



GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES AND GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL IN WAJIR EAST SUB COUNTY KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of provision of guidance and counseling services on girls' participation in public secondary schools in Wajir East Sub-County, Kenya. The study was grounded on Theory of student participation. Employing a quantitative research design, the study collected numerical data that were statistically analyzed. The target respondents were school management staff, including principals, teachers, and administrators, from 14 mixed secondary schools in Wajir East Sub-County, totaling 210 respondents. The sample size was 137 respondents, selected through a stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire interview guide comprising closed-ended questions administered face-to-face. The analysis involved descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages, and mean scores, as well as inferential statistics such as regression analysis, to establish the relationship between guidance and counseling services and girls' participation in public secondary schools. Findings revealed strong support for guidance and counseling services with respondents acknowledging their positive effects on enrollment, retention, and academic performance of female students.

Key Words: Guidance and Counseling Services

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the constitutional provisions and policy frameworks that support gender equity in education, girls in Wajir East Sub-County continue to experience challenges in accessing and completing secondary education. The sub-county has a low enrollment rate of girls in secondary schools, and the completion rate of form four among girls is also low. The factors that contribute

to the low participation of girls in secondary education in the sub-county are complex and multifaceted, but school management strategies are one of the factors that may have an impact on girls' participation in secondary education. As an instance, Table 1 reveals low admission of girls in secondary schools in Wajir East Sub county (Ministry of Education Report Wajir County 2018 / 2022).

Table 1: Wajir East Sub-County Girl Child Education Report from 2018 to 2022

Year	Admission Rates (%)	Dropout Rates (%)	Completion Rates (%)
2018	18.5	7.9	11.6
2019	22.2	9.7	13.2
2020	23.1	13.3	11.4
2021	24.2	15.1	9.5
2022	25.2	15.9	10.3

Source: (Ministry of Education Report Wajir County 2018/ 2022)

Table 1 shows admission, dropout, and completion rates of girls in secondary schools in Wajir East Sub-County from 2018 to 2022, offering insights into girl child education trends. Admission rates have gradually increased from 18.5% in 2018 to 25.2% in 2022, indicating efforts to enhance access and enrollment. However, dropout rates have also risen, reaching 15.9% in 2022, suggesting a significant number of girls leaving school prematurely. Completion rates remain consistently low, declining from 11.6% in 2018 to 10.3% in 2022. These statistics highlight the need for targeted interventions to address challenges in accessing and completing secondary education. Barriers such as socio-economic factors, cultural norms, early marriages, inadequate infrastructure, and limited resources contribute to the low rates. Stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, local authorities, communities, and NGOs, should collaborate and implement comprehensive strategies. These may involve financial assistance, community sensitization, addressing cultural barriers, improving infrastructure and teacher support, and promoting girls' empowerment. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the data are essential to track progress and identify areas needing attention. Through addressing underlying

issues, admission rates can improve, dropout rates can decrease, and completion rates can increase, ensuring equal educational opportunities for girls. Despite these figures, there have been limited research studies investigating how school management strategies impact girls' participation in public secondary schools in Wajir County, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Despite efforts to promote gender equality in education, girls in many parts of Kenya, including Wajir East Sub County, continue to face significant barriers to accessing and participating in public secondary schools. These barriers may include cultural norms that prioritize boys' education over girls', poverty, early marriage, and inadequate school facilities and resources. The enrollment rate of girls in form one in Wajir East Sub-County is low, and the completion rate of form four among girls is also low. According to the Wajir East Sub-County Education Office, only 34% of the girls who enroll in form one complete their secondary education in the sub-county (Wajir East Sub-County Education Office. 2022). This problem has persisted over the years.

