

**Cultural Factors Influencing Student's Response toward seeking Guidance and  
Counselling Services in Private Primary Teachers Training Colleges In Nyanza Region,  
Kenya**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to investigate cultural factors that influence student's low turn-out to guidance and counselling services among college students in private teachers training colleges in Nyanza Province. The study used descriptive survey and employed a questionnaire (structured and semi- structured) for students in teacher training colleges as data collection instrument. The population of the study comprised the students in private teachers training colleges in the region. The population was 2000 students and had a sample of 200. The questionnaires were pre-tested by being administered to 30 respondents from two schools which were not included in the study. The scores obtained from the first and second tests were 0.76 and 0.77 respectively. The descriptive statistics including percentages mean and frequency tables were used to analyze the data. The statistical tools, which were used in the analysis of the data, were frequencies and percentages. Tabulation constituted the main form of organizing and presenting the collected information. The findings revealed that cultural factors that influence student's low turn-out to guidance and counselling services was sixty four percent (64%).The recommendations were made that the institutional heads to be trained in Guidance and Counselling services. The study ethical considerations were carefully taken care of in the study.

**Keywords:** Kenya, Students, Response, Guidance/Counseling, Colleges

**Introduction**

Source of guidance movement is religion, which aims at getting hold of people when they are very young and train them for the good life. According to Arbuckle (2005), another source is mental hygiene, which sees in adjustment problems a need for mental and emotional therapy. As put forward by De Paulo (2003), the social change has been as well a source of guidance and counseling. During the period between the two world wars thousands of young people who had no marked desire to go to school were driven into secondary schools. Pressure of the

numbers and the non-academic character of these pupils created a whole set of new problems for administrators. They found that the outstanding need was for individual attention and counselling to help these pupils. The fifth source is the measurement movement in education. It involves the thesis that the first duty of the school is to know its pupils as individuals and to enable each individual to understand himself (Arbuckle (2005).

According to Gelso and McKenzie (2003) and Byrne, (2007:25), also found that the origins of the guidance movement was rooted in the Declaration of United States of Americas' Independence from England. "It's within these ideas about mankind, those values about humility that is found the root of development that eventually produced the guidance movement in education". That movement did not take form and substance until the beginning of the twentieth century. Byrne further posits that not only was it inevitable that the guidance movement would emerge in the United States of America, but also that it could not have emerged in other countries, except in rudimentary form. Psychology emerged as science and gave the political and institutional areas a substantive base for expressing a concern for individuals.

In Britain, school counselling movement began in 1965 (Jones, 2004). It was aimed at adding a vitality needed element to the education of the adolescent. The counselling approach was eventually recognized as a fundamental and integrated part of true learning from the cradle to the grave. According to Dondo (2005), the idea of counselling has been there for many years. The realization that one can be helpful to another by sharing insight, perspectives, understanding, warmth and acceptance is pervasive over the history of humans. He accounts the roots of counselling to early civilization. The work of Durojaiye, (2002), had it that Africans are now influenced by Western culture. The traditional practices with the age grades and

initiation ceremonies and other activities that provided some form of effective general education, including sex education, are no longer open to African schoolchild. It is for this reason that the school must be aware of the need to fill the gap created by the replacement of traditional education by formal education including guidance and counseling.

In Kenya, just like in any other African Country as put forward by Gacheri (2003); Ombuya, Yambo and Omolo (2012) and Mudis and Yambo (2015) prescribed that informal guidance and counselling was in practice since time immemorial to address among others, cultural factors. It was a lifelong activity that every member of the society underwent. Guidance and counselling started from the time the child was born but was particularly significant during initiation when the youths graduated from Childhood to adulthood. The occasion provided counselling on general and potential life expectations as well as problems. They were taught the social taboos and their social obligations. The youths were then allowed to marry, a period which took them through a number of guidance and counselling sessions. Individuals were advised and counseled when faced with crisis of life by immediate and extended family members. Formal guidance in Kenya can be traced back to a few years before independence.

According to Gacheri (2003) the young nation realized that independence was about to be given and they had to prepare the youths for manpower development consequently including cultural factors, the need for guidance and counselling services has been recognized and more so at the present time due to the infiltration of the western culture into our societies. The work of Masibi (2006) and Ombuya et al. (2012) contended that Guidance and Counselling was introduced in Kenya formally in 1967 under the Ministry of Education. However, it had been entrusted in the immediate and extended family where individuals confided in and depended upon their relatives for advise when faced with problems emanating from the self and the environment. It

was a community's responsibility to see that everybody adjusted positively to the development of that society. With the onset of modernization, rapid industrialization, rural-urban migration, disintegration of the family, high mobility in search of education and career opportunities, the family and initiation schools could no longer meet the expectations of the populace. It became necessary to borrow the concept of formal guidance and counselling from the western world where it was already in progress to meet the social changes (Dondo 2005).

