

# **Influence of Peer Counseling Services on Student Discipline In Public Secondary Schools in Homabay Sub County, Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

From the inception of peer counseling, it has aimed at helping the students to know their skills, interests, personality and capacity to encounter problems faced by them so as to help them develop positive behavior. However, schools in Homabay Sub- County have continued to experience indiscipline cases such as bullying, theft, vandalism, unrest, arson attacks, drug and substance abuse, risky sexual behavior and truancy among others cases. Statistics showed that Homabay County became second in the entire Country of teenage pregnancy with 33% of girls getting pregnant at a tender age, several students had also engaged in arson attacks in various Secondary Schools in Homabay Sub-County between the years 2016, to 2017, to 2018, to 2019 to 2020. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of peer counseling services on student discipline in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub-County. The objectives of the study were to; establish the influence of provision of peer counseling services on student discipline in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub - County. The study adopted Ex-post Facto research design. Target population of 1279 made up of; deputy principals, teacher counselors and students from 30 secondary schools was used through saturated sampling technique was used to obtain the sample. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data, while qualitative data were collected using interview schedules. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means T-Tests and regression analysis. Qualitative data were transcribed and reported thematically. On testing the hypothesis, it was revealed that, the Sig. (2- tailed)  $p = 0.001$ . When compared to  $\alpha = .05$  it showed that the  $p < 0.05$ . It was then concluded that provision of peer counseling services have a significant influence on student discipline in public secondary schools in Homa Bay Sub-County. The study therefore recommended that, teacher counsellors should continuously be involved and be given a major role to play during peer counseling services. There should be more allocation of space on the notice board, which should be used for communicating counselling issues concerning the peer. The findings of this study may be significant to the students, Teachers, Non-Governmental Organizations, among other education stakeholders.

Key words: Influence; Peer counseling; Discipline; Services; Students;

**Research Area:** Counseling Psychology

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## **I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Peer counseling had been established in Kenyan secondary schools among other counseling services being offered to students. This emanates from the fact that it has the potential to impact students' behavior positively, (Njeri K. John, 2020). Peer counseling reinforces the value of discussing problems and difficulties experienced by the students amicably without resulting into violence that is, talk it out rather than act it out. This creates ownership amongst the students of the need to maintain peace by recognizing the peers' role in problem-solving. On the same note, it is generally believed that benefits from the use of peer counselors include: expanded services and reduced costs because professionals are freed for other duties; traditional counseling service enhanced by the unique abilities and skills of peers; the opportunity to gain special insight into the needs and problems of the students; and a bridge for the gap between professionals and the diverse student body, John, Joseph, Jane, Pamela and Peter (2016).

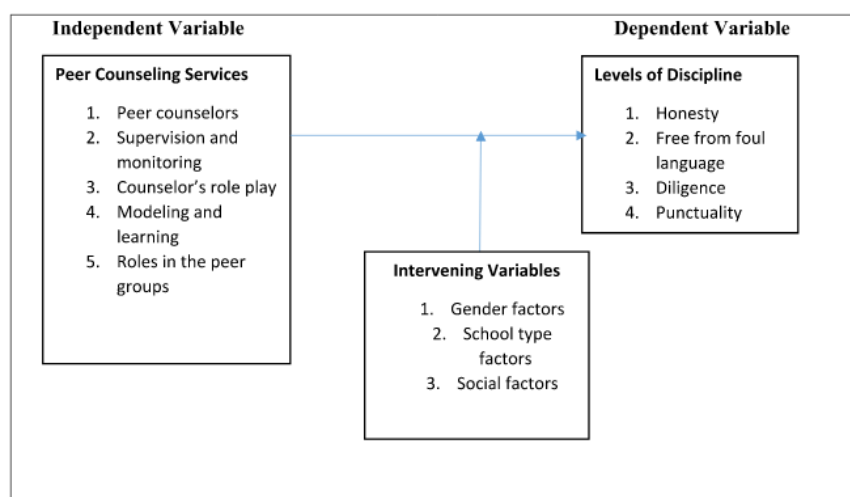
Despite various recommendations such as The Report of the Task Force on Student Discipline and Unrest (Republic of Kenya, 2001) which recognizes the use of peer counseling in the management of student discipline in schools due to its proactive approach; and Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 which also provides general guidelines on Guidance and Counseling services in schools. The use of peer counseling services in secondary school institutions has been observed to be still weak. Whereas research pertaining school unrest in

Kenyan high schools has been widely done, the influence of peer counseling on student discipline have not been investigated exhaustively. It is therefore important to determine and establish the influence of peer counseling on student discipline and thus learn what gaps in knowledge this study will address, (Sarah Ngotho, 2013). Different guidance and counseling services are deemed to have different influence on the intended student's behavior. Despite highly recommended programmes that have been acknowledged to be more effective in guidance and counseling; their influence on student discipline have not been effectively rolled out in public secondary schools with various reasons given for the lack of their implementation. Therefore the study sought to establish influence of peer counseling on student discipline in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub County, Kenya.

