

Influence of Non-Teaching Staff on Students' Guidance and Counselling in Public Secondary Schools in Embu County, Kenya

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Abstract: There is general outcry world over in relation to crime which has affected all sectors of development. Educational institutions especially secondary schools are best avenues where youth can be impacted with knowledge and competences for holistic character formation. The study objective was to examine the influence of non-teaching staff on the discipline of students in public secondary schools in Embu County, Kenya. Inculcating discipline among students requires a multi-dimensional approach incorporating other stakeholders. Non-teaching staff in secondary schools interact often with students. They directly or indirectly influence their behaviour. The study adopted Systems theory by Ludwig Von Bettalanffy and Institutional theory by Meyer and Rowan. This study involved descriptive survey design and utilized qualitative research method. Stratified, purposive techniques were used to select the sample size. Data was collected by observation, open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interview. Pretesting of instruments was done to determine validity and reliability. A sample size of 20% was used for population above 50, 30% for any category above 10 but not exceeding 50. Census was used for cases below 10. All principals, one student per school and all non-teaching staff in public secondary schools were targeted. The results were analysed through tables, pie charts and graphs. The findings indicated that non-teaching staff were indirectly involved in discipline issues pertaining the students. The research recommends that non-teaching staff should be trained and directly involved in handling students' discipline cases.

Keywords: guidance and counselling, quality education, support staff.

1. Introduction

Guidance and counselling for learners is a requisite to acquisition of knowledge, skills and habits by learners which are useful in promotion of individual talents and abilities, leading to holistic character development and are acceptable by the society, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015). In Kenya, the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2022), incorporated life skills lessons to the school curriculum so as to equip the learners with basic social and psychological skills in; understanding themselves (self-awareness) and others, learning problem solving skills and making right decisions to overcome life challenges.

A. Objective

The study was carried out to examine the influence of support

staff on the students' guidance and counselling in public secondary schools in Embu County, Kenya.

B. Statement of the Problem

In the 21st Century, there has been many complains of crime, loss of lives and increase in moral decadency among the youth. Some of these cases are caused by the digital platforms such as internet and social media platforms. Others are domestic related cases and also school environment pressures in addition to individual development challenges. As a result, some of these students involve themselves into crimes such as drug abuse and school burning of school property. Most times when crimes are committed in the schools, the blame is placed on the teachers and partially on the support staff. However, the non-teaching staff are not directly involved in management and administration of institutions but they interact more often with the learners. Moral growth with better ethics is championed for in raising responsible citizens who can cope with dynamic global changes. Inculcating discipline among students requires a collaborative approach incorporating other stakeholders. It is important to note that support staff in learning institutions directly or indirectly influence their behaviour. The problem, therefore, is an investigation on influence of non-teaching staff on students' guidance and counselling in public secondary schools in Embu County, Kenya.

2. Literature Review

The study is anchored on systems theory by Ludwig Von Bettalanffy (1950) as quoted by Mahmut (2019) which states that any organization is a single, unified system of interrelated parts or subsystems. Each part of the overall system is dependent on the others and cannot function optimally without them. Behavior is influenced by a variety of factors that work together. Some of the factors that influence behavior are related to family, social friends, economic factors such as environment where one is living. These factors are interdependent and interrelated. An institution is influenced by both internal and external factors that determine the outcome. In the school setting, there are teachers, students and members of the non-teaching staff. Although teachers are charged with

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responsibility of teaching, disciplining and the guiding and counselling students, members of the non-teaching staff play a complimentary role that cannot be underrated.

Moreover, as the employees continue working together, they build a sense of belongingness to work as a team and promote education standards. It is through the performance of members of support staff, coupled with their care that the basic needs of students are addressed in schools.

The role of non-teaching staff in provision of quality education in secondary level is manifested directly and indirectly depending on the specific staff (Anietie et al. 2020). Although by virtue of their job placement, non-teaching staff are expected to play constructive roles in the school, sometimes this cadre may exhibit the potential for negative activities. Among the negative activities which can be perpetrated by non-teaching staff in educational institutions include intentional preparation of bad food, selling of drugs and cigarettes or pilfering of students' food to supplement their income.

Carolyn (2020) recommended talks with family and counsellors in order to create, long term plans to address students' misbehavior as effective way of handling learners' indiscipline. While this method seems to be effective. Students spend most of their time in school than at their homes. Many parents have little time with their children. Therefore, if careful measures by those people whom they spend long hours with in school, are not taken the students are likely to go astray.

3. Materials and Methods

A. Research Design

This study employed descriptive survey design since it allows the researcher to analyse the whole population using a sample as a representation. This research design was considered appropriate for this study since it allowed the use of thematic methods to collect data such as questionnaires and interviews, observation, tape recording and document analysis. The design assisted the researcher to obtain a large number of respondents and inspect a wide range of policy implementation issues (Sharma, 2019). Furthermore, as supported by Kothari (2014) the descriptive survey design was appropriate because it is concerned with describing, recording, analysing and interpreting conditions that either exist or existed. In addition, Nworgu (2015) refers to descriptive survey design as one which aims at collecting data on and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population.

B. Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Embu County, which is located to the East of Mt. Kenya, whose pinnacle cuts through the county's eastern boundary. It is surrounded by many counties, including Kirinyaga to the west, Tharaka-Nithi to the north, and Kitui to the East.

C. Target Population

The target population comprised of the principals, students' representatives and non-teaching staff in public secondary schools in Embu County. Each school is headed by one principal. Hence, all principals in public secondary schools

were targeted.

D. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

For the purpose of this study, a sample size of 20 percent was used for population above 50 characters as proposed by Khan (2020). The study also drew a sample of 30 percent from any category with the population above 10 but not exceeding 50 characters. Nevertheless, in the case of national schools (two schools), census was used.

This study employed stratified and purposive sampling technique. All public schools were classified according to the categories and types; national boys' schools and national girls' schools, county boys' schools and for girls, and then sub-county schools for both boys and girls (mixed schools). Any school considered for sampling had done Kenya Certificate for Secondary Examination (KCSE) for at least five years. The sample sizes were drawn per category of schools depending on the number in particular categories.

E. Sampling of Schools

The researcher listed down all the schools according to their categories. More importantly, the representative sample percentage varied from 10 (census) for very small population to 30 percent for large population categories. Public secondary schools were classified as national, extra county, county and sub-county schools (Basic Education Act, 2013). This categorisation and establishment are both analysed in Table 1.

Table 1
Categories of Government Secondary Schools in Embu

Type of school	Number	Percentage	Sample
National	2	100	Census
Extra County	23	30	7
County	24	30	8
Sub-county	116	30	35
Total	165		60

F. Sampling of Principals

Table 2 shows sampling of principals of government secondary schools in Embu. Each school has one principal and hence their number is equal to the number of schools per each category. Sampling of principals was similar to that of school such that all principals of national schools were selected while those in county and sub-county schools were sampled at thirty percent.

Table 2
Sampling of Public Secondary School Principals

Category of school	Number of schools	Number of principals	Percentage	Sample
National	2	2	100	Census
Extra county	23	23	30	7
County	24	24	30	7
Sub-county	116	116	30	35
Total	165	165		51

G. Sampling of Students

For students' population, one senior student (mainly the president) was selected per category of schools through purposeful sampling. Thus, there were a total of 165 students selected through purposeful sampling. The researcher made a deliberate attempt to cover all sub-counties for fair representation and more accurate information.

Table 3
Sampling of Students of Public Secondary Schools

Category of school	Number of schools	Number of Students
National	2	2
Extra County	23	23
County	24	24
Sub-county	116	116
Total	165	165

H. Sampling of Non-teaching Staff by Category of Secondary Schools

Different categories of secondary schools have varying numbers of non-teaching staff depending on their establishments. Nevertheless, each established public secondary school had its non-teaching staff. In such a situation, schools were classified as outlined under subsection 3.5 in accordance with the Basic Education Act, 2013. From this arrangement, a sample of schools was drawn from each category and then sampling of non-teaching staff was conducted per each category. In this case, schools were selected per category using random sampling.

The sampling of categories of non-teaching staff is analysed in Table 4. Here a sample of 30 percent of non-teaching staff was drawn from national schools. For county and sub-county schools sampling was done at 20 percent as supported by Gay and Airasian (2003) in Khan (2020) who claim perhaps the sample size for descriptive research ought to be approximately 10% to 20% of the population.

I. Instrumentation

Data was collected by using open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews. For school principals, data collection was done by use of in-depth interviews while questionnaires were administered to students and support staff.

J. Pretesting of Research Instruments

The study was carried out to assist in assessing the quality of data collection instruments in two public secondary schools. Two experts, who are the research supervisors from Kenya Methodist University School of Education, were consulted to ensure the validity of the findings. In addition, the researcher ascertained that the items adequately covered the research objectives. The results of the pilot study were used to check for and correct any ambiguity.

Tools were piloted in two schools to test their reliability. This process helped to address ambiguities, misunderstandings, or other shortcomings in the final instruments. The research instruments were above 0.7 which is the accepted level based on Cronbach coefficient which is the recommended level for pilot study.

K. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher applied for a research permit from the

NACOSTI after obtaining a letter of introduction from Kenya Methodist University. Permission was also sought from Embu County Commissioner, the County Director of Education and principals of sampled schools to conduct research. The researcher informed the principals of the selected schools using mobile phone and booked appointments to deliver the questionnaires and conduct interviews. The researcher personally visited the selected schools in order to establish personal connection with the school authorities for the purpose of data collection. The researcher then distributed the questionnaires to the participants and once filled they were collected.

L. Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed in accordance to Taherdoost (2016), where the data was organized into patterns, categories and descriptive units in order to have relationships between them and conclusions were drawn.

