

Abstract

School discipline is a serious challenge facing schools globally, Kenya not excluded. With Kenya banning of corporal punishment in 2001, Guidance and Counseling (G&C) is being promoted as an alternative approach to managing students' discipline. However, growing evidence suggests that G&C services are ineffective in addressing students' discipline. The current study was motivated by the need to investigate the influence of students' attitudes towards guidance and counseling and its influence on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The study was guided by Client Centered Theory advanced by psychologist Carl Rogers (1940). The study used descriptive survey design while the target population was all 35 public secondary schools, all 35 heads of schools, all 35 heads of counseling units (HCUs) and 2,864 form three students in Matungulu Sub-county in Machakos County. However, simple random sampling technique was used to sample 11(10.0%) schools and 286 (10.0%) form three students. All the 11 school heads and the 11 heads of the participating schools were purposively sampled. In total, 308 participants were sampled. Data collection instruments included questionnaires for school heads, heads of counseling units and students. Additionally, an observation checklist was used. The study results showed that G&C interventions face a number of challenges such as and lack of trained teacher counselors. Based on the findings, the study concludes that majority of public secondary schools in Matungulu Sub-county do not have G&C offices, and where the offices are available, they cannot offer the much needed confidentiality to enable students open up during G&C sessions. Although G&C is allocated time, the study concludes that the time allocated is not adhered to. On the level of resources needed in G&C department, the study concludes that G&C resources are grossly inadequate. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education (MOE) should formulate policies that ensure schools implement G&C programmes effectively. On students' attitudes towards G&C, the study recommends that; Guidance and Counseling services should be strengthened, in terms of peer counseling interventions and teacher counselor training to take advantage of students' positive attitudes and to ensure that more students seek assistance so as to improve school discipline.