

## **Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Services In Psychological And Emotional Adjustment of Orphaned Students In Public Secondary Schools In Kandara, Sub-County, Kenya.**

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**Abstract:-** Guidance and counselling services are provided to orphaned students to enable them to adjust to loss and grief. This paper examines the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in psychological and emotional adjustment of orphaned students. Data was collected from a sample of 130 orphaned students and 7 teacher counsellors from 3 educational zones which had the highest of orphaned students in Kandara sub – county. Descriptive statistics was used in data analysis. The study established that guidance and counselling services helped orphaned students to adjust emotionally and psychologically. The study recommended that teacher counsellors need to have refresher courses, seminars and workshops to equip them with knowledge and skill to help orphaned students to adjust psychologically and emotionally. The government also needs to employ more teacher counselors for the elaborate welfare of the orphaned students.

**Key words:** *Guidance and Counselling Services, Psychological and Emotional Adjustment, Teacher Counsellors.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

United Nations Agency for International Development (2008) provides various global estimates of orphans as ranging between 143 million to 163 million with roughly 90% of those classified as orphans having one living parent. An estimated 18.3 million orphans globally have lost both parents. In addition the same sources indicate that everyday 5760 more children are become orphans. United Nations International Children's Education Fund (2003) indicate that there are over 14 million orphans from other causes of death. The number of orphans has been rising steadily in many African countries. UNICEF (2006) notes that, the number of orphans in Sub-Saharan Africa has been increasing by more than 50% per year since 1990. Conversely, the total number of orphans from all causes combined has been decreasing in the Asian, Latin America and the Caribbean countries during the same period. In Kenya there are 1.2 million orphans because of AIDS. The high death rate had generated 650,000 orphans aged below 17 years by the end of 2003. Kenya has the ninth highest HIV prevalence rate in the world (United Nations Agency for International Development & World Health Organization, 2004).

The National Association of Counsel for Children, (2005) reported that 1.9 million children in Kenya are AIDS orphans. Over the past few five years, the number of orphans and vulnerable children living in Kenya has been escalating at an alarming rate. In 2004 the number of orphans was estimated to be 1.8 million and by 2009 the number had grown to nearly 2.6 million. Psychological and emotional adjustment problems have been documented as educational issues of concern for centuries thus calling on teachers, pastors and significant others to assist students through guidance and counselling services. According to Mapfumo (2001), students experience immense psychological pressure in today's world. For this reason, guidance and counselling services need to be provided in schools to enable the students to adjust psychologically and emotionally in case of any traumatizing occurrence during their schooling life. Egan, (2002) states that the goal of counselling is to reduce psychological disturbances. These programmes have been structured to respond to orphans' psychological and emotional maladjustments. These services should be made available to each student to meet their needs. Educational needs of all students should be identified and catered for social personal and health education. Students should be made to understand the stages of bereavement and loss, including how they might support themselves and each other in times of bereavement (National Christian Council Association, 2006). Department of Education and Science, (2005) reveals that guidance counsellors role has been recognized as a key part of development of the students, in that it enables them to develop coping strategies to deal with stress, personal, social issues and challenges that life may present. In Kenya, the need for effective guidance and counselling has been emphasized by various commissions set up by the Government of Kenya since independence. Republic of Kenya (1964) stresses that every child has a right to guidance and counselling services while Ministry of

Education Science and Technology, (2001) Ministry of Home Affairs, Heritage, and Sports (2002) report further emphasized need for counselling services especially among youths. This implies that guidance and counselling has been recognized as an important programme in Kenyan institutions to assist individuals to adjust psychologically and emotionally. The government of Kenya, therefore, implemented national legislation policies for protection of orphans. Among these policies and action plans was the need for guidance and counselling services which were recognized to play a vital role in assisting the orphans (Government of Kenya, 1998). The intended goal of education is to produce physically, emotionally, psychological, intellectually and socially mature children. Kenya as a signatory, to the United Nations Convention (UN) on the Rights of a Child emphasized guidance and counselling as a means of maintaining sound mental health (MOEST, 2001). These services enable orphaned students to adjust psychologically, emotionally and to understand that they are equally important and have a right to live a sound life.

Foster and Williamson (2000) observed that “internalized behavior changes such as depression, anxiety and low self-esteem” are more evident than externalized behaviors in children that are orphaned. The tendency to internalize may be due to their inability to find ways to express their grief adequately. In this respect, effective guidance and counselling services in schools is encouraged to assist orphaned students adjust psychologically and emotionally so as to learn with ease. The report on man power training and development (Republic of Kenya, 1999), recommends that guidance and counselling in educational institutions should be an active and available service on a daily basis to all students, and should begin at primary school level where children’s ability, interests and aptitude can be harnessed well at the initial stages of life.

