

# Effectiveness of School Counselling Services in Mitigating Bullying Among Secondary School Students in Nyandarua, Kenya

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**Abstract:** There is an increasing concern on cases of bullying among students which if not mitigated could impact negatively to individual students as well as with their colleagues. School counseling plays an important role by impacting student's behaviour. This paper investigated the effectiveness of counseling services in mitigating bullying among secondary school students in Nyandarua North Sub-County. The independent variable was the counseling services while the dependent variable was the mitigation of bullying that includes drug abuse, truancy and bullying. The study applied cross sectional survey research design that embraced both quantitative research approach using students' questionnaires and qualitative approach using counseling teachers' interview schedules. Multistage sampling comprising of stratification (20 schools), simple random sample (400 students) and purposive sample (20 counseling teachers) techniques were used. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency, percentage and mean with assistance of SPSS (Version 22). It was established that counselling services in schools is done to a little extent. The levels of bullying were rampant. The inferential statistics both correlation and Chi-Square revealed that counselling services positively affects the mitigation of the bullying significantly at 5 % levels of significance. The study recommends that schools should embrace of counselling services as the remedy for bullying in secondary schools.

**Keywords:** School Counselling Services, Mitigating Bullying and Students Behaviour.

## I. INTRODUCTION

There is growing concern globally on bullying in schools as it has negative effect on the general climate of schooling and the right of a student in attending school safely, free of fear (Banks, 1997). A repeated harassment, by physical or psychological, to a person of less power, by a person with more power or a group is recognized as bullying, the main ingredient is that of power imbalance making it possible for the ill treatment of a victim (Rigby, 1997; Smith & Brain, 2000). It is made up of such direct behaviours as taunting, threatening, teasing, hitting and stealing, originated by one or a group of students towards the victim, in addition to indirect behaviour, which causes the victim to become anti-social through intentional exclusion (Schreck, Miller, & Gibson, 2003). Researchers have confirmed that in approximation, 15% of students either face regular bullying or are architects of bullying behaviour (Wolke & Samara, 2004). The most known form of violence in society is bullying; an average of 15 – 30 percent of students in the US are bullies or victims of bullying while in Australia, the prevalence stands at 15-20 percent (Skrzypiec, Slee, Murray-Harvey, & Pereira, 2011). For boys in frequent cases participate in the behavior of bullying and are prone of being victims of bullying compared to girls, even though this deviation goes down when indirect aggression is considered. Despite the fact that boys naturally are engaging in bullying methods that are direct, bully girls are at a higher chance of utilizing strategies that are very delicate and indirect, like the spread of rumours and enforcement of social isolation (Ahmad & Smith, 1994).

In Kenya, the famous form of bullying had been the subtle type (Poipoi, Agak, & Kabuka, 2010). This has been a long-term behavior rooted from 1970, mainly in boys' schools. In this schools, students who suffered from bullying were exposed to torture of mental kind by being forced to respond to several questions, provide money, shaping their mouths in a funny way by moving jaws apart and sideways in accordance with the instructions from a bully's palms while

singing obscene songs. On the other hand, in girls' schools, minimum violence was reported and bullying was primarily in the form of calling names, taunting and threats. As a result, it is still hard in proving that someone was bullied (involving rape), exception is where a bit of force of physical kind visually was used. Undeniably, violence has ended in many consequences of dire nature on students' social and academic endeavor. Being bullied increases isolation on some students since their peers are not ready to lose status through by association, with their risks of being bullied. Approximately 19% of truants had begun missing school as a result of bullying and had continued to miss school for this same reason (Koo, 2007).

