

## **The Influence of Guidance and Counseling in Addressing Selected Home challenges of Students in Public Day Secondary Schools in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya**

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**ABSTRACT:** Guidance and Counseling aims at assisting individuals in various aspects of life. In Kenya, the ministry of Education established the department of guidance and counseling to deal with formal areas of counseling which include educational and psychological counseling in which home related challenges of students in day secondary schools can be addressed. The purpose of this study was to find out some home related challenges faced by day school students in secondary schools and how Guidance and Counseling addressed these challenges in Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample of 8 day schools from which 386 students and 34 teachers were randomly selected. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics. The study found out that day secondary school students face several home related challenges and that guidance and counseling offered did not address those challenges. The study recommended that the ministry of education to support the counseling department by employing a teacher whose duty is counseling, thus creating time to counsel many students thus the home challenges of day secondary school students can be addressed.

**Keywords:** Guidance and Counseling, Home Challenges, Day schools, Students

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The guidance and counseling movement began in Europe and USA in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and did not gather momentum until the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Industrialization resulted in social and vocational mobility (Rao, 2003). The guidance movement later led to the growth of counseling psychology (Rao, 2003). Although the principles of guidance have remained the same, the method and focus have evolved over time (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). Modern counseling is a product of educational system which has deep roots in concern for an individual's freedom, rights, dignity and worth of as a human being (Rao, 2003). In Kenya guidance and counseling can be traced back in 1960s. Schools counseling has substantial impacts on students' emotional and personal development (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). Schools counselors with a comprehensive guiding and counseling services help children and adolescents adjust to many challenges that they face both at home and at school. There is need to examine how effective guidance and counseling services is in helping day secondary schools in dealing with their home challenges. Rao (2003) emphasises that a school guidance program may initiate steps to overcome difficulties in learning and help students gain insight into himself and understand his own problems in proper perspectives, thus addressing home challenges faced by day students in secondary schools.

#### **1.1 Background**

In Kenya guidance and counseling can be traced back in 1960s (Rao, 2003). At the end of 1962, the Ministry of Education came up with a plan to offer vocational guidance with the help of career masters in schools. In 1965, the Ministry of Labour produced a booklet called Choosing Career; the book gave information on career selection for secondary students. There was vocational guidance which was geared towards preparing the young people to the world of work. Though very essential, vocational guidance was not adequate in character building of the youth.

Numerous problems which affect students in overall development as they pursue education require effective counseling to be delivered to them (Gladding, 2003). Guidance and counseling is a necessary service in all education and training institutions. Schools counseling has substantial impacts on students' emotional and personal development (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). School counselors with a comprehensive guiding and counseling services help children and adolescents adjust to many challenges that they face both at home and at

school. There was need to examine how effective guidance and counseling services is in helping day secondary schools in dealing with their home challenges. Rao (2002) emphasises that a school guidance program may initiate steps to overcome difficulties in learning and help student gain insight into himself or herself and understand his or her own problems in proper perspectives, thus addressing home challenges faced by day students in secondary schools.

It is well established belief that children of higher and middle level can achieve higher than children from poor backgrounds. The environment the students grow in, their past educational experiences and the way teachers perceive these students can go a long way to influence their achievements. Schools can play an important role in the success and academic achievement of children considering them as capable of achieving instead of failures and setting them up to achieve to the utmost (Kovalic & Olsen, 1998). To take the children away from poverty, they must receive a good education. This in turn leads into more future opportunities for them. Cultural relevance and superior content quality is of great importance. Knowledge of students' culture can help teachers prepare lessons that are effective and challenging. Additionally, instructional and classroom management techniques that work well with poor children can be put in place. The perspective and experiences of the children need to be considered (Goodwin, 2000).

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

A number of secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County are day schools, meaning that the students spend a lot of time at home. It has been observed that these students face several challenges at home which directly affect their personal development and behavior, their self esteem which in turn affect their academic performance. Some of the challenges are cultural issues for example preference of gender as pertaining education, some students are orphans who live on their own or with relatives, the living condition of homes of many students are not conducive for learning. It has been observed that many students also travel long distances to and from school with many having problems with meals and payment of school fees among others. The study intended to investigate the influence of guidance and counseling in addressing these challenges.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study aimed at answering the following questions:

- i) What are some of the home related challenges faced by students in public day secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County?
- ii) Does guidance and counseling offered in public day secondary in Trans-Nzoia county address selected home related challenges of students?