For any education to have a change, teachers are believed to be the change makers (Ertmer, 2005). This means that teachers are able to contribute change in education of orphaned students. Effective guidance and counselling services have a positive impact on orphaned students’ school life that it will enable them to live fully adjusted life. It is important to examine effectiveness of guidance and counselling services because the services act as a driving force of change in orphan’s life (Corey, 1991). For this reason, this study seeks to examine the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in psychological and emotional adjustment of orphaned students in public secondary schools in Kandara sub –county.

## **II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The number of orphaned students in school has been on a steady increase over the years. These learners suffer enormous psychological and emotional challenges which affect their academic life and other aspects of their lives. The concern of this study was that although it is generally agreed that orphaned students need guidance and counseling services to help them in their psychological and emotional adjustment, few studies have been done to determine the effectiveness of these services. Their effectiveness is not determined stakeholders may not know the exact challenges faced by the orphaned learners. This study therefore sought to determine the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services towards emotional and psychological adjustment of orphaned students in public secondary schools in kandara, sub-county, kenya. This would be useful in establishing the wellness of the orphaned learners and highlight areas of improvement in delivering guidance and counseling services to these students.

## **III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of the study was to examine the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services on emotional and psychological adjustment of the orphaned students.

## **IV. METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted survey research design. It was carried out in three educational zones located in Kandara Sub-County namely Ithiru, Muruka and Kagundu. The population of the study comprised of 1030 orphaned students and 67 teacher counsellors. The sample size of 130 orphaned students and 7 teacher counsellors was obtained using a sample size of 15%. Stratified sampling was used to sample the orphaned students on basis of gender and classes that formed the strata. Teacher counsellors who participated in the study were purposively sampled. Stratified sampling is useful for it yields more reliable and detailed data while ensuring that no sub-population is omitted (Orodho, 2004). A questionnaire was used to collect data from orphaned students and teacher counsellors. The questionnaire included a likert scale to measure symptoms of grief and loss, effectiveness of teacher counsellors on psychological and emotional adjustment and effectiveness of guidance and counselling on psychological and emotional adjustment of the orphaned students. The data collected from the questionnaire was organized, coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means and frequencies. The Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to facilitate data analysis.

V. RESULTS

**Student’s Duration of Orphan hood**

The researcher further established how long the student has been an orphan. The findings are shown in the Table 1

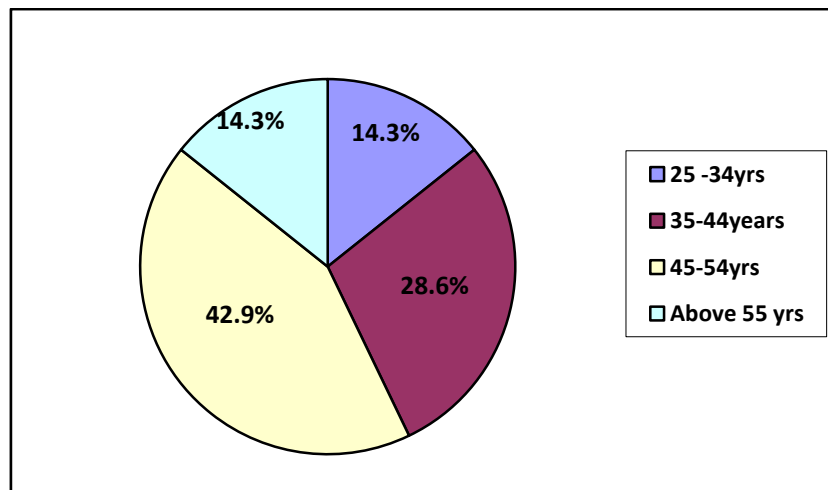
**Table 1: Students’ duration of Orphanhood**

Years	Frequency	Percentage
0-3 years	21	16.2
4-6 years	44	33.8
7-9 years	40	30.8
10 years and above	25	19.2
Total	130	100

The length of period a student had been orphaned determined the level of psychological and emotional adjustment. Orphaned students who had lost their parents in recent times could still be going through fresh psychological distress as compared to students who were orphaned long time ago. The researcher also observed that these orphaned students could still be grieving for their deceased parents. This is supported by Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2000) who asserted that orphans grieve for their deceased parents and since grieving is a process; some orphans take longer to mourn their parents. Christ, (1999) also posited that physical and emotional functioning of the surviving parent can affect the emotional and psychological adjustment of a child.

**Demographic information of Teacher Counsellors**

The demographic information included age brackets, years of experience and teachers’ level of training. Figure 3 revealed that majority of the teacher counsellors were in the age of 35-44 years and 45-54 years both at 28.6% and 42.9% respectively followed by 25 to 34 years and ages 55 and above representing 14.3 % respectively. These are also teachers who have been in the teaching profession for more than 7-10 years. This means that, these teacher counsellors have vast experience with the students’ bereavement problems. Thus they are in a better position to handle psychological and emotional problems in order to assist orphaned students to adjust psychologically and emotionally.