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of peer counseling services on student discipline in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub-County, Homabay County, Kenya. This study would be important to school principals, school Heads of Departments, teachers, students, Education officers, the Ministry of Education, parents and the Non-Governmental Organizations among others.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study was based on the conceptual framework that believed that peer counseling had a direct influence on assisting students to understand their self-potential or giving them the right direction so as to aid appropriate adjustment in their behavior. As indicated in figure 1



**Figure 1: Influence of Peer Counseling Services on Student Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Homabay Sub-County, Kenya**

Peer counseling services when carefully carried out and effectively provided, such as; allocation of peer counseling groups, assigning peer counselors among students, effective role play by teacher counselor and peer counselors during guidance and counseling period, encouraging students to learn through modeling the behavior, assigning students roles within the peer counseling groups and supervision and monitoring of the student's progress in school should enhance its influenced through its' roles such as; knowing when to seek help and information from the peer counselors and teacher counselors, able to handle challenges and hardships and difficulty successions which translated to increase in student discipline, where the students would be cable of showing honesty and other traits. On the contrary, if peer counselors in a given school are not aware of their role play, are not good role model to their fellows and are lacking monitoring tools, then the students will develop negative behavior such as, disrespect, truant, bullying, being late for classes among others which are forms of indiscipline in a school set up. The intervening variables of gender, school type and social factors were taken into account during the study.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted ex-post facto research design. Ex-post facto research is a method of eliciting possible antecedents of events, which have happened and cannot, because of this fact, be engineered or manipulated by the researcher (Cohan, 1986). In this study, two data collection instruments were used: interview schedule for the deputy principals and questionnaire for the teacher counselors and the students. The target population of the study was 1279 participants that included deputy principals, teacher counselors and students in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub County. The unit of analysis were the students who are the primary receiver of guidance and counseling services in secondary schools. Saturated sampling technique was used in the

first stage of sampling, which involved schools, followed by multistage sampling. The final sample size was determined using Fisher’s formula (Fisher, 1930), which was 180 students and 30 teacher counselors. A pilot study involving 5 schools was carried out in Siaya County.

The data collected was analyzed by use of frequency counts, means, percentages, t-Tests and regression analysis. This was done through analyzing the responses on Likert scale through getting percentage response score on each item. Hypothesis were tested by use of paired t-test. The t- test was used to determine whether to reject or accept the null hypothesis at  $P \leq 0.05$  as noted Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003). In cases where the Null hypothesis was rejected the researcher proceeded further to perform a regression analysis to establish the degree of predictability influence.. Qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed then reported as thematically in corroboration with the quantitative data.

### III. FINDINGS

This section was guided the objective of the study, which was to establish the influence of provision of counseling services on student discipline in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub-County. The results were as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Teacher Counselors and Students’ Response on Provision of Peer Counselling Services in Public Secondary Schools in Homabay Sub-County**

Provision of Peer Counseling Services	Respondents				
	Students ‘Response		Teacher Counselors Response		
	Ratings	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very Low Provision	1	7	3.9%	0	0%
Low Provision	2	29	16.1%	5	16.7%
Moderate Provision	3	77	42.8%	9	63.3%
High Provision	4	59	32.8%	6	20.0%
Very High Provision	5	8	4.4%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>180</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 indicated that majority of students (42.8%) reported that provision of peer counselling services were at moderate level rated at 3 out of 5. They were followed by 32.8% who reported that this provision was at high level rated at 4 out of 5. This showed that there were a considerably satisfactory provision of peer counselling services in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub-County. This response was compared to teacher counselors’ and the results were that, majority of teacher counselors (63.3%) reported that provision of peer counselling services were at moderate level rated at 3. They were followed by (20.0%) who reported that this provision was at high level rated at 4. This showed that teacher counselors’ response were considerably in agreement with those of the students’. In both cases there was considerably a satisfactory provision of peer counselling services in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub-County.