Studies by Masibi (2006) postulates that the importance of guidance and counselling services in Kenya has been appreciated, the Government has not put in place enough personnel in schools to offer the services in learning institutions, an idea which Mudis and Yambo (2015) confirmed to have been implemented. This was aimed at addressing the cultural factors that influence student's low turn-out for guidance and counselling services among secondary and college students.

In addressing cultural factors that influence student's low turn-out for guidance and counselling services, Durojaiye (2002) added that the needs for guidance and counselling increase with development and growing sophistication in the community, with more rural-urban migration, influence of cultural factors, with improved communications and mobility, and with increased independence from a traditional way of life seem to interfere with students in various ways.

Many recommendations including that by Karugu (2000) have been made to the government in reports and education commissions and politicians regarding the provision of guidance and counselling on the influence of cultural factors in our learning institutions right from primary schools up to the universities. The work of Kimathi (2002) further pointed out that Guidance and Counselling of the youth in secondary Schools is an essential service in helping in the

identification of their individual interest ,needs, and appreciate correction or assistance to enable them face the realities of life. Such response would ensure effective planning, implementation and evaluation of the program at school level. Guidance and counselling programme in our schools is widely recognized. The National committee of educational objectives and policies is expected to come out with definite recommendations on how guidance and counselling can support all learning activities if students are to be able to take full advantage of their educational opportunities (Masibi 2006).

### **Statement of the problem**

Today's social changes are apparent not only in technical advances and material conditions but also in the sphere of ideas and values. The contributions of cultural factors that influence student's low turn-out to guidance and counselling services are equally on the increase. The government through the Ministry of Education has been very keen on deploying guidance and counseling teachers in schools. Despite this effort, there seem to be rampant cultural factors that influence student's low turn-out to guidance and counselling services. Consequently this study responded to the needs and aspirations of the young generation and recommend that they should seek Guidance and counselling which is a core service in a school.

### **The Concept of Guidance and counselling in learning institutions**

Every student requires at least one if not all of the types of guidance. It is therefore important to set up a guidance and counselling programme in each school and college to provide the students with essential service. As put forward by Blackburn (2005), more guidance and Counselling programs take shape throughout the world, Kenya inclusive, the creative talents of the Guidance and Counselors in meeting student's needs have been challenged. Though most of the reports and the recommendations made are pointed towards primary and secondary

schools, students in Teachers training colleges encounter almost the same situations as in primary and secondary schools. According to Brewer (1999), students generally encounter situations in which they need aid or advice to continue with their social, spiritual and academic life in college. In such a situation a student needs to be aware of his / her need for help and decide to seek for that help and make use of it.

Quite often, as observed by Dimick and Huff (2000), it has been noted that many students do not seek the guidance and counselling services even when they are readily availed to them. This has really raised a great concern among school administrators. Some of them would rather respond to their needs in any other way instead of asking for help. Every human being needs help. Studies done by Kananu (2002) posited that when the person needing help especially counselling related fails to get it, appropriately, it leads to frustration and suffering. Therefore when students fail to get proper guidance and counselling at the appropriate time and from the appropriate source, they are quite disadvantaged. It is for this reason that the researchers were interested to carry out a research in this area because hardly any substantial research has been done on teachers training colleges as to why most students don't actively seek for the guidance and counselling services offered in their colleges (Mbera, Tuitoek & Yambo 2015).

For our primary schools to have teachers whose performance both in the classroom and outside the classroom is exemplary, it is important that such teachers be well developed physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Guidance and counselling services if well instituted and received by students in our colleges will be able to create such a situation whereby teachers who are produced will be able to disperse their duties with commitment, effectiveness and efficiency. However, through observation of one of the private teachers training college very few students seek for counselling services (Blackburn 2005).

### **Cultural Factors that influence student's low turn-out to guidance and counselling services**

There are diverse factors that influence college student to either seek or fail not seek for guidance and counselling service offered in their colleges. Among these factors are cultural factors, social factors, psychological factors, religious factors, political factors, motivation factors, personality, the guidance and counselling program, provision of physical equipment the school guidance team, parents and the students themselves (Herbert 2000).

According to Miller (2001) and Gibson (2003) culture has been argued to include material object developed by man, attitude and values which we exhibit and the institutions we create to preserve them and that individuals are not only born into a culture but that they are also shaped by the culture hence a need for guidance and counselling. Miller (2001) added that culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, moral custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Further culture is a social product and is completely independent of biological inheritance. To any group, its own cultures seem natural, right and proper and therefore members accept their cultural modes without question. The culture in which an individual lives and develops will determine his personal hierarchy of values, which includes views of teachers and other educators and obviously the counselling services. In this light, an understanding of the influence of culture on both the individual and the college would be of great value if the guidance programme is to be truly responsive to the needs of the students (Gibson 2003). Therefore, it is a challenge to the counselors to develop guidance and counselling programs, which will cope with the students cultural influences.