Numerous studies have examined the correlation between school management strategies and girls'

participation in public secondary schools. For instance, Sharma, Gupta, and Verma (2022) delved into the effects of Community Engagement on Students' Academic Achievement in Rural Primary Schools in India. However, this study lacked specificity regarding the types of community engagement activities and their varying impacts. Chen, Wang, and Li (2023) evaluated the efficacy of Teacher Professional Development Programs on Student Learning Outcomes in Urban Secondary Schools. Regrettably, the study fell short by not incorporating a comparison or control group to accurately assess the genuine influence of the professional development initiatives. Johnson, Anderson, and Smith (2023) explored parental involvement in students' transition to higher education through a longitudinal study. Yet, their focus primarily centered on parental perceptions and attitudes, neglecting the valuable experiences and viewpoints of the students themselves. Despite these research endeavors, empirical investigations on the subject remain scarce within the context of Kenya. This study bridged this gap by examining the impact of guidance and counseling services on girls' participation in public secondary schools in Wajir East Sub County, Kenya.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of guidance and counseling services on girls' participation in public secondary school in Wajir East Sub County Kenya. The study was based on the following research question:-

- How do guidance and counseling services affect girls' enrollment in public secondary schools in Kenya's Wajir East Sub County?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Literature Review

Guidance and counseling services are support services provided to individuals to help them address personal, social, or academic concerns. These services are designed to help individuals overcome challenges, make informed decisions, and reach their full potential. In the context of public

secondary schools, guidance and counseling services are aimed at promoting the overall well-being of students, including their academic success, mental health, and personal development.

Research has shown that guidance and counseling services can have a positive influence on girls' participation in public secondary schools. Here are five studies that provide evidence of the impact of guidance and counseling services on girls' participation:

A study by Adegoke and Adeyemo (2018) in Nigeria found that guidance and counseling services led to improvements in girls' academic performance and reduced the dropout rate. The study also found that the services helped to address emotional and psychological challenges that were hindering girls' participation in school. In a study of guidance and counseling services in Kenya, Onyango et al. (2019) found that the services were effective in promoting girls' participation and retention in school. The study also found that the services helped to address gender-based violence and promote gender equality in the school.

A study by Sharma et al. (2017) in India found that guidance and counseling services helped to improve girls' self-esteem, academic performance, and overall well-being. The study also found that the services helped to reduce the dropout rate among girls.

In a study of guidance and counseling services in Uganda, Mugalu and Oundo (2019) found that the services were effective in promoting girls' participation and retention in school. The study also found that the services helped to address emotional and psychological challenges that were hindering girls' academic progress.

A study by Nkata (2018) in Cameroon found that guidance and counseling services helped to address the needs of girls who were facing academic, social, or emotional challenges. The study found that the services helped to improve girls' academic performance and retention in school. A study by Makinde (2018) in Nigeria found that guidance and

counseling services helped to improve girls' academic performance and increase their participation in extracurricular activities. The study also found that the program helped to promote gender equality in the school.

In a study of guidance and counseling services in Kenya, Chege et al. (2018) found that the approach was effective in promoting girls' participation in school and reducing dropout rates. The study also found that the program helped to improve girls' mental health and well-being. A study by Mahmood and Rehman (2019) in Pakistan found that guidance and counseling services helped to reduce gender-based discrimination and promote gender equality in the school. The study also found that the program helped to improve girls' academic performance and attendance.

In a study of guidance and counseling services in South Africa, Molefe and Ramphalile (2019) found that the approach was effective in promoting girls' academic and personal development. The study also found that the program helped to reduce gender-based violence and promote gender equality in the school.

A study by Singh and Verma (2017) in India found that guidance and counseling services helped to improve girls' academic performance and reduce dropout rates. The study also found that the program helped to promote girls' career aspirations and increase their confidence and self-esteem.

Taken together, these studies suggest that guidance and counseling services can have a positive impact on girls' participation in public secondary schools by addressing the emotional and psychological challenges that may be hindering their academic progress. By promoting a supportive and inclusive learning environment, these services can help to improve girls' academic performance, retention in school, and overall well-being.

