reduce or stop the problem behaviours from actually occurring as opposed to conventional guidance and counselling approaches that are only applied to remedy or treat problems that have already occurred. When problem behaviours like absenteeism, truancy, drugs and alcohol abuse, adolescent sex and teenage pregnancies, violence and arson happen, they greatly affect the students and the parents indirectly (Njoroge, 2005; Kyalo, 2010). Primary Prevention that was viewed by Felner & Silverman (2000) as real preventive intervention focuses on preventing a problem from occurring and designed to reduce the incidences, prevalence and impact of the problem behaviours to promote health, social, moral and physical well-being of the individual or society (Cowen, 1996). Primary prevention approach also seems to have some remediation and rehabilitative interventions

depending on the problem behaviour or disorder in question (Schwartz & Waldo, 2003; Schwartz, Griffin & Russell, 2006). For effective intervention, Primary prevention should be applied at early stages in life since the children and adolescents are mainly at higher risk of problem behaviours like drugs and substances abuse, violence, teenage sex and pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and other forms of deviancy (Weisberg, Walberg, O'Brien & Kuster, 2003). Early preventive interventions should focus on reducing the risks and causes of problem behaviours or psychological dysfunctions and promote positive behaviour development in individuals and society wellness. (Conyne, (2004); Durlak, Weisberg & Pachan, 2010). Catalano, Berglund, Ryan & Hawkins, (2002) had the opinion that primary prevention promotes health and wellbeing of the individuals, community and the nation by reduces the cost of mental health care and controls occurrence of problem behaviours. This was supported by Satcher, 2000; Tolan & Dodge 2005; World Health Organization, 2008 that stressed the importance of prevention in controlling the problem behaviours in the individuals or society over a certain period by controlling their antecedents before they result to behaviour problems.

The Primary or Universal Prevention intervention can contemporarily be applied in preventing common students' problem behaviours by setting out the requirement for the acceptable behaviour. Universal Prevention is used to address all students during assembly days. This is by putting in place a participatory school-wide plan that involves the students clearly stating and defining the behavioural expectation in or outside the school. It requires all the students to meet the behavioural expectations impartially and reinforcing when the set out behavioural expectations are met by the students. The intervention should focus on immediate and consistent response to the inappropriate behaviours shown by the students ensuring follow-up and data collection for appropriate decision making (Schwartz & Waldo, 2003). This is the most crucial level in which much behaviour expectations can be achieved. This is by putting in place appropriate interventions in a school wide program that involves all staff, students, parents, community and the environment (Sharon *et al.*, 2002). Most of the physical problem behaviours are caused by both external and internal factors that relate to the family background, classroom and school environment, interrelationship with peers and teachers, communication breakdown, culture and societal norms and ethics, the genetic, physiological and morphological changes in an individual (Rizzo & Kim, 2005; Price & Anderson, 2007; Yee, Fox & Bailenson, 2009).

Most of the problem behaviours expressed by the students have their origins at homes, hence students from families deranged with poverty, domestic violence, conflicts, separation or divorce and autocratic parenting may depict such behaviours at school (Show, 2000; Solomon, 2005). The physical problem behaviours need to be prevented or reduced early enough before they negatively impact on the students' way of life, conduct and academic performance. The primary interventions should focus on all the students in a classroom or non-classroom activities as it targets to improve the school environment, student communications, interpersonal relationships and discipline in the school. It will also reduce the referrals on behavioural problems, save time that would have been wasted in instructions, counselling and handling the problem behaviour cases (Watson & Griffin, 2009). Externalizing behaviours that can be controlled at this level are expressed in emotions, feelings, and aggression (Njoroge, 2005; Muchiri, 2008). Teaching and inculcating good moral such as honesty, trustworthy, obedience, uprightness, faithfulness and sincerity associated with the acceptable school rules, ethics, norms and values can promote acceptable behaviours at the same time discouraging the antisocial behaviours in students (Greenberg, 2002; Trevino, 2006). Students can easily learn the morally acceptable acts, good moral decision-making skills, moral judgement and good moral behaviours (Bernardi *et al.*, 2004; Muchiri, 2008). This can promote acceptable social behaviours, social interactions and practices (socialization) such as giving gifts, helping others, sharing notes and group working impacts students' intensions, emotions, feelings, and actions. It also influences their thoughts and attitudes towards others enhancing good social behaviours (Kochanska &

Aksan, 2006; Poulou, 2005; Adler, 2002). The conventional Counselling approaches currently applied in schools are ineffective since they greatly focused on post-crisis interventions (crisis counselling) and remediation ignoring the pre-crisis (Preventive counselling) that is concerned with identifying, controlling and preventing the students' problem behaviour (Wambui, 2005; Samatwa, 2007; UNESCO, 2012). It is for this reason that the researcher sought to establish the effectiveness of preventive counselling in controlling the problem behaviours of secondary school students in Igembe South Sub-County.

2. Objectives

The objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of primary preventive counselling in controlling problem behaviours of students in secondary school of Igembe South Sub-County, Kenya.