**Figure 1. Age Brackets of Teachers Counsellors**

**Training Levels of Teacher Counsellors**

Figure 4 indicates that the majority (79.5%) of the sampled teachers were actually formally trained in guidance and counselling while the (20.5 %) of teachers had not received formal training in guidance and counselling. This implied that most teachers had been trained on guidance and counselling hence could give skillful, effective and professional guidance and counselling services to the orphaned student to enable them to adjust psychologically and emotionally. The researcher observed that these teachers who had received guidance and counselling training were in a very good position of providing effective guidance and counselling services. students to actualize the loss by enabling them to talk about it (Wild, 2002). This has also been supported by Worden (1983) who asserts that counsellors have a duty to help orphaned children actualize the loss in order to adjust psychologically and emotionally.

According to the findings, most teacher counsellors had basic knowledge and techniques in guidance and counselling. The findings in Figure 4 revealed that a majority (40.6%) of the trained teacher counsellors had a degree in guidance and counselling, 28.2% had a certificate or a diploma in guidance and counselling whereas 10.7% had a masters in guidance and counselling. The study notes that most teachers had acquired basic knowledge and techniques in guidance and counselling which they could apply as they provide guidance and counselling services to orphaned students. The level of training and education for teacher counsellors could have determined the kind of knowledge, skill or technique they will use to help orphaned students to adjust psychologically and emotionally.

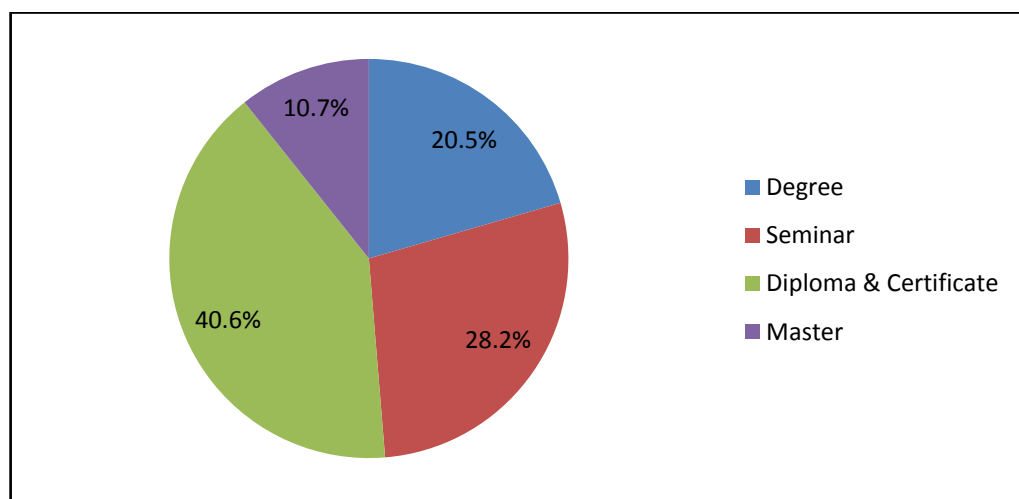


Figure 2. Teachers' Training on Guidance and Counselling

### Guidance and Counselling Services Offered to Orphaned Students

The study examined the scope of services offered by the teacher counsellors to the orphaned students in the schools. Table 3 summarizes the findings:-

Table 2 Guidance and Counselling Services Offered to Orphaned Students

Statement	Yes	No	Total
Information services	6 (85.7%)	1 (14.3%)	13 (100%)
Referral services	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)	13 (100%)
Follow-up services	4 (57.1%)	3 (42.9%)	13 (100%)
Individual counselling services	6 (85.7%)	1 (14.3%)	13 (100%)
Group counselling services	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.6%)	13 (100%)
Psychological counselling services	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)	13 (100%)
Pastoral counselling services	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.6%)	13 (100%)
Appraisal services	2 (42.9%)	5 (57.1%)	13 (100%)
Support group programmes	2 (42.9%)	5 (57.1%)	13 (100%)

As indicated in Table 3, the main forms of services offered to orphaned students in the school by the teacher counsellors are information services and individual counselling services. 85.7% of the orphaned students received these services. This is followed by pastoral counselling services and group counselling services at 71.4%, respectively. 57.1% of orphaned students received follow up services. The table also indicates that some services are not adequately provided in the schools. These include psychological counselling services, referral and appraisal services both at 42.9% and support group programmes at 28.6%. The researcher noted that some services like psychological counselling, referral services, appraisal and support group programmes are not frequently offered. This could have been attributed by the fact that teacher counsellors have not been trained to handle complex services in guidance and counselling. This could lead to maladjustment of orphaned students. To curb this problem, teacher counsellors need to be trained in these areas so as to fully help orphaned students to adjust psychologically and emotionally.

**Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Services Towards Emotional and Psychological Adjustment of Orphaned Students.**

**Students' Adjustment to Loss and Grief**

The researcher looked for signs of loss and grief and summarized findings in table 3

Table 3 Symptoms of loss and grief

Symptoms	Frequency	Percentage
Seeing other people who look like their parents and.	17	13.0
Urge to visit parents' grave.	7	5.4
Poor relationship with peers.	21	16.2
Self-isolation from others.	30	23.1
Being watched by deceased parents.	23	17.7
Suffering from hallucinations	32	24.6
Total	130	100.0

From the table it is clear that some orphaned students reported to have been experiencing symptoms of loss and grief, 30% of the orphaned students reported symptoms such seeing other people, who look like the late parent 5.4% had the urge to visit their late parents' grave, 23.1% reported not to have relating well with peers and 23.1% had the need to isolate oneself from other student's while 17.7% of the orphaned students suffered from the feelings of being watched by their late mothers. 24.6% had the feelings of excessively staying away from people, from places or activities that remind him/her of a late parent and 21.1% suffered the feelings of being different form their fellow students and suffering hallucinations. Worden, (2001) supported this by saying; children who have lost their parents tend to revisit the meaning of their parents loss over and over again at different developmental stages. He proposed that orphaned children should be helped to draw good and bad memories of their deceased parents and share them with others. This aspect can only be achieved through provision of effective guidance and counselling services.

The researcher observed that, provision of effective guidance and counselling services by professionally qualified personnel, was the only way to enable orphaned students to adjust psychologically and emotionally from bereavement. This was also seen in Worden, (1996) who asserted that provision of guidance and counselling services helps the bereaved to bring their grief to a more effective resolution.

Guidance and counselling was found to be very effective in enabling orphaned students to adjust psychologically and emotionally. Provision of effective guidance and counselling services help orphaned students to cope with grief and loss. The researcher analyzed the level of adjustment of the orphaned learners.

Figure 1 indicates the level of adjustment among orphaned learners.

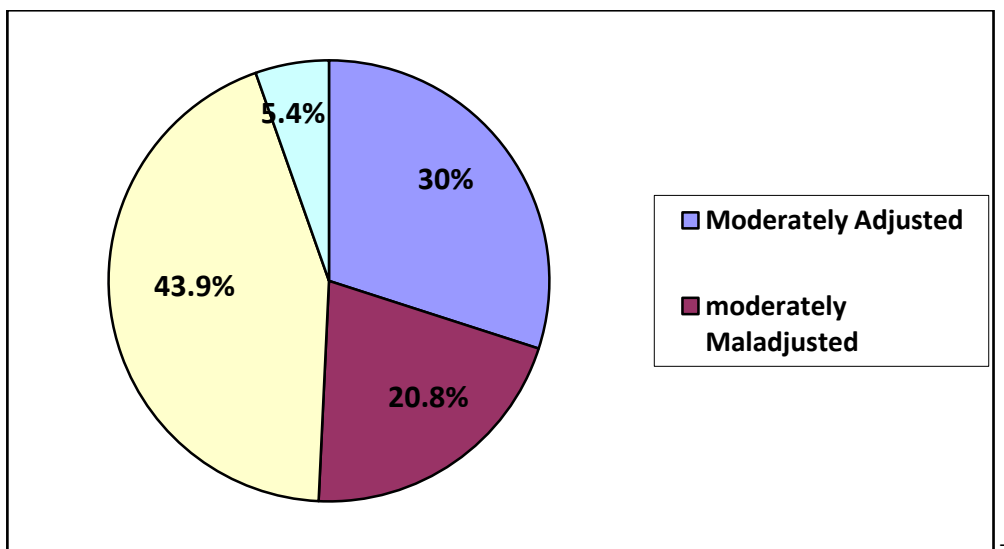


Figure 3. Students' adjustment to loss and grief

From these figure, it is observed that 43% of the orphaned learners reported that they had adjusted to loss and grief, while 30% were moderately adjusted. Only 5.4 % were reported to have been maladjusted. This is an indication that although much more need to be done, guidance and counseling was to a large extent effective towards emotional and psychological adjustment of learners

## **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following were recommended as way forward towards helping orphaned students adjust to loss and grief

- i) There is need to ensure consistency in guidance and counseling services among orphaned learners in order to increase high levels of psychological and emotional adjustment.
- ii) The government should implement grief and loss education in schools so as to equip the affected with knowledge of dealing with grief and loss effectively.
- iii) Teacher counsellors need to be given refresher courses to equip them with the skills and knowledge to help orphaned learners towards emotional and psychological adjustment.

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