A study by Iwundu (2017) in Nigeria found that guidance and counseling services were effective in promoting girls' academic performance and reducing their dropout rates in secondary schools.

The study also found that the program helped to improve girls' mental health and well-being.

In a study of guidance and counseling services in Zimbabwe, Dzvova et al. (2019) found that the approach was effective in promoting girls' participation in school and reducing dropout rates. The study also found that the program helped to improve girls' self-esteem and confidence.

A study by Sibandze and Sibandze (2018) in Eswatini found that guidance and counseling services helped to reduce girls' absenteeism and dropout rates in secondary schools. The study also found that the program helped to improve girls' academic performance and promote gender equality in the school.

In a study of guidance and counseling services in Kenya, Ayodo and Oanda (2018) found that the approach was effective in promoting girls' participation in school and reducing dropout rates. The study also found that the program helped to improve girls' mental health and well-being.

A study by Akande et al. (2018) in Nigeria found that guidance and counseling services helped to improve girls' academic performance and reduce their dropout rates. The study also found that the program helped to promote gender equality in the school.

In a study of guidance and counseling services in Tanzania, Assey and Shayo (2018) found that the approach was effective in promoting girls' participation in school and reducing absenteeism and dropout rates. The study also found that the program helped to improve girls' mental health and well-being.

A study by Alemu and Alemayehu (2021) in Ethiopia found that guidance and counseling services helped to reduce girls' absenteeism and dropout rates in secondary schools. The study also found that the program helped to improve girls' academic performance and promote gender equality in the school.

In a study of guidance and counseling services in Ghana, Ansah and Ansah (2017) found that the approach was effective in promoting girls' participation in school and reducing dropout rates. The study also found that the program helped to improve girls' mental health and well-being.

A study by Ogbazi and Ugwu (2019) in Nigeria found that guidance and counseling services helped to reduce girls' absenteeism and dropout rates in secondary schools. The study also found that the program helped to improve girls' academic performance and promote gender equality in the school.

In a study of guidance and counseling services in South Africa, Nkoana (2018) found that the approach was effective in promoting girls' participation in school and reducing dropout rates. The study also found that the program helped to improve girls' mental health and well-being.

Guidance and counseling services provide personalized support to girls, addressing their individual needs and challenges. This support can include academic guidance, career counseling, and assistance in setting goals and making educational decisions. By receiving guidance and support tailored to their specific circumstances, girls are better equipped to navigate the academic demands of secondary school, make informed choices, and stay engaged in their education. Girls often face emotional and social challenges during their secondary school years. Guidance and counseling services offer a safe and confidential space for girls to express their concerns, discuss personal issues, and seek guidance on social and emotional well-being. This support helps girls develop resilience, cope with stress, build positive relationships, and enhance their overall mental health, leading to increased participation and a sense of belonging within the school community. Guidance and counseling services play a crucial role in preparing girls for future opportunities and life beyond secondary school. These services help girls explore career options, develop essential life skills such as communication, decision-making, and problem-

solving, and equip them with the necessary tools to pursue further education or enter the workforce. By providing guidance on career pathways and life skills development, girls are empowered to make informed choices, enhance their employability, and actively participate in shaping their futures.

Theoretical Review

Theory of Students Participation

This research will also be guided by Tinto and Cullen's (1973) theory of student participation, with a central focus on integration. According to this theory, the persistence or dropout rates of girls in education are strongly influenced by their level of academic and social integration. These factors develop over time, and dropout decisions are influenced by the level of commitment at the time. Tinto and Cullen (1973) have classified theories related to girls' education into three categories: psychological, environmental, and interactional. The psychological dimension centers on individual personality traits, suggesting that girl attrition is linked to personal shortcomings or weaknesses. However, there is no consistent "departure-prone" personality or specific personal characteristics uniformly associated with girl attrition (Tinto & Cullen, 1973).