3. Methodology

The study targeted individual students at various levels of problem behaviour development through primary, secondary and tertiary preventive counselling interventions. The study adapted a descriptive survey research design and involved 42 public secondary schools with a total enrolment of 8,017 students. Accessible population of the study was 1,974 form three students from which a sample of 317 respondents was drawn to participate in the study through simple random sampling. Further 15 teacher counsellors and 15 deputy principals from the selected schools were purposively sampled to participate in the study. The study had a total sample of 347 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires. To ensure validity of the instruments, the researcher sort expert judgement and opinion from the university supervisors in determining the content, construct and face validities in addition to searching relevant literature. To test the reliability of the instruments a pilot study was conducted in three sampled secondary schools in Igembe North Sub-County which had similar conditions. Cronbach's alpha coefficient method was used to estimate the internal consistency and reliability of the instruments. The reliability coefficients of 0.903, 0.875 and 0.794 were obtained for the students, teacher counsellors and deputy principals respectively. An average reliability coefficient of alpha scale of 0.857 was arrived at indicating that the instruments used were reliable. Data collected was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 and presented using frequency tables, percentages, charts and graphs. Qualitative analysis was done by determining the effectiveness of primary preventive counselling from the information collected through questionnaires.

4. Results of the Study

The study aimed at testing how effective is Primary Preventive Counselling in controlling problem behaviours of secondary school students in Igembe South Sub-County. The information was obtained from 317 form three students, 15 teacher counsellors and 15 deputy principals whose analysed data produced the following results.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The students represented 91.36% while the teacher counsellors 4.42% and the deputy principals were 4.42%. Of the students 58.99% were girls while 38.80% were boys and majority (75%) were aged between 18-20 years, 16.14% between 12-17 years and 7.25 % between 21-24 years. Majority of the teacher counsellors were females (73.33%) and males (26.37%) with most of them aged between 25-32 years (60.0%) while 40.0% between 33 to above 37 years. Over 60.0% of the teacher counsellors were degree holders, 26.67% diploma holders and 13.33% undergraduates. Trained teacher counsellors were 26.67% while the untrained ones were 73.33%. The deputy principals were 80.0% males and 20.0% females with majority (60.0%) aged between 25-36 and others 40.0 % were 37 and above years.

4.2 Effectiveness of primary preventive counselling in Controlling Students' Problem Behaviours

To determine the effectiveness of primary preventive counselling in controlling the students problem behaviours in secondary, questionnaires were specifically designed to obtain information from the students, teacher counsellors and the deputy principals. A five point Likert scale with seven items rated between 1 and 5 with 5=Very Effective; 4=Effective; 3=Unsure; 2=Less Effective and 1=Ineffective. The responses were presented in form of means with a mean 1.0-2.0 indicating that the approach was ineffective; a mean of above 2.0 and below 3.0 to show that the approach is less effective. A mean of 3.0 was taken as the average; mean of above 4.0 and below 5.0 to indicate the approach was effective while a mean of 5.0 showed that it was very effective.

Table 1: Students' responses on the effectiveness of primary preventive counselling in controlling students problem behaviours

Responses	Response ratings					MN
	VE=5	E=4	U=3	LE=2	I=1	
In enlightening students on dangers of drug abuse	116	180	9	4	8	4.24
In promoting good behaviours in students	242	62	6	3	4	4.71
In uplifting students' self-esteem in school	200	58	10	8	4	4.04
In teaching students' importance of dialogue in presenting their needs in school	170	102	17	18	10	4.27
In improving interaction among students and teachers	230	52	8	20	7	4.51
In educating students on the risks of teenage sex and STIs	210	82	5	14	6	4.51
In cautioning students on the use of sexually explicit materials and clothes	130	148	12	13	14	4.16
Average Mean	1298	684	67	80	53	4.42

The findings in Table 1 revealed that in most of the statements the responses scored a mean of above 4.0 meaning that the students' opinions were that primary preventive counselling was effective. Therefore according to most students primary preventive counselling had enlightened them on dangers of drug abuse with a mean of 4.24, risks on STIs with a mean of 4.51, motivated them towards good and acceptable behaviours and promoted self-esteem encouraged with means of 4.71 and 4.04.

The results obtained from the teacher counsellors' responses on the statements related to effectiveness of primary preventive counselling in controlling problem behaviours in secondary school students IS presented as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Teacher counsellors' responses on the effectiveness of primary preventive in controlling problem behaviours in secondary school students

Responses	Response ratings					
	VE=5	E=4	U=3	LE=2	I=1	MN
In enlightening students on dangers of drug abuse	6	5	1	2	1	3.87
In promoting good behaviours in students	8	6	0	1	0	4.53
In uplifting students' self-esteem in school	6	4	2	2	1	3.80
In teaching students' importance of dialogue in presenting their needs in school	7	4	2	1	1	4.00
In improving interaction among students and teachers	5	5	2	2	1	3.73
In educating students on the risks of teenage sex and STIs	6	7	0	1	1	4.07
In cautioning students on the use of sexually explicit materials and clothes	3	5	2	3	2	3.73
Average Mean	41	36	9	12	7	3.88

The data in Table 2 shows that the primary preventive counselling was effective in promoting good behaviour in students with a mean of 4.53, educating students on dangers of STIs (4.07), importance of dialogue in presenting their needs (4.0), improving interactions between students and teachers (mean of 3.73), cautioning on drugs abuse and exposure to explicit sexual materials and dressing (mean of 3.73). From the findings the average mean of 3.88 indicated that teacher counsellors agreed that primary preventive counselling was effective in inculcating positive behaviour and controlling problem behaviours in secondary school students.