M. Analysis of Qualitative Data

The data were entered into the computer using STATA version 17. The generated results were presented using narratives, tables, percentages, and graphs to facilitate interpretation of the findings. To depict the situation as it was on the ground, narrative and interpretive reports, as well as citations, were written down. All data were strictly interpreted in relation to the research questions, and conclusions were drawn from the findings in relation to the research objective.

N. Quantitative Data Analysis

Questionnaires were sorted out to ensure only the completed ones are analysed while incomplete ones were discarded. The study variables were assigned different codes and defined accordingly before formulating equations or models showing causal relationships between independent and dependent variables. Once coded, various diagnostic tests were conducted to eliminate any type of biasness. Such tests included normality, linearity, multicollinearity, heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation. These tests enabled the researcher to establish the suitability of the collected data in satisfying various assumptions.

Once that is accomplished, hypothesis testing was done through regression analysis using Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Method. The model to be tested is formulated as follows:

$$QE = \alpha + \beta_1 ISSS + \beta_2 IACB + \beta_3 RSSI + \mu \quad (1)$$

Where:

- QE - Quality Education
- α - Constant

Table 4
Sampling of non-teaching staff by type of school

Type of School	Number in the Category	Non-teaching Staff Establishment per School Category	Total Number of Non-teaching in the School Category	Sampling Percentage	Sample Size
National	2	28	12 (6x2)	30	4
Extra County	23	18	115 (5x23)	20	23
County	24	13	72 (3x24)	20	14
Sub-County	116	6	232 (2x116)	20	46
Total	165		431		87

- $\beta_{1...4}$ - Coefficient
- ISSS - Involvement of support staff with students
- IACB - Influence on administrative levels of involvement and capacity building
- RSSI - Ranking of support staff involvement
- μ - Disturbance Term

The coded data inputs were fed into the computer statistical package using appropriate commands, and through this process, the output data was analysed and the results interpreted.

O. Ethical Consideration

The researcher strictly observed all legal and ethical considerations as expected in conducting research. The researcher sought permission to conduct study from NACOSTI and other relevant authorities.

4. Results and Discussion

The study sought to investigate the influence of support staff role on students' guidance and counselling in provision of quality education in public secondary schools in Embu County, Kenya. A total of 60 principals, 195 students' representative and 179 members of non-teaching staff were involved in the study survey. The responses were given on various aspects of involvement of support staff, on matters on guidance and counselling of students across public secondary schools in Embu County, as discussed below under the following sub-headings.

A. Response on Influence of Support Staff Role on Guidance and Counseling of Students on Selected Aspects

The study sought to determine the extent of support staff in influencing the performance of students in education in selected categories. These include; minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special need students, ensures drug free environment, helping students develop knowledge, skills and attitude that enhance acquisition of sound moral values and encourage students to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance.

Table 5 shows the principals' responses on extent of influence of support staff in minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special need students, ensures drug free environment, helping students develop knowledge, skills and attitude that enhance acquisition of sound moral values and encourage students to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance.

Table 5 presents the analysis of the influence of support staff on education performance in reference to minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special need students, ensures drug free environment, helping students develop knowledge, skills and attitude that enhance acquisition of sound moral

values and encourage students to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance. 90% of the school principals (54) who responded were in agreement that support staff have significant influence on students' performance in education through minimizing emotional and psychological trauma on students with special needs. Only 6 (10%) principals' respondents disagreed on support staff influence on minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special need students. This is in line with the findings of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020), who reported that many students in different countries suffered mental health due to COVID 19 pandemic. Some of these included suicide as reported by Dolean and Lervag (2021), Hawry and Tandon (2020). Hawry et. al. (2020), also reported that anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation were on increase in China. The findings further revealed that mental health was related to education level and negative coping styles. China was not the only nation where learners were affected and require guidance and counselling. The findings are also similar to AIR (2022) which found out that support staff play a vital role in supporting learners in education institutions and specifically, those with special needs. This implies that members of support staff are quite instrumental in improving quality education among public secondary schools in Embu County. The results could be due to the learners' closeness and having more time with the support cadre since teachers are too busy covering syllabus.

Based on the Table 5, 95 percent of the respondents (57) agreed that support staff exert significant influence on students to creating a drug free environment and hence improvement in education performance. 3 (5%) principals' respondents disagreed that the non-teaching staff cadre had little or no significant influence on students to creating the school environment free from drug abuse. This means that according to the principal respondents, support staff members help secondary schools in fighting drug abuse among students in Embu County and can be mobilized to help fight smuggling and abuse of drugs in school.

Table 5 also gives the analysis of response of school principals on the extent of support staff in helping students develop knowledge, skills and attitude that enhance acquisition of sound moral values. Performance of students in education is enhanced by continuous inculcation of high moral values among students. Abstracting from the table, 85 percent (51) of school principals' respondents agreed that embers of support staff play a vital role in helping students develop knowledge, skills and attitude that enhance acquisition of sound moral values. With sound moral values, performance in education is likely to be guaranteed.