In order to determine the level of discipline, the researcher studied indiscipline occurrences in schools. Indiscipline was used because of its inverse relationship with discipline. That is, high rating of indiscipline occurrences was an indicator of low rating on level of discipline. Increased cases of indiscipline could be a pointer of inadequate or lack of proper counseling services by teachers or rejection of counseling services by students. Therefore it qualified to be an important indicator in the study. The study findings were as indicated in table 2.

**Table 2: Teacher Counselors and Students’ Response on Occurrence of Indiscipline Cases in Public Secondary Schools in Homabay Sub-County**

Occurrence of Indiscipline Cases	Responses				
	Students		Teacher Counselors		
	Ratings	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very High Occurrence	5	4	2.2%	1	3.3%
High Occurrence	4	10	5.6%	3	10.0%
Moderate Occurrence	3	24	13.3%	5	16.7%
Low Occurrence	2	126	70.0%	19	63.3%
Very Low Occurrence	1	16	8.9%	2	6.6%
<b>Total</b>		<b>180</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2, indicated that majority of students (70%) reported that there was low occurrence of indiscipline cases rated at 2 out of 5 in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub-County. This was followed at a distance by those who reported that, there was moderate occurrence at (13.3%) rated at 3 out of 5. Low indiscipline cases were interpreted to mean that; there was satisfactorily higher level of discipline in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub-County. Similarly, this response was compared to those of teacher counselors and it was observed that, majority of teacher counselors (63.3%) reported low occurrence of indiscipline cases. This was also followed at a distance by those who reported that, there was moderate occurrence at (16.7%). This showed that teacher counselors' response were considerably in agreement with those of the students'. In both cases there was low occurrence of indiscipline cases in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub-County. The results showed that student discipline level was high in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub-County.

Research hypothesis tested under this objective was;  $H_0$ : Provision of peer counseling services have no statistical significant influence on student discipline in public secondary schools in Homabay Sub-County. The study hypothesis was tested by use of paired sample t-test at .05 alpha level of significance. The purpose of the test was to determine whether there was significant influence between paired observations. The results were as indicated in table 3.

**Paired Sample Test on Influence of Provision of Peer Counselling Services on Student Discipline as Reported by Students and Teacher Counselors**

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Students' Response	Mean Score of provision of Peer Counseling Services - Mean score on discipline	-.6943	1.0782	.0804	-.8529	-.5357	-8.639	179	.001
	Mean Score of provision of Peer Counseling Services - Mean score on discipline	-.6067					-3.813	29	.001
Teacher Counselors' Response	Mean Score of provision of Peer Counseling Services - Mean score on discipline		.8714	.1591	-.9320	-.2813			

Table 3 showed that, the Sig. (2- tailed)  $p = 0.001$  when compared to  $\alpha = .05$  it was revealed that the  $p < 0.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, from the students' response. Similarly, the teacher counselors' response showed that the Sig. (2- tailed)  $p = 0.001$  when compared to  $\alpha = .05$  it was revealed that  $p < 0.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected as well. It was therefore concluded that; both students and teacher counselors agreed that, as the provision of peer counselling services increase so does the level of student discipline.

The study performed regression analysis to determine the predictability, strength and character of the relationship between dependent variable (Score of discipline denoted by Y) and independent variables (score on provision of peer counseling services denoted by X). The regression model used was simple linear regression:  $Y = a + bX + u$ . The findings were presented as linear approximation shown in table 4.

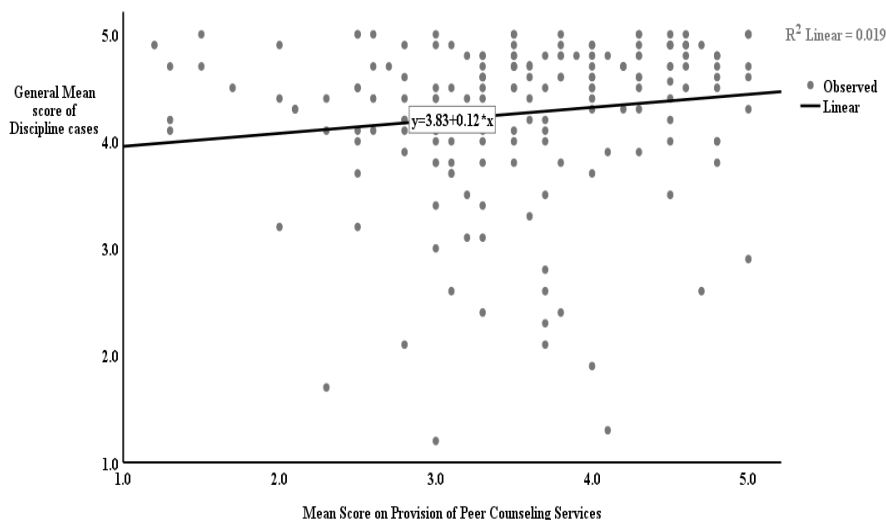
**Table 4 a: Model Summary and Parameter Estimates of Score on provision peer Counselling Services and Discipline from students' response**

