

Teachers' Gender and Perception of the Rights of Children in Guidance and Counselling Programme among Public Primary Schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

Muraguri Wangui Rose *, Barasa Enos, Mbuthia Ngunjiri

Department of Psychology, Counselling & Educational Foundations
Laikipia University

P.O. BOX 1100-20300, Nyahururu-Kenya

²Correspondence: e-mail - bamukadi2008@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Kenya is a signatory to International and Regional Conventions and Declarations which protect the child from brutality, cruelty and inhuman treatments. Teachers' gender and their perception on effects of guidance and counselling services is more likely to have high expressive qualities when in a relationship with a client compared to male counsellors. Female counsellors are more able in dealing with clients than male counsellors and this is due to their motherhood nature. The purpose of this study was to determine teachers' gender and perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in east Pokot sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya. The study was guided by the social learning theory and client-centred theory. This study utilized a descriptive research design. The target population was 739 respondents who comprised of 95 teachers, 95 teacher counsellors and 549 senior teachers in 95 primary schools. The sample schools were selected through proportionate statistical selection giving a total of 304 respondents. The study sample consisted of 76 teachers, 76 teacher-counsellors, 76 senior male teachers and 76 senior female teachers making a total sample size of 304 respondents from the sampled 76 schools. Purposive sampling was used to select teachers, teacher counsellors and senior teachers from the five divisions in East Pokot Sub-County. Three questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. The instruments were pilot tested in 10 primary schools in the neighbouring Maralal sub-county in Samburu County. The validity of the instruments was checked by the researcher who also sought the opinion of experts from the Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations in Laikipia University. Reliability of questionnaires was determined by using the Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Internal and external reliability coefficients for three teachers' questionnaires were estimated through Cronbach's alpha. The resultant alpha were $r = .80$ for teachers, $.75$ for seniors teachers and $r = .79$ for teacher counsellors questionnaires respectively. The questionnaires were considered reliable after yielding a reliability coefficient alpha of at least 0.70. The Statistical Package

for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme version 25.0 for windows was utilized to analyze the data. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including percentages, means and frequencies. Hypotheses were tested using Chi square at.05 level of significance. Findings from this study might benefit the County Ministry of Education officers, parents, teachers and other stakeholders in the implementation of rights of children policies regarding the guidance and counselling programme establishment in primary schools. The study might increase available knowledge in the field of education on the rights of the students in schools by equipping students with life skills that enabled them face day to day life challenges.

Key words: Armed conflict, Basic Education, Cattle raiding, Child neglect, Counselling

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Kenya has further reinforced protection of girls and women from the harmful practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) by enacting the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011 into law. This Act prohibits the practice of female genital mutilation to safeguard against violation of a person's mental or physical integrity through the practice of female genital mutilation. It also spells out the penalty due to any person who violates it as being liable to an imprisonment term that is not less than three years or a fine that is not less than two hundred thousand shillings or both (Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011). Section 24 of the Act states that a person who is aware that Female genital mutilation has been performed or is the process of being carried out or will be done and fails to report to law enforcing officers commits a crime. FGM prevalence is often linked with marriageability, preservation of virginity, social acceptance, family dignity and community identity (UNICEF 2005). The United Nations Children Funds (UNICEF) puts the practice as an extreme example of discrimination based on sex (UNICEF, 2005). In communities where women are strongly subjected to patriarchal domination and economic dependence, marriage is perceived to be the only means to "self-reliance" for girls. There is always an expectation that men will only marry women that have undergone the practice. One reason for the persistence of FGM is that girls are expected to pass through marriage to protect their future economically and achieving the level of woman hood (WHO, 2008).

According to Sarah (2008), researchers and professionals with an interest in children have grappled with interpreting United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) and implementing rights for children at international, national and local level. As such, despite all the laws being in place, children in East Pokot Sub County have continued to bear the blunt of retrogressive cultural practices such as early marriages, early pregnancies, female

genital mutilation and cattle raiding. These activities are practiced in a community that perceives them as socio-cultural occurrences. Head teachers and teachers are part and parcel of the community where the practices thrive despite the guidance and counselling role given to the teachers to guide and direct pupils through the education process toward completion. This may have contributed to the worrying trend of dropping out of school especially in primary schools due to pregnancies and early marriages (Society for International Development (SID), 2004). Consequently, head teachers and teachers may be underplaying their role in protecting the children's right to education.

The Children Act No. 8 of 2001 is the principal statute that deals with matters touching on a child's rights and welfare in Children Act- Kenya (Laws of Kenya, Revised 2018). It contains the whole framework of a child's rights as enacted by parliament. In a nutshell, the Act contains an exhaustive list of some of the rights as contained in part II. Examples of these rights include:

- i. Right to education
- ii. Right to religious education
- iii. Rights of a disabled child
- iv. Protection from abuse
- v. Protection from harmful cultural rites
- vi. Right to privacy
- vii. Right to leisure and recreation (page 3).