The extent to which support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to encourage

Table 5
Principals' response on extent of support staff in influencing the performance of students in education in selected aspects

Statement N=60	1 Fq(%)	2 Fq(%)	3 Fq(%)	4 Fq (%)	5 Fq (%)	Mean
Minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special need students	3(5.0)	3(5.0)	0	46(76.67)	8(13.33)	12
Ensuring a drug free school environment	3(5.0)	0	0	40(66.67)	17(28.33)	12
Helping students develop knowledge, skills and attitude that enhance acquisition of sound moral values	0	9(15.0)	0	38(63.33)	13(21.67)	12
Encourage students to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance	0	6(10.0)	0	45(75.0)	9(15.0)	12

students to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance, as shown on Table 5. Based on the findings, 45 (75%) respondents agreed while 9 (15%) strongly agreed that support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to encouraging students to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance while 10% (6) of the principals' respondents disagreed. It follows that support staff members in secondary schools are key in championing education through encouraging students to grow up into self-disciplined and self-reliant intellects among secondary schools in Embu County.

According to most of the principals, guidance and counselling is not offered by all support staff members. In one of the interviews, one of the principals said;

"In fact, talking about guidance and counselling department in this school is a dream. My cook and secretary guide and counsel them (the students). The problem of these people are so many. I can tell you for sure that myself and teachers alone cannot manage. Afterall, they are very free with our secretary and the cooks. They can tell them everything."

From the findings, it is clear that the support staff play a guidance and counselling role which has a bearing to provision of quality education despite the fact that they are not trained/professionals in guidance and counselling.

A total of 195 students' representative respondents were involved in the study survey. Table 6 gives the analysis of the students' response on extent to which support staff have influence on the performance of students in education in reference to minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special need students, ensuring that school environment is drug-free, developing knowledge, skills and attitude for good moral values, encouraging learners to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance and encouraging students to concentrate on their studies.

According to the results shown on Table 6, most of the students (90%) agreed that support staff members play a key role in minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among students with special needs. Only 18 (10%) disagreed that the influence of non-teaching staff members on minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among students with special needs was low. This is a clear indication that support staff cadre is vital in enabling students to do well in education secondary schools in Embu County.

Table 6 gives the analysis of the extent to which support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to ensuring that school environment is drug free - according to the views of the students themselves. According to the results, all the students (100%) were in agreement, as 111 agreed while 84 strongly agreed and none disagreed, that support staff members play a key role in ensuring that the school environment is drug free. By playing this role support

staff members help in steering good education performance among students in secondary schools in Embu County.

Table 6 gives the analysis of the extent to which support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to developing knowledge, skills and attitude for good moral values and according to the findings, 93 percent (181) of the respondents agreed that support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to developing knowledge, skills and attitude for good moral values. Indeed, only 7 percent (14) of the respondents disagreed with the criteria set. This implies that support staff members are quite instrumental in supporting quality education through developing knowledge, skills and attitude for good moral values which can lead to improved performance in education.

According to the findings, shown on Table 3.2 presenting the extent to which support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to encouraging learners to grow up into self-discipline and reliance, 175 respondents (90%) agreed that support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to encouraging learners to grow up into self-discipline and reliance. Indeed, about 10 percent (20) of the respondents disagreed with the criteria set. This implies that support staff members are quite instrumental in supporting quality education through championing students to be self-disciplined and reliance which can lead to improved performance in education.

Table 6 also shows the extent to which support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to encouraging students to concentrate on their studies. According to the findings, 85 percent (166) of the respondents agreed that support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to encouraging students to concentrate on their studies. The findings also reveal that about 15 percent (29) of the respondents disagreed with the criteria set. This implies that support staff members are quite instrumental in supporting quality education through helping students to concentrate on their studies thereby leading to improved performance in education.

Members of non-teaching staff were also required to respond to a number of criteria in which support staff had an effect on performance of students in education. Among the issues that needed response include minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special need students; ensuring drug free environment; developing knowledge, skills and attitude that enhance of sound moral values; encouraging students to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance and, encouraging students to concentrate on their studies. Table 7 shows the analysis of non-teaching staff response on extent to which support staff have influence on the performance of students in education in reference to minimizing emotional and

Table 6

Students' response on extent to which support staff role have influence on the performance of students in education in reference to guidance and counselling

Statement N=179	1 Fq (%)	2 Fq (%)	3 Fq (%)	4 Fq (%)	5 Fq (%)	Mean
Minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special need students	0	18(9.78)	0	91(49.46)	75(40.76)	44.75
Ensuring that school environment is drug-free	0	0	0	111(56.92)	84(43.08)	44.75
Developing knowledge, skills and attitude for good moral values	0	14(7.18)	0	59(30.26)	122(52.56)	44.75
Encouraging learners to grow up into self-discipline and reliance	0	20(10.26)	0	63(32.31)	112(57.44)	44.75
Encouraging students to concentrate on their studies	0	29(14.87)	0	49(25.13)	117(60.00)	44.75

psychological trauma among special need students, ensuring that school environment is drug-free, developing knowledge, skills and attitude for good moral values, encouraging learners to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance and encouraging students to concentrate on their studies.