Model Summary and Parameter Estimates								
(Dependent Variable: Mean score of discipline)								
		Model Summary				Parameter Estimates		
Equation	R Square	F	df1	df2	Sig.	Constant	b1	
Linear	.019	3.479	1	178	.064	3.832	.121	

(The independent variable is Mean Score on provision of peer counseling services.)

Table 4a indicated that model summary of score on provision of peer counselling services and discipline cases had  $R^2$  of .019 for students. Similarly, it showed the parameter estimates of 3.832 as constant and .121 as slope in linear regression. This result was compared to teacher counselors' response as indicated in Table 16b, while the graph drawn was indicated in figure 5.

When the graph was drawn the model in figure 2 was obtained.



**Figure 2: Regression Model and Parameter Estimates of Score on Provision of Peer Counselling Services and Discipline as Stated by Students**

Figure 2 showed a linear graph of score on peer counselling services and discipline cases for the students' response. From the graph it was deduced that as peer counselling services increase so do discipline cases with a slope (change) of 0.12 and  $R^2$  value of .019. The  $R^2$  value of .019 showed that there was a relatively low proportion of variance in dependent variable that can be used to predict independent variable. This result was compared to teacher counselors' response as indicated in table 4b.

**Table 4b:**

**Model Summary and Parameter Estimates of Score on provision of Peer Counselling Services and Discipline Cases from Teacher Counselors' response**

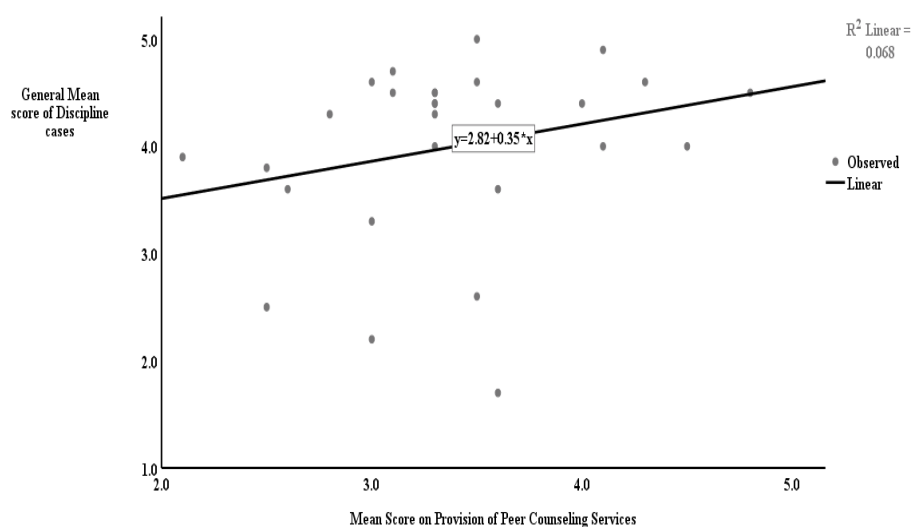
**Model Summary and Parameter Estimates**

(Dependent Variable: Mean score of discipline)

Equation	R Square	Model Summary				Sig.	Parameter Estimates	
		F	df1	df2	Constant		b1	
Linear	.068	2.038	1	28	.164	2.817	.348	

(The independent variable is Mean score on provision of peer counseling services.)

Table 4b indicated that model summary of score of provision of peer counselling services and discipline cases had  $R^2$  of .068 for teacher counselors. Similarly, it showed the parameter estimates of 2.817 as constant and .348 as slope in linear regression. When the graph was drawn the model in figure 3 was obtained.