Research by Sue (2001) postulated that counselors differ to the extent to which they are aware that how they think, feel and behave has been conditioned by their cultural upbringing. Culture deficit counselling model assumes that the rules and values of the dominant culture are normal and that variations observed in minorities are deficits. Culture sensitive counselling model avoids the assumption that dominant group practices are proper and superior. Respect is shown for cultural differences and positive features of cultural variation may be emphasized.

In view of cultural influence on students counseling needs, Day, Harris and Hadfeild (2002) and Kananu (2002) prescribed that it has been the failure by the counselors to interpret the cultural characteristics of students and their implications in guidance and counselling that has made the programs not to be very successful in some colleges. In colleges where the programs are responsive to the students' cultural backgrounds, the programs have been successful.

### **Research Methodology**

The study used a descriptive research design to investigate factors that influence response to Guidance and Counselling services among college students in private primary teachers training colleges in Nyanza province. According to Best and Kahn (2008), descriptive research is designed to obtain information concerning the current phenomena and whenever possible, to draw valid general conclusion from the facts discussed. The target population of the study comprised of 2000 students from four private primary teachers training colleges in Nyanza region and a sample of 200 students were considered. The researchers used the questionnaire instrument to gather data. Questionnaires are very convenient tools where a large numbers of subjects are to be handled. According to Bloomberg and Volpe M. (2008) questionnaires facilitate easy and quick responses. The quantitative data emanating from the field were edited, coded and then numbered. They were then entered into a database prepared in SPSS version 17

that aided in analyzing the data. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically. For quantitative data, Cross tabulation, and frequencies were adopted and the findings were presented using graphs, tables, frequencies and percentages.

## Results and Discussions

This section dealt with socio-cultural factors influencing students low-turn out to guidance and counselling services.

**Table 1: Socio-Cultural Contributing to Students Low Turn-Out to Guidance and Counselling Services Offered in Their Colleges**

Variables	Yes	%	No	%
1. Peer influence discourages me from seeking for guidance and counselling	71	40.8	103	59.2
2. I dislike seeking for guidance and counselling from a counsellor of opposite sex	58	33.3	116	66.7
3. I feel reluctant to seek counselling and guidance from a person who is not of my tribe	50	28.7	124	71.3
4. I do not prefer talking over my personal problems with my parents	74	42.5	100	57.5
5. My culture does not allow me to discuss my personal problems with outside my family circle.	63	36.2	111	63.8
6. I fear being seen by my friends going to the guidance and counselling office	34	19.5	140	80.5
7. As an adult do you think you are able to handle all your personal problems?	34	19.5	140	80.5
8. Do you think problems related to sex should be kept secret?	31	17.8	143	82.2
9. Do you find it difficult for you to speak and express your personal problems with a counsellor?	76	43.7	98	56.3
10. Do you think adults do understand the young people?	79	54.6	95	45.4

11. Do you think keeping distance from teachers is a way of showing them respect?	12	6.9	162	93.1
12. Do you need the assistance of other people to solve your problems?	160	92	14	8
<b>13. Do you think the guidance and counselling teacher is someone who can keep secrets?</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>40</b>

From table 1 the following observations were made: -

According to Dimick and Huff (2000), young people find themselves away from home, without the security that a family provides and seek for support in the peer group. Here they find the security they need and a response to their personal problems. The strong feeling of solidarity among members makes such groups very compact; the members give one another mutual support and together they can stand up to the adult world. They have set up their own society which is outside the society of adults. This makes it extremely difficult for them to attain a responsible level of responsible autonomy.

When the respondents were asked whether their culture did not allow them to discuss their personal problems with outsiders, sixty three point eight percent (63.8%) said 'No' while thirty six point two percent (36.2%) said 'Yes'. In other words, this was supported by Masibi (2006) when he contended that most of the students are not discouraged by their culture to seek for guidance and counselling assistance from counselors who may not be from their communities. It can therefore be concluded that the low-turn out is not as a result of cultural barring them from discussing their personal problems with anybody.

Later when the respondents were asked whether they thought adults understood the young people, fifty four point six percent (54.6%) responded with a 'Yes' while a significant percentage, forty five point four percent (45.4%) responded with a 'No'. according to Mudis and Yambo (2015), this would seem to suggest that while a higher percentage would seek for guidance and counselling because they felt adults understood them a significant percentage would not do so. This shows that the lack of understanding accounts for the low turnout.

### **Recommendations**

The department of guidance and counseling in the various schools and colleges need to be more vibrant in enhancing counseling in their schools and addressing cultural issues in a timely manner so as to get to the root cause of unbecoming behavior that may contribute in making the students not to seek the meaningful services in schools and colleges.

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