The responses by the deputy principals that were analysed based on the given Likert scale ratings and the calculated mean to each statement in relation to effectiveness of primary preventive counselling in controlling students problem behaviours. The results are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Deputy Principals' responses on the effectiveness of primary preventive counselling in controlling students problem behaviours

Responses	Response ratings					
	VE=5	E=4	U=3	LE=2	I=1	MN
In enlightening students on dangers of drug abuse	5	4	2	1	1	3.85
In promoting good behaviours in students	8	1	1	2	1	4.00
In uplifting students' self-esteem in school	6	3	1	2	1	3.92
In teaching students' importance of dialogue in presenting their needs in school	4	5	2	0	2	3.69
In improving interaction among students and teachers	4	6	1	1	1	3.92
In educating students on the risks of teenage sex and STIs	3	5	2	1	2	3.62

In cautioning students on the use of sexually explicit materials and clothes	3	4	3	2	1	3.23
Average Mean	33	28	12	9	9	3.74

According to the analysed data in Table 3, the deputy principal's responses to most of the statements indicated that primary preventive counselling had taught and encouraged the students in upholding good morals and inculcate good social behaviours with a mean of 4.0. The approach had also helped the students in understanding dangers and consequences of problem behaviours such as drug abuse (3.85), teenage sex and STIs (3.62) and exposure to explicit sexual materials with lowest mean of 3.23. They also indicated that it had taught students the value of dialogue instead of violence in expressing their views and presenting their needs to the school authorities (mean of 3.69). In all the responses by the deputy principals the average mean of 3.75 showed their concurrence that primary preventive counselling was effective in controlling students' problem behaviours in secondary schools.

5.0 Discussions

Primary preventive counselling was effective in controlling the common problem behaviours in secondary school students. Students had acquired the right values and attitudes that helped them develop a sense of identity that guided their behaviour and formed their character. The students were constantly cautioned on dangers of involving themselves in problem behaviours such as drug abuse, violent and antisocial behaviour, teenage sex and exposure to explicit sexual materials. This is in concurrence with what Griffin (1994), Chepkonga (2009) and Muinde (2015) had found in their studies on importance of guidance and counselling in influencing students behaviours. It showed that the students, teacher counsellors and deputy principals agreed that primary preventive counselling inculcated and promoted appropriate and acceptable behaviours in secondary school students. Most of the respondents scored average means of 4.42(students), 3.88(teacher counsellors) and 3.74 (deputy principals) supporting the fact that primary preventive counselling had positive impact on most of the aspects on students behaviour. The studies by Kenani (2011); Kyriacou (2001) and Goldstein (1995) supported the idea that improved interaction among students and teachers promoted positive behaviours in students hence controlling the problem behaviours in them.

In their studies Ndwiga (2007), Kenani (2011) and Karega (2012) supported the findings that guidance and counselling helps students to acquire the right values and attitudes. These will make them attain a sense of self-identity and self-esteem that can guide their behaviour and form their character. Living in harmony with the teachers and other students makes students feel cared for, raises their self-esteem and their attachment to their school. This created a healthy environment for development and maintenance of good behaviours as well as positive behaviour changes in secondary school students.

6.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine effectiveness of primary preventive counselling in controlling students problem behaviours Vis a Vis conventional guidance and counselling. This study established that primary preventive counselling impacted greatly on the students appropriate behaviour development.

Primary preventive counselling was found to be effective in promoting dialogue; enlightened and motivated students towards appropriate behaviours; inculcated good behaviours in them in order to lead well-adjusted lives. It also cautioned student on the dangers and consequences of the common problem behaviours, helped them

develop high self-esteem and good social interaction amongst themselves and with their teachers. It has also helped them acquire the right attitudes that will help them acquire a sense of self-identity, values and beliefs that can guide their behaviour and form their character.

7.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made:

- i. Proper comprehensive curriculum should be in place to equip the teacher counsellors with adequate professional knowledge in guidance and counselling. All the schools should have trained teacher counsellors with specific duties and responsibilities in guidance and counselling to meet the students' needs especially through primary preventive counselling to control the students' problem behaviours.
- ii. The school administrators, teachers and parents should be enlightened on factors that lead to problem behaviours in students in order to make them execute their different role effectively and help in making the students appreciate their influence on their behaviour development.

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