Far from the rights, important to note is perhaps the fact that Part III categorically provides for parental responsibility as guardians of children. It identifies these guardians as a strong pillar in the safeguarding of a child's interests and the important role they play. However, as a means of behavior control for rowdy and unruly children who may contravene the laws enacted to preserve order, children institutions have been provided for in part V. This serves the purpose of dealing with such absconders. Institutions created for this purpose include Rehabilitation schools and Remand Homes (UNICEF, 2014).

Matlin (2004) argued that females are considered more helpful and generous in offering assistance and emotional support. It is observed that women are more likely than men to enter occupations in the "helping professions" such as guidance and counselling. Female teachers counsellor have a positive attitude towards guidance and counselling services as compared to

male teachers. Gender has been reported as playing a significant role in determining attitude towards seeking help. Seeking psychological help would be seen as admitting failure, weakness and defeat. However, Ojenge and Muchemi (2010) in Ibrahim, Aloka, Wambiya and Raburu (2014) found out that most girls did not believe in the counsellors for lack of privacy in the counselling rooms. In Kenya, Nyingi (2014), found gender differences in students' perceptions of the benefits of guidance and counselling services with more female than male students rating guidance and counselling more highly. Similarly, Muema and Kiilu (2013) found higher, though, insignificant numbers of female than male students seeking help.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the teachers' gender and perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in east Pokot sub-county, Baringo county, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following research objective:

To determine the teachers' gender and perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in east Pokot sub-county, Baringo county, Kenya.

To achieve the research objectives for this study, the following null hypothesis was posited and tested at .05 level of significance:

H₀₁: Teachers' gender has no statistically significant influence on their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design to establish the teachers' perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among primary schools in East Pokot Sub County, Baringo County, Kenya. A Research design is the blue print that explains how a research undertaking will be carried out. As has been pointed out by Burns and Grove (2001), a research design is one of the key enablers of research undertaking and consequently realization of the targeted outcomes. According to Sekeran (2003), descriptive research

design is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena. Descriptive research design helped to gather quantitative and qualitative data describing the current status of the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. Descriptive research design allows researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for clarification (Orodho, 2010).

Instrumentation

This study employed questionnaires as the data collection instrument. Questionnaires were administered to the head teachers, teachers appointed and serving as teacher counsellors and senior teachers with long teaching experience and had administrative roles in the school. Teachers were purposely included into the study because they are the implementers and custodians of the children rights in the schools. Head teachers, teachers appointed as teacher counsellors and senior teachers' questionnaires sought to establish their perceptions of rights of children in the guidance and counselling programme in public primary schools. The questionnaires collected both quantitative and qualitative information. Likert-type of frequency scales were used to measure perception. These five point scales were used to measure levels of perception on a continuum scale of 1 – 5 where 1 = *totally disagree* and 5 = *totally agree* (McLeod, 2008). Questionnaires were preferred since according to Kothari (2003) the information obtained from questionnaires is free from bias and researchers influence, and thus accurate. This enabled valid data collection. The use of questionnaires was also preferred because it is time-saving and makes it possible for the collection of data from a larger group of people. According to Bell (1993), and Kane (1995), questionnaires are least costly and easy both to quantify and to summarize the results and thus chosen by the researcher for efficiency and effectiveness.

Validity of Research Instruments

The research instruments were systematically evaluated to ensure that they are valid. A valid Instrument is paramount to ensure that the data collected accurately samples out the desired attributes of the population (Borg & Gall, 2007). The questionnaires were subjected to scrutiny by the researcher to ensure that they are responding to the objectives of the study. The opinion of supervisors and other experts from the School of Education of Laikipia University on content validity was also sought. Content validity is a measure of the degree to which data collected using a particular instrument represents a specific domain of indicators

or content of a particular concept (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). After the pilot test, research instruments were improved and approved accordingly.

Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability refers to the measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Reliability of the instruments was tested in a pilot study in Maralal Division in Samburu County to provide the required information on its reliability and establish the time taken to administer the instruments in order to make necessary modifications and adjustments on questionnaires before data collection in the field. Maralal Division was chosen because it is far from the study location and would not thus interfere with the objectivity of actual data collection. The Division also bears similar characteristics of a semi-arid pastoralist inhabited context as East Pokot. The reliability coefficient was estimated by computing Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The questionnaires items were considered reliable and thus suitable for data collection after yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.75 for senior teacher questionnaires, 0.79 for teacher' questionnaires and 0.80 for teachers questionnaires. The obtained values for Cronbach' alpha were greater than 0.7 which is an indication of the consistency among items measuring a concept and therefore was accepted (Orodho, 2004, Mugenda&Mugenda, 1999). This meant that the responses given to the questions of the questionnaire by the respondents were both consistent and well understood.