Table 7 gives analysis of the extent to which members of support staff agree/disagree that they have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special need students in secondary schools in Embu County. According to the analysis, 90 percent of the respondents agreed, and 10 percent strongly agreed that support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special need students. This implies that members of support staff are quite instrumental in education performance in secondary schools in Embu County, especially so to the students with special needs.

Table 7 also gives analysis of the extent to which members of support staff agree/disagree that they have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special need students in secondary schools in Embu County. According to the analysis, 85 percent of the respondents were in agreement that support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to ensuring drug free environment in secondary schools. Nevertheless, 15 percent indicated that support staff have no implication on ensuring drug free environment in secondary schools. This implies that members of support staff are very important in minimizing cases of drug abuse in secondary schools and hence enabling the institutions to perform better in education in Embu County.

According to the analysis, on the extent to which members of support staff agree/disagree that they have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to developing knowledge, skills and attitude that enhance sound moral values in secondary schools in Embu County, given on Table 3.3, 97 percent of the respondents were in agreement that support staff have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to developing knowledge, skills and attitude that enhance of sound moral values, and only 3 percent indicated otherwise. This implies that members of support staff are quite key in eradicating cases of drug abuse in secondary schools and hence enabling the schools to perform better in education in Embu County.

Table 7 also gives analysis of the extent to which members of support staff agree/disagree that they have effect on the performance of students in education in reference to encouraging students to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance in secondary schools in Embu County. According to

the results, 90 percent of the respondents indicated that support staff members have influence on the performance of students in education in in reference to encouraging students to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance, and only 10 percent indicated to the contrary. This implies that members of support staff are quite instrumental in encouraging students to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance. This aspect can lead to improvement in education performance in Embu County.

According to the Table 7 that gives analysis of the extent to which members of support staff respond to their effect on the performance of students in education in reference to encouraging students to concentrate on their studies in secondary schools in Embu County, 97 percent of the respondents indicated that support staff members have influence on the performance of students in education in in reference to encouraging students to encourage students to concentrate on their studies, and only 3 percent indicated otherwise.

Beyond academics, students often require emotional and social support to thrive in a school environment. Counsellors and support staff members with specialized training offer guidance and a listening ear to students facing challenges. Their presence ensures that students feel heard and valued, and they can help address issues like bullying, anxiety, and personal crises, fostering a positive and inclusive school culture, (June, 2023). This implies that members of support staff are very important in encouraging students to concentrate on their studies. Such a move can lead to improvement in education performance among secondary schools in Embu County.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2020), reported that many students in different countries suffered mental health due to COVID 19 pandemic. Some of these included suicide as reported by Dolean and Lervag (2021), Hawry and Tandon (2020). Hawry *et al.* (2020), also reported that anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation were on increase in China. The findings further revealed that mental health was related to education level and negative coping styles. China was not the only nation where learners were affected and require guidance and counselling.

The researcher observed that the national and extra-county schools had school chaplains, who helped in offering guidance and counselling to learners to ensure that the students' psychological and emotional well-being is catered for. The sub-county schools engaged members of support staff such as; cooks, secretaries, accounts clerks and sometimes other motivational speakers from the local community to aid in giving access on guidance and counselling to learners. Although effort is put to offer guidance and counselling to learners, it was not done by professionals in Embu County. This is in contrary to Bharti and Kumar (2022) who contend that students' mental

Table 7
Non-teaching staff response on extent to which support staff have influence on the performance of students in education

Statement N=179	1 Fq (%)	2 Fq (%)	3 Fq (%)	4 Fq (%)	5 Fq (%)	Mean
Minimizes emotional and psychological trauma among special need students	0	0	0	161(89.94)	18(10.06)	35.8
Ensures a drug free school environment	78(43.58)	27(15.08)	0	74(41.34)	0	35.8
Developing knowledge, skills and attitude that enhance of sound moral values	0	5(2.79)	0	114(63.69)	60(33.52)	35.8
Encourage students to grow up into self-discipline and self-reliance	5(2.79)	13(7.26)	0	91(50.84)	70(39.11)	35.8
Encourage students to concentrate on their studies	0	6(3.35)	0	105(58.66)	68(37.99)	35.8

wellness should be given priority in any learning institution by the institution management.

B. Response on Influence of Support Staff Role on Guidance and Counseling of Students on Administrative Levels of Involvement and Capacity Building

Table 8 gives the analysis of the kind of support staff mainly involved in guidance and counselling among secondary schools on a scale of 1-5, with 1 – Non-participants, 2- Secretary, 3 – Matron, 4 - Nurse and 5 – Chaplain. The table also shows administrative levels of involvement of support staff in guidance and counselling of students in Embu County on a scale of 1-5 with 1 – Non-participants, 2 – Individual level, 3 – Administrative level, 4 – Supervision level and 5 – Boarding level.