According to this theory, girls' participation in education are strongly influenced by their level of academic and social integration. These factors develop over time, and dropout decisions are influenced by the level of commitment at the time. The psychological dimension centers on individual personality traits, suggesting that girls' participation in public secondary schools in Wajir East Sub County, Kenya is linked to personal shortcomings or weaknesses. In the context of this study, girls' access to educational opportunities and their eventual retention in schools are largely dependent on the various management strategies implemented by school principals.

Tinto and Cullen (1973) emphasize the role of social, economic, and organizational variables on girl retention in their discussion of the

environmental dimension. They contend that societal factors such as socioeconomic position, race, prestige, and opportunity have a considerable impact on girl retention rates, whereas individual and institution-specific elements are overlooked. The economic dimension emphasizes the significance of individual socioeconomic

circumstances and financial assistance in determining girl retention. As a result, in the context of this study, girls' access to educational opportunities and eventual retention in schools are heavily reliant on the varied management tactics employed by school principals.

Conceptual Framework

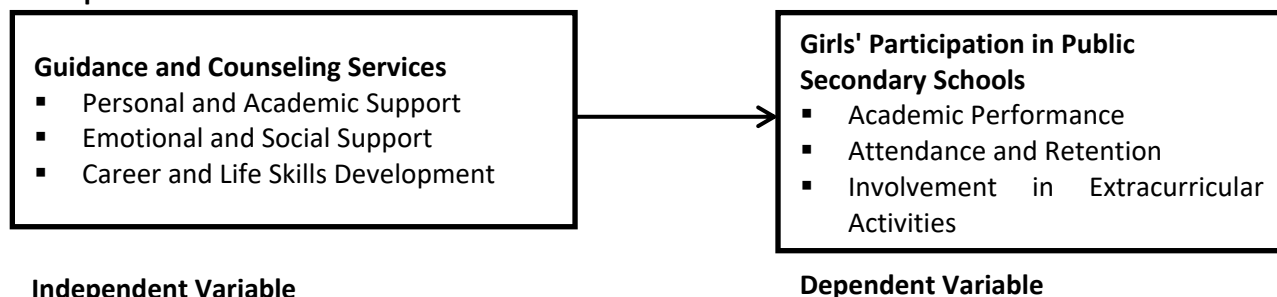


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

To better understand the research issue, the study used a mix of methods, both quantitative and qualitative. This was considered a good choice because the study gathered and analyzed both numbers and words in one research. The research design encompassed the entire plan and structure guiding a research study. A quantitative research design was used, enabling the collection of numerical data for statistical analysis. The research took place in Wajir East Sub-County, situated in the northeastern region of Kenya. Within this sub-county, there were a total of 14 public secondary schools. The target respondents consisted of school management staff, including principals, teachers, and administrators, from 14 mixed secondary schools in Wajir County. In total, there were 210 respondents, comprising 14 principals, 168 teachers, and 28 school administrators. To determine the sample size for this study, the researcher employed Yamane's Formula. The sample size were 137 respondents. In this study, the chosen sampling technique approach was stratified random sampling. Data collection methods included questionnaires for teachers and administrators, while interviews were conducted with principals to collect the necessary information.

The gathered data underwent analysis employing descriptive statistics like frequency distribution and percentages. Additionally, inferential statistics such as regression analysis were used to determine the correlation between school management strategies and girls' involvement in public secondary schools.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

The study sought to determine the influence of school management strategies on girls' participation in public secondary schools in Wajir East Sub County, Kenya. The study used a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was strongly disagree "SD", 2 was disagree "D", 3 was neutral, "N" "4 was agree "A" and lastly 5 was strongly agree, "SA". To achieve this objective teacher's opinion was established.