Data Collection Procedure

An introductory letter to conduct research was sought from the Graduate School, Laikipia University. After which permission to conduct research was also sought from the National Commission on Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The researcher then proceeded to the area of study for data collection. The researcher made initial visits to East Pokot Sub County education office and explained the purpose of the study. Thereafter, the researcher made appointments with respondents which guided the data collection schedule. The researcher selected two research assistants from each division selected for the study. They were trained for one day to orientate them on the study to be undertaken and data collection instruments. On the agreed dates, the researcher and the research assistants visited the respective respondents and

collected data using the questionnaires. The questionnaires and interview schedules were administered in person by the researcher and the research assistants respectively.

Results and Discussions

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender was conceptualized as maleness and femaleness of a teacher and the distribution presented in Table 5

Table 1:

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	173	56.9
Female	131	43.1
Total	304	100.0

Source: (Field data, 2019)

Table 1 shows that among the respondents male teachers were more at 56.9% (173) while female respondents were the fewer at 43.1% (131) to yield a total of 304 respondents. Research has also shown that pastoralist communities support boy child education as opposed to the girl child as reported by Warrington and Kiragu's (2011) in their findings among the Maasai in Kajiado that fathers did not value education for their daughters, hence gave minimal support to those who did manage to go to school. This can be generalised for a similar pastoralist community in East Pokot which explains lower number of female teachers than men teachers in primary school set up establishment.

To achieve the objective the following hypothesis was formulated:

H₀1: Teachers' gender has no statistically significant influence on their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

The hypothesis presumed that gender of the teachers has no influence on the perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya. To establish the truth of this assumption, t test analysis was carried out. The results of the analysis are as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2 shows the mean for Teachers’ gender and their Perception of the Rights of Children on Guidance and Counselling Programme.

Table 1:

Mean of the influence of gender on Teachers' Perception on the Rights of Children

Teachers' Perception Rights of Children			
Gender	Mean	N	
Male	46.15	173	
Female	52.53	131	
Total	48.90	304	

Source: Field Data, 2019

Table 3 presents t test analysis for teachers’ gender and their Perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme.

Table 3:

t test analysis for Teachers’ Gender and their Perception of the Rights of Children on Guidance and Counselling Programme

Paired Samples Test							
Paired Differences							
95% Confidence							
Std. Interval of the							
Std. Error Difference							
Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)

Pair	gender -	-47.470	30.511	1.750	-50.914	-	-27.127	303	.000
1	Teachers' Perception Rights of Children				44.027				

Source: (Field data, 2019)

From Table 3, the t value was found to be significant ($t(303) = -27.127$, $p = .000$). Therefore the null hypothesis H_0 that gender has no statistically significant influence on the perception of the rights of children was rejected at .05 level of significance. This means that the gender of a teacher has an influence on the perception of the rights of children and from Table 12, the mean scores favors female teachers (mean = 52.53) than male teachers (Mean = 46.15). This scenario is linked to the perceived ability of females to handle primary school pupils due to their innate or acquired feminine personality traits such as friendliness, sensitivity, caring, helpfulness, and supportiveness. The findings are in agreement with Moindi (2011) who in his study, about teachers' gender and their perception on effects of guidance and counselling services, showed that female teachers were more likely to have high expressive qualities when in a relationship with a client compared to male counsellors. The findings also concur with Wanjohi (1990) and Maithya (1998), who state that female counsellors are more able in dealing with clients than male counsellors. Further, Matlin (2004) argued that females are considered more helpful and generous in offering assistance and emotional support. It is observed that women are more likely than men to enter occupations in the “helping professions” such as guidance and counselling. Female teacher counsellors have a positive attitude towards guidance and counselling services as compared to male teachers. In this regard, the research results are supported by several researchers. The study findings agrees with Iroegbu and Adeleke (2015) who in their study established that there is a highly significant positive correlation ($r = .614$, $p = .001$) in the perceptions of the male and female teachers/caregivers. This result tends to show that both male and female early childhood education teachers/caregivers harbor highly similar views on the rights of children. The correlation accounts for 38% of the variation in the perceptions of the teachers/caregivers. This result means that as much as 38% of the perception of the females could be predicted correctly from the perception of the males.

Summary of the Findings

The Influence of Teachers' Gender on their Perception of the Rights of Children in Guidance and Counselling Programme among Public Primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

To achieve the objective the following hypothesis was formulated:

H₀₁: Teachers' gender has no statistically significant influence on their perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya.

The hypothesis was tested using t test analysis. The t test analysis showed that;

1. The t value was found to be significant ($t(303) = -27.127$), $p = .000$)
2. Therefore the null hypothesis (H₀₁) was rejected.
3. The gender of a teacher has an influence on the perception of the rights of children.
4. Female teachers (mean = 52.53) mean scores were higher than male teachers (Mean = 46.15).

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusion was made:

- i. There is significant influence of gender on respondents' perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.
- ii. Professional training in guidance and counselling does significantly influence respondents' perception of the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendation was made:

- i. It was expected that gender would play a key role in perception, but the neutral observations pointed to a dearth in active sensitization of the professional as well as masses in the area. It was therefore recommended that more sensitization efforts be

expended to educate the people on the rights of children in guidance and counselling programme among public primary schools in East Pokot Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

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