The above findings show that the most utilized category of support staff in guidance and counselling include matron - 3 (28%) and 2 - principal's secretary (18%). To note is the fact that contrary to the expectation, 2 and 3 respondents gave their response in non-teaching staff involvement in 5 - chaplaincy and 4 - school nurse is dismal at 3% and 5% respectively.

Table 8 shows administrative levels of involvement of support staff in matters of guidance and counselling of students among secondary schools in Embu County. It is clear that members of support staff were involved in matters of guidance and counselling of students at various levels of school administration including individual (13%), administration level (27%), supervision level (5%) and boarding (10%). This implies that support staff members are quite instrumental in guidance and counselling of students in secondary schools in Embu County.

Table 9 shows, the analysis of principals' response on the availability of capacity building programmes, on a scale of 1-3, with 1 – Disagreed, 2 - Neutral, 3 – Agreed. The table also shows frequency of training of support staff on guidance and counselling staff in guidance and counselling of students in Embu County on a scale of 1-3 with 1 – Non-participants, 2 – Termly, 3 – Annually and Number of support staff who have

acquired professional training on guidance and counselling with 1 – One member, 2 – Two members and 3 – Three members.

It is clearly indicated on table 3.5, that majority of principals were in agreement that capacity building programmes on guidance and counselling were lacking in schools (40 - 67%). However, 20 principal respondents (33%) disagreed with the criteria set. This scenario implies that support staff members in secondary schools are not trained on counselling skills.

Table 9 gives the analysis of Principals' response on the frequency of training Support Staff in schools on guidance and counselling of students. Capacity building on guidance and counselling of support staff is an area which is not exploited by the schools. From the response of principal, termly training programmes constituted 20 percent while annual programmes constituted 13 percent. This implies that in most secondary schools in Embu County, few capacity building programmes were organized for members of support staff.

Table 9 also indicates the number of support staff who have acquired some professional training in guidance and counselling according to principals. Most of the schools (82%) had only one member of support staff who had acquired professional training. Those with between two and three support staff members trained on guidance and counselling constituted 18 percent of the schools. This means that professional guidance and counselling training is lacking among members of support staff in secondary schools in Embu County.

Table 10 gives the analysis of the involvement of support staff in guidance and counselling in secondary schools on a scale of 1-3, with 1 – Disagreed, 2 - Neutral, 3 – Agreed, 1 – Non-participants, 2 - Neutral, 3 – Involved. The table also shows availability of capacity building programmes, on a scale of 1-3, with 1 – Disagreed, 2 - Neutral, 3 – Agreed and frequency of training of support staff on guidance and counselling staff in guidance and counselling of students in Embu County on a scale of 1-3 with 1 – Non-participants, 2 – Termly, 3 – Annually.

Based on the analysis on Table 10, 92 percent of the

Table 8

Types of support staff involved in guidance and counselling in the school and administrative level of involvement of support staff in guidance and counselling of students						
Statement	1 Fq(%)	2 Fq(%)	3 Fq(%)	4 Fq(%)	5 Fq(%)	Mean
Types of support staff involved in guidance and counselling of students	27(45.0)	11(18.33)	17(28.33)	2(3.33)	3(5.0)	12
Administrative levels of involvement of support staff in guidance and counselling of students	27(45.0)	8(13.33)	16(26.67)	3(5.0)	6(10.0)	12

Table 9

Principals' response on professional training of capacity building for support staff on guidance and counselling skills				
Statement	1 Fq(%)	2 Fq(%)	3 Fq(%)	Mean
Availability of capacity building of support staff on guidance and counselling	40(66.67)	0	20(33.33)	20
Frequency of training for support staff on guidance and counselling	40(66.67)	12(12.0)	20(33.33)	20
Number of support staff who have acquired professional training on guidance and counselling	49(81.67)	6(10.0)	5(8.33)	20

Table 10

Support staff response on involvement of support staff in guidance and counselling and capacity building programmes in public secondary schools

Statement	1 Fq(%)	2F q(%)	3 Fq(%)	Mean
Involvement in guidance and counselling in your school	165(92.18)	0	14(7.82)	20
Areas of involvement in guidance and counselling	165(92.18)	9(5.03)	5(2.79)	20
Availability of capacity building for support staff on guidance and counselling	145(81.01)	0	34(18.99)	20
Frequency of training of support staff on guidance and counselling	145(81.01)	21(11.73)	13(7.26)	20

respondents admitted that that members of support staff are not involved in guidance and counselling of students in secondary schools in Embu County. Indeed, only 8 percent of the respondents showed that members of support staff were involved in guidance and counselling affairs of the students. Such a scenario implies that members of support staff are not involved at all in matters of counselling of students despite the fact some of these members interact with students regularly in school.

Based on the analysis on Table 10 that gives the analysis of the various ways support staff were involved in guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Embu County, only 8 percent of the respondents admitted that that members of support staff were involved in guidance and counselling through peer counselling and social interaction. Otherwise, the majority of the support staff (92%) were non-respondents. This situation implies that members of support staff are rarely involved in matters of counselling of students although some of these members interact with students regularly in school.