Guidance and Counseling Services have on Girls' Enrollment

The study sought to ascertain the effect that guidance and counseling services have on girls' enrollment in Kenya's public secondary schools in the Wajir East Sub County. The results are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Guidance and Counseling Services have on Girls' Enrollment

Opinion	SD	D	N	A	SA
Effective guidance and counseling services help address personal and academic challenges faced by female students in public secondary schools.			12(11.0%)	51(46.8%)	46(42.2%)
Girls who receive regular guidance and counseling support are more likely to stay enrolled in public secondary schools.			6(5.5%)	64(58.7%)	39(35.8%)
Guidance and counseling services play a crucial role in improving the mental health and well-being of female students in public secondary schools.			4(3.7%)	51(46.8%)	54(49.5%)
I feel that providing specialized guidance and counseling for girls enhances their academic performance and confidence in public secondary schools.		2(1.8%)	7(6.4%)	51(46.8%)	49(45.0%)
Public secondary schools with comprehensive guidance and counseling programs are more successful in retaining female students.	1(0.9%)		6(5.5%)	39(35.8%)	63(57.8%)
I think guidance and counseling services contribute to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for girls in public secondary schools.		3(2.8%)	5(4.6%)	39(35.8)	62(56.9%)

Source: Researcher (2024)

In view of Table 2 findings above, most of the respondents 89.0% agree that effective guidance and counseling services help address personal and academic challenges faced by female students in public secondary schools while 11.0% were neutral with the opinion. The findings also revealed that most of the respondents 94.5% of girls who receive regular guidance and counseling support are more likely to stay enrolled in public secondary schools while 5.5% were neutral to the opinion. The study findings also revealed that most of the respondents 96.3% agreed with the opinion statement that guidance and counseling services play a crucial role in improving the mental health and well-being of female students in public secondary schools, and 3.7% of the respondents were neutral to the opinion. The most respondents 91.8% revealed that providing specialized guidance and counseling for girls enhances their academic performance and confidence in public secondary schools, only 6.4% of the respondents were neutral whole 1.8%

disagreed with the opinion. Most of the respondents, 93.6% agreed that public secondary schools with comprehensive guidance and counseling programs are more successful in retaining female students, 9.9% of the respondents were neutral to the statement, 5.5% were neutral while only 0.9% were in disagreement. Finally, most respondents 92.7% agreed with the opinion statement that guidance and counseling services contribute to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for girls in public secondary schools, 4.6% were neutral while only 2.8% disagreed with the opinion. This study findings revealed to be in line with Castleman and Goodman (2018) , that guidance and Counseling Services (GCS) boosted female school enrollment by providing tailored support and addressing socio-emotional barriers. A study by the World Bank (2020) revealed that implementing GCS led to improved self-esteem, motivation, and academic achievement among girls. This personalized approach encouraged females to

overcome obstacles, fostering increased enrollment in schools.

Their interview the principals' respondents affirmed that, *in terms of guidance and counseling services, we have specific programs and initiatives tailored to support girls' participation and well-being. Our counselors are trained to address the unique challenges and issues that girls may face, such as gender-based violence, early marriage, and societal expectations. We also organize regular workshops and peer support groups to empower girls and provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate these challenges.*"

In our experience, guidance and counseling services have positively influenced girls' participation in school activities and decision-making by providing them with a safe space to express themselves and seek support. For example, through individual counseling sessions, girls have been able to address

personal issues that may be hindering their academic performance or participation in extracurricular activities.

Additionally, our guidance and counseling department has implemented initiatives such as mentorship programs and career guidance sessions, which have had a significant impact on enhancing girls' participation and their overall school experience. These initiatives provide girls with role models and opportunities to explore their interests and aspirations, ultimately motivating them to actively engage in school activities.

