

**EFFECTS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PROGRAMME ON
REDUCING PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AMONG SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF BUURI DISTRICT,
MERU COUNTY – KENYA.**



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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR
THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN COUNSELING
PSYCHOLOGY OF MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**



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ABSTRACT

There is a growing literature describing the stressful nature of students' school experience. Previous research has found that students are particularly subject to high levels of stress due to exposure to violence and pressures due to the schooling process. The purpose of this study was to evaluate effect of Guidance and Counselling programme on reducing Psychological Distress among secondary school students in Buuri District, Meru County – Kenya. Descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The study was conducted in public secondary schools Buuri District. The district has a total of 34 secondary schools. The target population of this study included 34 secondary schools in Buuri districts. Up to 34 counsellor teachers of these secondary schools and 1253 form three students were targeted for this study. Systematic random sampling method was used to select 375 students from form three since they had stayed in school for relatively long time. This study used questionnaires to collect data. The quantitative data was analysed using various statistics including frequency counts, means and percentages. The computer program, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 17 was used to enhance efficiency in the quantitative data analysis. Qualitative data was analysed qualitatively using content analysis of meanings and implications emanating from respondents' information. The study revealed that majority of the students had experienced psychological distress during the schooling process and that majority of the students could not handle such an experience. Results further show that there were insufficient counsellors in schools in Buuri district; inadequate availability of counselling facilities; and that the qualification of guidance and counselling personnel has impact on the quality of counselling services they provide to secondary school learners. The study recommends that all secondary schools should have teacher counsellors appointed on the basis of their qualifications and interest in the area, the administration to come up with appropriate ways of creating awareness to students about the counselling services offered in schools and the importance of these counselling services to the holistic development of the student. In addition, the school administrations should work towards establishing offices specifically for conducting counselling services and set specific times of the day when students are supposed to attend counselling. Further research to be conducted to assess the counselling needs of students and determine the factors that influence utilization of available counselling services among students in Kenyan secondary schools.

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