Table 10 also gives analysis of availability of capacity building programme for support staff in guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Embu County, which according to the analysis, 81 percent of the respondents (145) indicated that no capacity building programmes on guidance and counselling were offered in schools. Only 34 (19%) respondents admitted that that capacity building programmes were offered in schools. This means therefore that capacity building programmes for support staff, focusing on guidance and counselling needed to be initiated in schools in the County.

Table 10 finally gives analysis of the frequency of capacity building programme for support staff in guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Embu County. According to the analysis, 81 percent of the respondents indicated that no capacity building programmes on guidance and counselling were offered in schools. Only 19 percent of the respondents admitted that that capacity building programmes were offered in schools. This means therefore that capacity building programmes for support staff, focusing on guidance and counselling need to be initiated in schools in the County for better performance.

While the support staff in Embu County public secondary schools are not trained, members of support staff in Australia as investigated by Mukite (2012), were found to be professionals.

C. Response on Ranking of Members of Non-Teaching Staff, in terms of Involvement in Guidance and Counselling in Public Secondary Schools

195 students were sampled to respond to the issue concerning involvement of support staff in their guidance and counselling matters in various public secondary schools in Embu County.

Table 11 shows students' response was on ranking of members of non-teaching staff, in terms of involvement in a scale of 5 where 1 is the least involved and 5 is the most involved in guidance and counselling.

Table 11 gives the ranking of accounts clerk in terms of involvement in guidance and counselling of students among secondary schools in Embu County. According to the findings,

53 percent showed that accounts clerks are involved in guidance and counselling matters concerning students. The rest of the respondents ranked the accounts clerk participation as neutral (6%), least involved (15%) and non-participants (26%). This implies that accounts clerks are much involved in guidance and counselling of students in secondary schools in Embu County.

Table 11 shows the ranking of farm attendants in terms of involvement in guidance and counselling matters in the schools in Embu County. According to the findings, 50 percent of the respondents indicated that farm attendants were involved in matters of guidance and counselling in the secondary schools.

From the findings, Table 3.7 gives the ranking of the school secretary in terms of involvement in guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Embu County. 43 percent of the respondents admitted that school secretaries are well involved in guidance and counselling in secondary schools. The rest of the respondents indicated 50 as non-participants (26%), 7 - least involved (4%) and 22 - neutral (22%). This implies that school secretaries are quite involved in matters of guidance and counselling according to students themselves.

Table 11 also gives the ranking of the school librarian in terms of involvement in guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Embu County. From the findings, the following ranks of involvement were given namely not involved (26%), least involved (15%), less involved (6%), involved (5%), more involved (11% and most involved (37%). From the analysis, the involvement of support staff ranged from least involved to most involved constituting 74 percent. This implies that most of the librarians were involved in matters of guidance and counselling of students in secondary schools according to students themselves.

On the ranking of the school cleaners in terms of involvement in guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Embu County, as shown on Table 11, the findings indicate that the following ranks of involvement were given namely not involved (26%), least involved (18%), less involved (5%), involved (29%), and most involved (23%). From the analysis, the involvement of support staff ranged from least involved to most involved constituting 74 percent, this implies that most of the school cleaners interact with students on matters of guidance and counselling of students in secondary schools according to students themselves. One of the students, in response to influence of support staff in offering guidance and counselling responds:

“Aki hawa masupport staff wanafanya kazi muhimu sana. (Infact these support staff do a vital job). Our matron is a real mother, coz (because) she can guide you and when you have a problem she can solve it for you without announcing to everyone. Hata princee haezi jua (even the principal can't know). She is there for you. Huyo ndiye tu atakuelewa (that is the only one who can understand you) time uko na ngori (when you have a problem) you can be sure utashughulikiwa (you will be sorted).”

Table 11 gives the ranking of the school cooks in terms of involvement in guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Embu County. Based on the findings, the following ranks of involvement were given namely; not involved (26%), least

Table 11
Ranking of support staff in terms of involvement in guidance and counselling of students

Statement N=195	1 Fq(%)	2 Fq(%)	3 Fq(%)	4 Fq(%)	5 Fq(%)	Mean
Influence of Accounts Clerk role in guidance and counselling	50(25.64)	30(15.38)	12(6.15)	42(21.54)	61(31.28)	39
Influence of Farm Attendants' role in guidance and counselling	50(25.64)	30(15.38)	18(9.23)	44(22.56)	53(27.18)	39
Influence of Secretary role in guidance and counselling	50(25.64)	7(3.59)	43(22.05)	42(21.54)	41(21.03)	39
Influence of Librarians' role in guidance and counselling	50(25.64)	30(15.38)	12(6.15)	31(15.90)	72(36.92)	39
Influence of Cleaners' role in guidance and counselling	50(25.64)	36(18.54)	9(4.62)	56(28.72)	44(22.56)	39
Influence of Cooks' role in guidance and counselling	50(25.64)	13(6.67)	0	57(29.23)	75(38.46)	39
Influence of Lab technicians' role in guidance and counselling	50(25.64)	13(6.67)	0	46(23.59)	86(44.1)	39
Influence of Security officers' role in guidance and counselling	50(25.64)	13(6.67)	0	73(37.44)	59(30.26)	39

involved (7%), involved (29%), and most involved (38%). From the analysis, the involvement of support staff ranged from least involved to most involved constituting 74 percent of the respondents. This implies that most of the school cooks interact with students on matters of guidance and counselling of students in public secondary schools according to students themselves. This is supported by Kelly and Alexandre (2018), who argue that educational potential of school cooks is based on the relationships of affection they develop with students and qualifications that they possess.