**Figure 3: Regression Model and Parameter Estimates of Score on Provision of Peer Counselling Services and Discipline as Stated by Teacher counselors**

Figure 3 showed a linear graph of score of peer counselling services and discipline cases as stated by teacher counsellors.  $R^2$  value of .068 showed that there were a relatively high proportion of variance in dependent variable that can be used to predict independent variable. However, the slope for teacher counsellors' is steeper (0.35) meaning that the change of peer counselling per discipline case is greater compared to those reported by students at (0.12). This meant that teacher counsellors proposed a stronger relationship between peer counselling services and discipline cases. The Teacher counsellors' response tend to perfectly collaborate with those of the students. The findings agree that peer counselling services can be used to predict discipline cases. It was concluded that peer counselling services has a significant influence on student discipline in public secondary schools in Homa Bay sub-county

The above findings were also affirmed from deputy principals' response on influence of provision of peer counseling services on student discipline, who in their interview stated that; as Deputy Principals they were in touched with how supervision and monitoring is done during peer counselling services. In addition, they stated that, in most of the schools, new students were allocated groups within the peer. Though some particular schools also, adopted school mothers/ fathers who took the roles of peer counsellor to the new students.

These results were in agreement with the studies; by The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE, 2014), that argued that, peer counseling is successful in reducing drug and substance abuse as well as risky sexual behavior. The KIE further observed that, although peer counseling is a recent phenomenon in Kenyan schools, it is rapidly gaining momentum and therefore an important alternative tool in enhancing positive behavior change and academic achievement among students. The KIE, (2014) showed that peer counseling contributes to an environment conducive for learning hence discipline.

The findings also agreed with a study by (Chen, 2009) on a counseling model for self-relation coordination for Chinese clients with interpersonal conflicts that sought to help clients experiencing conflict between personal interest and social harmony to develop a balanced psychosocial homeostasis by coordinating self and related others. In his study, he asserted that peer support occurs when people provide knowledge, experience and practical help to each other and is sure way of helping students in their adjustments there by influencing their discipline.

A study by Bururia, Marangu and Nyaga, (2014) on contribution of peer counseling to student behavior in secondary schools in Maara Sub County, Kenya, also agreed with findings of this study when they revealed that, peer counselors are academically above average making them effective academic tutors. It was also found that peer counselors are further more established in many schools giving them the opportunity to model good behavior.

Ngumi, (2013) study on the influence of peer counseling on students' behavior change in Secondary school in Nakuru District, that sought to examine the status of peer counseling in school also supported the findings in the current study when it revealed that peer counseling influences students' academic performance, a

good performing students tend to take most of his or her time in books rather than engaging in indiscipline cases.

In addition, these findings were in agreement with a study by (Osodo, Raburu & Aloka, 2016) on the role of peer counseling in promoting discipline among students in public school in Ugunja Sub- County, which revealed that peer counseling has a significant role in promoting discipline among students in public schools. The study further recommended that peer counselors should be motivated in order for them to perform optimally.

In another study by Mudis, (2015) that sought to assess the role of peer counseling on the relationship between prefects and the students' body in public schools in Migori District. The study also supported these findings when it revealed that, peer counseling is beneficial in nurturing healthy relationship between prefects and the students' body. The study recommended that guidance and counseling department should be more vibrant in enhancing peer counseling in their schools and addressing issues in a timely manner in secondary schools in Kenya.

All these studies therefore, supported that, peer counseling has been successful in reducing drug and substance abuse as well as risky sexual behavior, peer counselors are further more established in many schools giving them opportunity to model good behavior and that peer counseling has a significant role in promoting discipline among students in public schools respectively.

This study therefore recommended that school administrations should continue strengthening teacher counselors, peer counselors to participate in enter-school meeting (especially schools with high levels of discipline) mentioned the incorporation of them in their meetings. There should be allocation of more space, notice boards, which should be used for communicating counselling issues concerning the peer. Peer counselors should continuously be provided with a room within the guidance and counselling department where they organized, assign and keep the counseling peer session records within department of guidance and counseling so as to continue lowering the occurrences of indiscipline cases to achieve greater positive influence in student discipline within the public secondary schools in Homabay Sub county.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The study established that peer counseling services do influence student discipline, from the interview findings, it emerged that peer should continuously be given to new students so that they get right direction because they shall have received first-hand information from the horse mouth. Peer counsellors should often participate in enter-school meeting (especially schools with high levels of discipline mentioned the incorporation of them in their meetings. There should be more allocation of space on the notice board, which should be used for communicating counselling issues concerning the peer. Peer counselors should be provided with a room within the guidance and counselling department where they organized, assign and keep the counseling peer session records. In addition, peer counselling needs to be sub-divided to enable easy control of members. The peer counsellors should be enlightened to counsel and encourage the weak ones within peer groups. Peer counsellors should be taken to bench mark so as to improve on ideas they should also be provided with relevant materials to be used during peer counselling.

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