

## Abstract

Peer counseling has been established in Kenyan secondary schools among other counseling services being offered to students. This emanates from the fact that it has the potential to impact students' behaviour positively. The purpose of this study was to establish the impact of peer counseling services on students discipline and academic achievement in secondary schools in Tharaka South Sub County Kenya. This study adopts the descriptive survey design. The study targeted a population of 4212 persons. These include 4160 students in the secondary schools, which includes 104 students' counselors, 26 principals and, 26 heads of departments in secondary schools. From this population, 496 respondents were sampled and the response rate was 365 respondents. The sample is obtained through three sampling techniques: stratified random sampling (for students, peer counselors, principals and counseling masters) so as to achieve the designed representation from various categories in the population as well as simple random sampling and purposive sampling to sample principals, counseling masters, students and peer counselors from each of the various types of schools (Girls Boarding, Boys Boarding, Mixed Boarding, Mixed Day and Private) in the 26 schools sampled. Data was collected using questionnaires from students, principals and student counselors and interviews from counseling masters. A pilot study was carried out in two schools in the neighboring Tharaka North Sub County. Data from the pilot study was used to test reliability of the study instrument. Content Validity of instruments for this study was assured by expert advice from university supervisors and other experts in the field of study. Reliability of the instruments was assessed through Pearson coefficient ( $r$ ), obtained through test-retest of individual questions, whereby a value of 0.7 and above were deemed to adequate to judge the instruments as reliable for the study. Data from interviews was analyzed thematically. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies were used to describe the data from questionnaires. It was evident in the study that schools had peer counselors programmes. The findings show that the students who were exposed to peer counseling had better discipline. When students were guided well, they tended to concentrate more in school activities. This went on to impact their achievement in examinations and other tests. In line with the study findings and conclusions, various recommendations were made. The Ministry of Education need to train enough peer counselors. Student counselors should also be exposed to regular training so as to enhance their ability to offer regular honing of the skills of peer counselors. In addition, schools should provide motivation strategies to peer counselors so as to motivate them to be willing to take part in peer counseling efforts. The researcher recommends a comparative study on the subject in other counties in Kenya.