Ultimately, a person who faces this form of violence goes through despair and low esteem. Quite a number of secondary schools had grieved from strikes, in most cases placing head teachers on the spot light. For instance, in 1991, male students of a mixed high school attacked the dormitory where girls rest and engaged in rape of more than 70 girls, leading to 19 female students losing their lives at an early age of 15. In 1999 an incident happened where a group of male learners imprisoned 4 prefects in their cubicles during the night, dousing them in petrol which killed them at instant. The worst calamity happened in 2001 in which students were burnt to death totaling 68 in number while some got injuries after their dormitory was set ablaze by two boys who used petrol to bomb the school (Cooper, 2014). A number of reasons were raised by stakeholders at different levels concerning the root causes of school riots. Included were: curriculum overloading, tyrannical school administration, abusing of drug and substance, living conditions that are poor in schools, excessively giving corporal punishment, lack of guidance and counseling service that is effective in schools, being pressured to excel academically, abandonment of parental responsibility, board of governors which is not competent, culture of impunity in the society and adolescence identity crisis and mass media campaigns.

The needs of humans call for inventions that are new. While guidance and counseling tend to focus on the development of career, issue of socio-economic and which are contemporary including drugs, lack of employment, families that are not stable and truancy have contributed to incorporating of guidance and counseling profession in secondary schools. The reason being that guidance and counseling is safer in its application for development of children, their behavior notwithstanding holistically. With corporal punishment as the only means of dealing with perpetrators of the maladaptive behaviours and other related indiscipline cases among students, it was witnessed in the country an upsurge of disorders within secondary schools, of violent and destructive nature in some instances leading to extreme events like burns of dormitories with own properties and students still inside. Guidance and counseling has a significant role in the management of students' behaviour and corrections in schools. Counseling can apply both as a curative measure in looking at school discipline and in averting and/ or correcting lack of discipline in students (Karangu&Muola, 2011).

Guidance and counseling ought to be given in a holistic manner within secondary schools. Guidance of Vocational nature has information regarding job opportunities and influences in the job market like unemployment, information technology and international relations. The purpose of guiding vocationally includes having an expanding function, assisting in talent placement where it is required. By considering education guidance, a student will have better information regarding the subject of study and choice of subject; and that for success in an individual's academic, needs learners to take an additional mile pertaining their studies (Karangu&Muola, 2011).

The type of learning provided to students has specific significance on youths with less exposure plus limit in understanding of the world in which Parents are working, tutors and society at large are viewing and broadcasting a remarkable reduction in the level of discipline and behaviour that is good in secondary school students. In a majority of these students there is the general lack of respect, courtesy, decency, self-control, and social protocol. This poses values like lacking respect for the authority, promiscuous behavior, abusing of drugs, and living styles that seem carefree. Guidance provides the learner within a new schooling environment or in a higher level institution of learning a way of coping with the new environment. Help comes to learners for developing a better understanding of who they are hence make them appreciate their roots. Students come to know about self-awareness, pressure from peers, relations, differences in persona, manners and social decorum, responsibility and social roles, intrapersonal and interpersonal resolving of conflicts. Through personal and social guidance, a pupil is assisted in overcoming the lack of discipline as a search for 'freedom'. The feeling of not being fulfilled, lack of constructive freedom plus frustration is the cause of students lacking discipline in secondary school (Lieberman, 2004).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Secondary schools consist of learners at teenage stage of life where they are in the process of developing their characters as well as building the foundation for their future. Most teenagers are experimental in trying out new stuff and picking strange behaviour without rationality. Some of the behaviours, for instance drug abuse, bullying and truancy are

considered to be maladaptive since they neither acceptable in the society nor in the school. These behaviours are antisocial as they are seen to affect the capability of a person to function effectively with others as member of society as they do not provide room for the person to meet his or her own needs and ultimately having negative effect in the wellbeing of other persons (Ngesu, Ndiku, & Masese, 2008; Onderi&Makori, 2013). Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) acknowledges the effectiveness of counselling services in curbing maladaptive behaviours in secondary schools. However, previous studies show that there are many challenges facing its implementation, such as, untrained personnel, lack of time and counseling rooms which need to be addressed (Karangu&Muola, 2011). There is no adequate literature on the prevalence and causes of bullying, truancy and abusing of drugs in Kenyan secondary schools, specifically in Nyandarua North Sub-County and how they can be mitigated through school counseling. It is against this back drop that the study was carried out to investigate the effectiveness of counseling services in mitigating bullying among secondary school students in the Sub-County of Nyandarua North.