## **II. METHODS**

### **2.1 Participants**

The population was students and teachers in public day secondary school in Trans-Nzoia County of Kenya. There are 132 public day secondary schools, 11290 students and 720 teachers. From these, 8 day schools were selected where 34 teachers and 386 students to constitute the sample were randomly selected. Out of 386 students, 203 (52.6%) were girls and 183 (47.4%) were boys and out of the 34 teachers, 16 (7.1%) were female and 18 (52.9) were male.

### **2.2 Instrument and Data Analysis**

Data was collected using two research instruments, that is questionnaire and interview schedules.

Reliability of the instruments was established using Crombach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and coefficient of 0.72 was established from the questionnaires. Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

## **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **3.1 Home Related Challenges of Students**

The first objective of this study was to establish some home related challenges faced by students in public day secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. As noted by Mwaura (2014), home environments vary in many aspects such as the parents' level of education, economic status, occupational status, religious background, values, interests, parental expectation for their children, and family size etc. which variously affects the students' performance. The findings of the study revealed that many students faced several home challenges. Some of the home challenges are discussed below.

#### **Interference from Members of the Family**

The first challenge that the researcher identified was interference from a member of the family. Day scholars, they spend a lot of time at home. The data was analysed in the Table 1.

**Table 1: Interference from Member of the Family**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	89	23.1
Agree	98	25.4
Undecided	27	7.0
Disagree	83	21.5
Strongly Disagree	89	23.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 shows that 89 (23.1%) of the students strongly agreed and 98 (25.4%) agreed that they experienced interference from a family member. This comprised 48.5% of the total students which is a big proportion considering the fact that home is where they spend a lot of time after school. Other challenges the teachers felt affected students included having alcoholic parents, constant family quarrels or domestic violence, orphaned students who either lived with relatives or alone in rented shacks. In a research by Hayes and Morgan (2011) in Ireland, the findings revealed that without question, family issues were the majority (i.e. 64%) of counseling issues among learners in post-primary schools. These family issues included breakdown and separation, conflict with parents, [absent] father returning, family illness and alcoholism. They further note that these issues can at times get quite complicated. This is in agreement with Shapiro (2014) who says that principals and teachers agree that what is going on at home will impact a student's propensity to learn. The other challenge that the researcher wanted to find if it affected the students was poor lighting system. This was important because the respondents need light to enable them do their assignments and extra work while at home. The results under this question are shown in the Table 2.

**Table 2: Poor Lighting System**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	113	29.3
Agree	104	26.9
Undecided	13	3.4
Disagree	95	24.6
Strongly Disagree	61	15.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 2, 113 (29.3%) strongly agreed and 104 (26.9%) agreed that the lighting system at home was poor. This gives a total of 216 (56.2%) of students felt that lighting systems at home was a challenge. Banta (2003), in his study found out that 57.9% of the students had suffered from poverty, 81.5% had a challenge of acquiring school uniforms, showing that their basic needs were not met by their parents or guardians, thus implying that a need like lighting to facilitate their learning at night could also be a challenge. There is a considerable amount of literature relating to lighting in the classroom (Higgins, 2005) and studies show that poor or inappropriate lighting in schools can adversely affect children's health and their ability to learn (Healthy Schools Network, 2005).

For instance, the Healthy Schools Network, (2005) document a two-year study done in six schools in North Carolina, USA, which compared children attending schools with full-spectrum light with children attending similar schools with conventional lighting conditions. The study found that children who were exposed to full-spectrum lighting became healthier over time. Schneider (2002) also reviewed several studies on optimal lighting levels which had the consensus that appropriate lighting improves test scores, reduces off-task behavior, and plays a significant role in students' achievement. Higgins et al. (2005) also note the most common complaints of inappropriate lighting are headaches, eyestrain and fatigue. According to Dahlan and Eissa (2015), daylight in classrooms has an essential effect on the learning environment. They state that careful introduction of daylight into educational buildings reduced operating costs, improve students' vision and perception, and contribute to students' health, comfort, and productivity.

### **Lack of Reading Materials**

The researcher wanted to find out if the students had access of reading materials while at home. This was because they had books which were availed by the school and because these books were not enough for each student, teachers reported that the students were not able to do the assignments given to them and the results are shown in the Table 3.