Table 11 gives the ranking of the school lab technician in terms of involvement in guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Embu County. Based on the findings, the following ranks of involvement were given namely not involved (26%), least involved (7%), involved (24%), and most involved 44%). From the analysis, the involvement of support staff ranged from least involved to most involved constituting 74 percent of the respondents. This implies that most of the school cooks interact with students on matters of guidance and counselling of students in secondary schools according to students themselves.

Table 11 gives the ranking of the school security officers in terms of involvement in guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Embu County. Abstracting from the findings, the following ranks of involvement were given namely not involved (26%), least involved (7%), involved (37%), and most involved 30%). From the analysis, the involvement of support staff ranged from least involved to most involved constituting 74 percent of the respondents. This implies that most of the school cooks interact with students on matters of guidance and counselling of students in secondary schools according to students themselves.

The researcher also observed that most of the schools in Embu County had a guardian saint name regardless of the denomination sponsor such as Saint Anthony, Saint Stephen Saint Mary Goretti and Saint Claire among others. It was also observed that catholic sponsored schools had guardian saint statues. The relevance of such was the school aimed at instilling religious moral values and virtues to the school community.

The findings corroborate with the findings of a study by a body of neuroscience, focusing on child development, which revealed that students' academic achievement is predicted on the environments that support holistic student's growth in terms of physical, psychological, social and emotional pathways (UNICEF, 2022).

D. Discussion of the Findings

The study aimed at investigating the influence of support staff on students' guidance and counselling in provision of

quality education in public secondary schools in Embu County. The study concentrated on some aspects of guidance and counselling to collect information from sampled respondents being the principals of public secondary schools, the students and members of non-teaching staff. More information was collected from existing documents and observation by the researcher. Aspects researched on were on how support staff contributed on minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special needs students; their effect on helping students to develop knowledge, skills, and sound moral values; whether they had any effect on helping students in growing up into self-reliant individuals and also their role on influencing students to shy away from drug and substance abuse. The findings revealed that ninety percent of the principals strongly agreed that support staff had an influence in minimizing emotional and psychological trauma among special needs students while ten percent disagreed. 85 % strongly agreed that support staff had an influence in helping students to develop knowledge, skills, and sound moral values, 90% strongly agreed that support staff had an influenced students in growing up into self-reliant individuals while 95% strongly agreed that support staff had could influence students on matters of drugs and substance abuse. The findings also showed that following were more involved in matters of guidance and counselling; the school nurse (40%) matron (24%) and accounts clerk (15%) others were below 5 percent. This can be interpreted that the students trust them more that other persons. Moreover, it was also discovered that when the guidance and counseling team was augmented by one more support staff, the quality of education offered responded upwardly by 1.713 units. This corroborates with AIR (2022), who contend that members of non-teaching staff can encourage family involvement in the students' education. They can also go beyond the set curriculum by providing students' development resources for teachers that address trauma-informed practices and positive behavioral interventions.

5. Conclusion

From the findings it is evident that there is a lot of interaction between the members of the non-teaching staff and students. A healthy, social and psychological student is able to concentrate and actualize on his/ her set goals. Provision of guidance and counselling by people who a learner is free with, helps a student to settle down and overcome challenges facing them. Results revealed that many students are comfortable with members of support staff and appreciate guidance and counselling from them thus support staff involvement in student guidance and

counselling, has a significant influence on the quality of education offered in public secondary schools within Embu County.

6. Recommendations

Since guidance and counselling is the most recommended method of handling discipline in schools as per the government and non-governmental organizations, public secondary school managers, County government and national government should consider offering guidance and counselling to all support team working in secondary schools. Guidance and counselling to support members should be done regularly especially on stress management to enable them remain psychologically stable. This will enable them empathize instead of sympathizing with learners who need their assistance. Basic guidance and counselling skills should also be taught to non-teaching staff so that they can handle simple cases and understand on how to refer difficult one. This will influence learners to make right decisions in school and outside the school. Government should make it a compulsory requirement for schools to conduct regular capacity building products on guidance and counselling. The study recommends that the schools' board of management should employ people with basic skills in guidance and counselling. For those who are already employed, the board of management should provide on-job training of the support staff on basic skills of handling students' issues. Moral education

bodies should reinforce their efforts to ensure acceptable moral training is imparted to learners. Further studies should be carried out in relation to roles of non-teaching staff in schools.

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