Girls' Participation in Public Secondary Schools in Wajir County, Kenya (GPPSC)

The study sought to investigate into the role that parental involvement plays in encouraging girls to enroll in public secondary schools in Wajir East Sub County, Kenya. The results are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Schools in Wajir County, Kenya

Opinion	SD	D	N	A	SA
Girls who actively participate in school leadership roles demonstrate higher levels of engagement and commitment to their education.		5(4.6%)	11(10.1%)	62(56.9%)	31(28.4%)
Public secondary schools that offer tailored programs to address the needs of girls attract more female students.		5(4.6%)	14(12.8%)	50(45.9%)	40(36.7%)
I believe creating a supportive peer network encourages girls to actively participate in school activities and programs.		8(7.3%)	12(11.0%)	49(45.0%)	40(36.7%)
Girls who receive mentorship and guidance from older students or alumni are more likely to participate in public secondary school events.	6(5.5%)	6(5.5%)	30(27.5%)	29(26.6%)	38(34.9%)
Implementing initiatives to promote girls' voices and perspectives in school decision-making processes enhances their participation in public secondary schools.	6(5.5%)	8(7.3%)	10(9.2%)	32(29.4%)	53(48.6%)

Source: Researcher (2024)

According to the study findings as shown in table 4, most of the respondents 85.3% agreed with the opinion statement that girls who actively participate in school leadership roles demonstrate higher levels of engagement and commitment to their education, the 10.1% of the respondents were neutral while only 4.6% strongly disagreed with the

opinion. Most of the respondents 82.6% also agreed that public secondary schools that offer tailored programs to address the needs of girls attract more female students, 12.8% were neutral while only 4.6% of the respondents disagreed with the opinion. Most respondents 81.7% as well agreed that creating a supportive peer network encourages

girls to actively participate in school activities and programs, 11.0% were neutral to the opinion while 7.3% strongly disagreed with the opinion. In addition, most respondents 61.5% agreed that girls who receive mentorship and guidance from older students or alumni are more likely to participate in public secondary school events, 27.5% of them were neutral while only 11.0% strongly disagreed with the opinion. Lastly, most of respondents 78.0% agreed that implementing initiatives to promote girls' voices and perspectives in school decision-making processes enhances their participation in public secondary schools, 9.2% were neutral while only 12.8% strongly disagreed with the opinion. Girls' participation in public secondary schools is influenced by various factors including societal norms, access to education, quality of infrastructure, and support systems. Efforts such as gender-responsive pedagogy and guidance and counseling services have been shown to enhance girls' enrollment and participation in secondary education, as revealed by various studies (Aziz *et al.*, 2018).

SUMMARY

The study investigated the effect of guidance and counseling services on girls' enrollment in public secondary schools in Wajir East Sub County, Kenya. Results demonstrated that effective GCS helped address personal and academic challenges, improved mental health and well-being, enhanced academic performance and confidence, increased retention rates, and contributed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for girls. These findings are consistent with studies, indicating that GCS boosts female school enrollment by providing tailored support and addressing socio-emotional barriers.

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CONCLUSIONS

The study found that GRP contributes to creating a supportive and inclusive environment, breaking gender stereotypes, and encouraging girls to pursue education. Similarly, the study concluded that effective Guidance and Counseling Services (GCS) play a crucial role in enhancing girls' enrollment, retention, academic performance, mental health, and well-being in public secondary schools. Providing specialized support, addressing personal and academic challenges, and fostering a supportive environment through GCS were associated with improved outcomes for female students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Guidance and counseling services (GCS) should be effectively implemented in public secondary schools to address personal and academic challenges faced by female students. Specialized support programs and initiatives tailored to support girls' participation and well-being should be developed, including workshops, peer support groups, and individual counseling sessions. Moreover, schools should prioritize creating a supportive and inclusive environment through GCS to empower girls and provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate challenges such as gender-based violence and early marriage.

Recommendation for Further Studies

The reportage in this study determined the influence of guidance and counseling services on girls' participation in public secondary school in Wajir East Sub County Kenya. The study recommended the need to conduct further studies in the other parts of the Country. This will contribute to the body of knowledge since that knowledge is missing.

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