**Table 3: Lack of Reading Materials**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	100	25.9
Agree	107	27.7
Undecided	25	6.5
Disagree	96	24.9
Strongly Disagree	58	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The Table 3 shows 100 (25.9%) strongly agreed and 107 (27.7%) agreed that they did not have the relevant materials for learning at home, giving a total of 207 (53.6%) had problems accessing reading materials because they were day scholars. This could be true because the reading materials are available only at school and these materials are not enough for each student to carry home. Banta (2003), in his study that some needs of the students were not met, for example, school uniform 81.6%, school fees 81.5%, implying that the parents and guardians probably were not able to purchase reading materials for the students. He also found out that 57.9% suffered from family neglect which would amount to lack of provision of needs like reading materials. Another study revealed that most students fail to study at home simply because their parents do not care about buying the necessary materials such as paraffin, reading materials and others (Ogur, 2014).

### **Noisy Environment**

The researcher wanted to find out how conducive the home environment was to students in terms of noise. This was because many of the teachers felt that some students lived in rented houses with many occupants, others were living in slums and so on, the results are shown in the Table 4.

**Table 4: Students who lived in Noisy Environments**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	110	28.5
Agree	95	24.6
Undecided	12	3.1
Disagree	99	25.6
Strongly Disagree	70	18.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4 shows that 110 (28.5%) strongly agreed and 95 (24.6%) agreed that they lived in noisy environments accounting for more than half (i.e. 53.1%) of the students living in noisy environments. This could be because some students lived in slums or town outskirts which were noisy, but this was not probed in the study. In a review of research issues relating to the effects of noise on children at school, Shield and Dockrell (2003) argue that it is generally accepted that noise has a detrimental effect upon the learning and attainments of primary school children. They state further: "General effects of chronic noise exposure on children are deficits in sustained attention and visual attention; poorer auditory discrimination and speech perception; poorer memory for tasks that require high processing demands of semantic material; and poorer reading ability and school performance on national standardised tests."

From Shield and Dockrell's (2003) review, it is imperative to note that studies reveal that both chronic and acute exposure to environmental noise may adversely affect children's academic performance. Though this review focused on effects of noise in classrooms, the same results can be applied to the situations at home because noise, whether at home or at school, is a big impediment to learning. Findings from another study also showed that noise from neighbors was negatively influencing the participation of students in public day secondary school education (Ogur, 2014). In fact, noise at home may lead students going to places like video places, and others get exposed to alcohol and such at a stage where they need to read and concentrate in studies.

### **Long Distance Travelled to School**

For students having been day scholars, it means that the students commute daily from their places of residence to school and back. The researcher wanted to find out whether this was a challenge, how far were they commuting daily and what was the mode of transport, the results are shown in the Table 5.

**Table 5: Distance Travelled to School**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	135	35.0
Agree	108	28.0
Undecided	18	4.7
Disagree	71	18.4
Strongly Disagree	54	14.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5 shows that 135 (35%) strongly agreed and 108 (28.0) agreed that they travelled long distance to school. This comprises of 243 (63.0%) of the students indicated that they travelled long distances to get to school. The teacher felt that this was a major challenge because many students would get to school late and tired and also get back to their homes very late. The teachers felt that these students could not concentrate in school because of tiredness due to walking and especially during the rainy season. The students also indicated that the major mode of transport to and from school was by foot.

**Interference from Friends in the Neighborhood**

Day scholars usually interact with friends in their places of residence, who are not necessarily students. The researcher wanted to find out if these friends interfere with the respondents considering that some of their friends may not be students and therefore their goals and aspirations are different especially if their friends were school dropout within the slums, towns, or villages. Table 6 shows the results of the findings.

**Table 6: Interference from Friends in the Neighborhood**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
SA	65	16.8
A	103	26.7
U	39	10.1
D	104	26.9
SD	75	19.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The Table 6 shows that 65 (16.8%) of the students strongly agreed and 103 (26.7%) agreed that they had friends at home who were not necessarily students and probably of some influence to them, thus 168 (43.5%) students in total felt that their friends in the neighborhood were a source of interference to them. This is because these students were interacting with many of their friends who dropped out of school, and for those living in slums these friends led them to other activities not geared to school work, which is in agreement with what Chada, (2007), that natural learning determines a person’s character, identity, values and morals, personality, thinking skills, and overall perspective and development as a human being. Natural learning is the learning people do voluntarily to satisfy their curiosity to increase their awareness and understanding and to develop their scales and abilities. Coon, (2009), says that there is a fascinating interplay between our own behavior and that of the people around us. Also Banta (2003) in identifying challenges of students in public day secondary schools found out that 73.6% of the students would miss school to attend funeral and ceremonies, 68% agreed that the friends in the neighborhood had a great influence on them. This shows that many students in public day students suffer a great influence from the friends in the neighborhood.