### **1.3 Research Question**

What is the effectiveness of counseling in mitigating bullying among secondary school students in Nyandarua North Sub-County?

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The section looks at theories as well as empirical findings that connect to the research.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was anchored on the Two-Factor theory that highlights how people are triggered to change how they behave. Learning a new behavior does not require rehearsals, neither overt responses, nor reinforcement. It is known before it is performed. Engle & Kane (2004) quoting Albert Bandura and Mowrer (1960) describes the two-factor theory to have focus on the interplay of classical and operational likelihoods, and on this basis explaining avoidance conditioning. Mowrer had a belief that under some conditions, there always comes the need to exceed boundaries of the visible in analyzing the data that are not observable directly for the reason that environmental stimuli do not activate the overt behavior directly, but performed through mediators which are thoughts and emotions. In contradiction to visible behavior, thoughts and emotions have no direct observation and measurement. There is the possibility of assuming them only on the basis of maladaptive behavior observations. Consequently, emotions and thoughts are termed as covert behavior or covert responses. They work using the same principles as overt behavior.

Based on the Classical Conditioning (CC) principles, an individual is enlightened on the consequences of a situation, for this matter the maladaptive behaviour for the case of students. This conditioned fear is called anxiety. Counseling services here is a warning stimulus which can be considered to be Unconditioned Stimulus (US), and evoked emotional response of fear or anxiety represents Unconditioned Reaction (UR). Several counseling engagements, triggers self-consciousness among students. In this case a Conditioned Stimulus (CS) evoked an emotional response of fear. Based on the Avoidance Conditioning (AC) principles, students learn to avoid a source of fear, maladaptive behaviour whose consequences are students informed about. To avoid consequences, they avoid the maladaptive behaviours. The theory is significant for the study as the counseling services which is the independent variables is adopted as the warning stimulus as they trigger the students' consciousness while the maladaptive behaviours can be assumed to be the response described by the theory as conditioned fear called anxiety.

### **Empirical Literature**

In Kenya, the famous form of bullying had been the subtle type (Poipoi, Agak, & Kabuka, 2010). This has been a long-term behavior rooted from 1970, mainly in boys' schools. In this schools, students who suffered from bullying were exposed to torture of mental kind by being forced to respond to several questions, provide money, shaping their mouths in a funny way by moving jaws apart and sideways in accordance with the instructions from a bully's palms while singing obscene songs. On the other hand, in girls' schools, minimum violence was reported and bullying was primarily in the form of calling names, taunting and threats. As a result, it is still hard in proving that someone was bullied, exception is where a bit of force of physical kind visually was used. Undeniably, violence has ended in many consequences of dire nature on students' social and academic endeavor. Being bullied increases isolation on some students since their peers are not ready to lose status through by association, with their risks of being bullied. Approximately 19% of truants had begun missing school as a result of bullying and had continued to miss school for this same reason which if not mitigated leads to dropping out (Koo, 2007).

Ultimately, a person who faces violence as a result of bullying goes through despair and low esteem. Quite a number of secondary schools had grieved from strikes, in most cases placing head teachers on the spot light. For instance, in 1991,

male students of a mixed high school attacked the dormitory where girls board and sexually violated more than 70 girls, leading to 19 female students losing their lives at a tender age as young as 15 years. In 1999 an incident happened where a group of male students locked 4 prefects in their cubicles during the night, dousing them in petrol which killed them instantly. The worst calamity happened in 2001 in which a total of 68 students were burnt to death while some got injuries after their dormitory was set ablaze by two boys who used petrol to bomb (Cooper, 2014). A number of reasons were raised by stakeholders at different levels concerning the root causes of school riots which included; curriculum overloading, autocratic school administration, abusing of drug and substance, poor living conditions in boarding schools, excessive administration of corporal punishment, lack of counselling services that is effective in schools, being pressured to excel academically, abandoning of parental responsibility, board of governors which is not competent and considerate, culture of impunity in the society and adolescence identity crisis as well as mass media campaigns.

## The Conceptual Framework

This section presents conceptual framework that shows the hypothetical relationship between variables under study.



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: researcher (2022

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Research Design.

Cross sectional survey research design was used to target different categories of respondents, students and school counsellors in the targeted secondary schools. This design is of preference in this study as it is suitable in collection of original data, cheap in administering, it allows subjective human variables being measured, allows researchers to study a much larger population within a short duration, gives room for researchers to measure problems in realist setting, hence providing space for numerous variables to be measured together as well as applicable in both quantitative and qualitative studies (Walliman, 2005).

## Study Area

Nyandarua North is a Sub-County located in Nyandarua County is an important education hub that is a home to several tertiary colleges and polytechnics but no universities and 149 secondary schools with a population of about 25,758 students. The Nyandarua County is on the west of the west of Aberdare Mountain Ranges and it borders five counties; Laikipia to the north, Murang'a and Nyeri to the east, Nakuru to the West and Kiambu to the south.

## Target Population

population encompassed of all the 25,758 students in the 149 secondary in schools in Nyandarua Sub-County (Sub-County Education office, 2017). The schools are categorized into five categories as indicated in Table 1

Table 1: Distribution of Target Population

School Category	Number of Schools
Mixed day	57
Mixed boarding	34
Boys boarding	7
Girls boarding	7
Private schools	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>

Source: (Nyandarua North Education Office, 2018)

### 3.4 Sample size and sampling procedure

The study uses the Fishers formula as described by Mugenda and Mugenda (2013). The study targeted students in all the secondary schools in Nyandarua North Sub-County as the primary subjects while counseling teacher are the key informants. The study applied stratified random sampling that categorized secondary schools into five strata namely; mixed day, mixed boarding, boys boarding, girls boarding as well as private school. In each stratum representing a school category, a simple random sample between 5-30% of schools were selected. This arrived at a sample of 20 schools that is 13% of the total, 149 therefore representative (Mugenda, 2013). A random sample of 20 students was picked in each school to arrive at 400 students. Counseling teachers in each selected school were be sampled purposively (20 teachers) since they are the people who can give an in-depth information on the counseling processes in the schools.

Table 2: Distribution of Sample Size

School Category	Number of Schools	Sampled Schools	Sampled Counseling Teachers	Sampled Students
Mixed day	57	7	7	140
Mixed boarding	34	4	4	80
Boys boarding	7	2	2	40
Girls boarding	7	2	2	40
Private schools	43	5	5	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>400</b>

### Research Instrument

Collection of data from the selected students was done by the use of questionnaires. Questionnaire had section A for background information and sections B, C, D and E as per the study objectives. The questions were marked primarily on a five-point Likert Scale format. In this Scale, 5 represented the high end while 1 represented the low end. The use of questionnaires is because they give assurance to the participants for anonymity thereby giving them courage to be more truthful in responding. Questionnaires have a further advantage to eliminate interference from the researcher which may seem to be more prevalent in interviewing. Additionally, they are cheap in administering and analysis of the data. Responses were gathered from identified counseling teachers through an interview schedule. Interview contained a process that is interactive where respondents got an opportunity for expressing themselves deeply in an oral way in response to the researcher's questions (Mouton & Babbie, 2001)

### Data Analysis

The study gathered a combination of data that is qualitative and quantitative. Cleaning of data together with editing was carried out for the elimination errors associated with sampling and non-sampling for the avoidance of biased estimations. Content analysis as a technique was used to analyze qualitative data thematically. Classification and coding of quantitative data was done and keyed into MS Excel. Analysis of the data was by the use of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics using measures of central tendencies (frequency, percentage and mean) and measures of dispersion (standard deviation) was applied to summarize the research findings. Testing of the associations between counseling and maladaptive behaviour management was done by using inferential statistics namely correlation and Chi-square at 5% levels of significance for enabling of the study conclusions.

#### IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

##### Correlation between Counseling Services and Bullying

Table 3: Correlation matrix

		Counseling Services	Bullying
Pearson Correlation®	Counseling Services	1.000	0.799
	Bullying	0.799	1.000
<i>p</i> -value	Counseling Services	.	0.000
	Bullying	0.000	.
N=400, $\alpha=0.05$			

After testing the relationship between the counseling services and mitigation of bullying among secondary school students using a Karl Pearson Correlation test at 5 % levels of significance, there was clear evidence that there was a strong positive relationship with correlation coefficient being 0.799. This relationship is statistically significant as indicated by the resultant *p*-value being 0.000 which is less than 0.05.

##### Chi-Square Analysis between Counseling Services and Bullying

The researcher performed a Chi-Square test at 5% levels of significance as a confirmatory test to test the influence of stress related factors on occurrence of physical violence among relational couples. The Chi-Square was fit for the study variables since the response rates was arranged in an ordinal scale of five categories as per the 5 likert scale measures enabling cross-tabulation with the determiner being the stress related factors in the row and the dependent variable being occurrence of physical violence in the column. The Chi-Square results is indicated in Table 4.

Table 4: Chi-Square Result.

Variables	Chi-square	df	<i>p</i> -value
Bullying	48.359	16	0.000

On testing the effect counseling services on the mitigation of bullying among secondary school students using a Pearson Chi-Square test at 5 % levels of significance, the study yielded  $\chi^2(16, n = 400) = 48.359, p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . This implies that counseling services have a significant effect on the mitigation of bullying among secondary school students that is statistically significant at 95 % levels of confidence.

#### V. SUMMARY

The junior and disadvantaged students in secondary schools are disturbed by the seniors. There is intimidation of junior students as well as of those who are disadvantaged is rampant in secondary schools within Nyandarua North Sub-County. Senior students bully junior and disadvantaged students by taking properties and personal effects without their consent and forcing them to answer obscene questions against their will as well as subjecting them to physical torture. Notorious groups are formed by some secondary school students. There are incidents of calling unpleasant names, issuing threats, isolation and denial of some privileges by senior students. Bullying is rampant to the extent leading to depression, low esteem and casualties and in some instances to hospitalization of the victims.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

The tests on the relationship between the counseling services and mitigation of bullying among secondary school students using a Karl Pearson Correlation test at 5 % levels of significance, there was clear evidence that there was a strong positive relationship with correlation coefficient being 0.799. The test also yielded a Pearson Chi-Square test at 5 % levels of significance, the study yielded  $\chi^2(16, n = 400) = 48.359, p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . This implies that counseling services have a significant effect on the mitigation of bullying among secondary school students that is statistically significant at 95 % levels of confidence

## **VII. RECOMMENDATION OF THE STUDY**

There is need to formulate clear policies by the Ministry of Education on how school counselling services should be offered for them to be effective. The policy should outline various counselling strategies for instance individual, group and career counseling services. There should be time allocation for the counseling despite the secondary school schedules being highly inclined towards academics. The study recommends the need for secondary schools to be provided with qualified and trained counselor with adequate skills on how to handle counseling of the students who are adolescents therefore at risk of engaging themselves with maladaptive behaviours if they are not well mentored.

## **VIII. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

The researcher suggests that there is need for a study to conduct so as to establish traumatic effects that gender violence especially physical abuse among parents causes to their children.

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