**Numerous Duties at Home**

The students in day schools are usually assigned some duties to do at home by the parents or guardians some before and after school. To some students, these duties were many that they took a lot of time and energy to accomplish them. The researcher wanted to find out how challenging this was; the results are shown in the Table 7.

**Table 7: Numerous Duties at Home**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	99	25.6
Agree	108	27.6
Undecided	36	9.3
Disagree	92	23.8

Strongly Disagree	51	13.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 7 shows that 99 (25.6%) of the strongly agreed and 108 (27.6%) agreed that they had a lot of duties to attend to while at home. This constitutes to slightly over half (i.e. 53.2%) of students who felt that the home duties assigned to them was so much thereby interfering with their studies. The teachers felt that many students were not able to finish their assignment and do personal reading because of the many duties assigned to them thereby precluding the students from having quality time for studies because of fatigue. This is similar to findings by Mwaura (2014) whose study on home-based factors influencing performance of public day secondary school students in Lari District, Kiambu, revealed that 57% of the teachers agreed that home chores deters students from concentrating on their school work thereby negatively affecting their education. Mwaura (2014) and Ogur’s (2014) studies further revealed that a high proportion of day school learners’ time was spent on home chores in comparison to academics. This, according to Ogur (2014), could partly be attributed to the poverty level at home, which could be a factor influencing the participation of students in day secondary education because most of students are engaged in domestic activities to supplement family income. This is reinforced by Murage (2010) in her study showed that the majority (i.e. 80%) of students lived with their parents, 13.8% with the relative and 6.25% with friends or alone. She also argues that many who live with relatives do so mainly to help them with household chores.

### 3.2 The Influences of Guidance and Counseling in addressing Home Related Challenges

The forth objective was to find out whether the guidance and counseling offered in public day secondary school addressed some selected home challenges. Both categories of respondents – teachers and students – felt that guidance and counseling did not address many of the home challenges. Table 8 shows students’ view on whether guidance and counseling offered in their schools addressed selected home related challenges; F is the frequency of students on various responses.

**Table 8: How Guidance and Counseling Addressed the Selected Home Related Challenges**

Some Home Related Challenges	Responses				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
	F	F	F	F	F
My family background and my up bringing					
Type of family I come from	66	123	32	92	73
The kind of house I live	33	98	53	121	80
Provision of basic needs	41	88	49	126	82
My fears and anxieties	60	111	46	119	50
My relationship with parents or guardians	72	142	31	92	49
Understanding my change in behaviour	81	162	19	80	42
<b>Mean</b>	<b>58.8</b>	<b>120.7</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>105.0</b>	<b>62.7</b>

From the Table 8, considering the mean, 58.8 (15.3%) of the students strongly agreed, 120.7 (31.3%) agreed, 38.3 (9.8%) were undecided, 105.0 (27.2) disagreed and 62.5 (16.3%) strongly disagreed. This shows that 46.6% of the students agreed that the Guidance and Counseling programs address problems they face at home while 39.5% of the students did not agree. A very big percentage that is 27.2% was undecided showing that many students probably may not even be aware and so these challenges are not properly catered for. Kamra and Hum (2008) stated that family being the first and major agency of socialisation has great influence and bearing on the development of the child. It has been shown that most of the children who are successful or great achievers and well adjusted come from the families where sustaining wholesome relationships exist. The home environment sets the pattern for the Childs’ attitude towards people and society, aids intellectual growth in the child and supports his aspirations and achievements. Also Kamote (2010), found that 58.2% of the teachers felt that there was no time in the school time table allocated for counseling and this could be a major reason why counseling does not address the home challenges.

## IV. CONCLUSION

The students in public day secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia county face these home challenges, which includes interference from a member of the family, poor lighting system, lack of reading materials, a lot of work at home after school, interference from friends in the neighborhood, many travel long distances to and from school, challenge in payment of school fees showing that many students in public day schools belong to poor families or families which are not financially stable. Guidance and counseling offered does not address the

home challenges of students in public day secondary schools in Trans-Nzoia County. The teachers have no training in guidance and counseling. The teacher counselors also felt that they have a lot of work for apart from being counselors they also are classroom teachers and have other responsibilities. The time also they have with students is little because there are other programs running in school, and by evening they are on their way home.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ministry of Education should employ a teacher as guidance and counseling teacher so that all he or she does is counseling, that means there will be more time to listen and counsel students, and this would strengthen department and thus the teacher would be able to identify the home related challenges faced by students in day secondary schools. The counseling programs in the schools should not only be educational or social, but should address home related challenges the students face for being day scholars.

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