
Efficacy of Guidance and Counselling Programme in the Paramilitary Establishment among National Youth Service Trainees and Trainers in Gilgil Training College, Kenya

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Abstract

The National Youth Service (NYS) is a department in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs entrusted with the responsibility of offering vocational training to the youth. The Basic Paramilitary Training Programme exposes recruits to psycho-social problems hence the need for guidance and counselling services. Trainees and trainers' attitude of guidance and counselling programme determines its effectiveness in the paramilitary establishment. The purpose of this study was to determine the trainees and trainers' attitude on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme in the paramilitary establishment in Gilgil training college, Kenya. The study used the *ex post facto* research design. The target population was all NYS trainees and trainers. The college had a population of 242 paramilitary trainers and 2473 trainees. A sample of 24 paramilitary trainers and 252 trainees were selected through stratified and simple random sampling procedures. The required data were collected through questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents after being pilot tested for reliability and yielded a reliability index of 0.83 for paramilitary trainers' questionnaire and 0.90 for trainees' questionnaire. The questionnaires were also subjected to scrutiny by the researchers to establish their validity. Descriptive statistics included percentages, means and frequencies which were used to analyse the data on trainees and trainers' attitude of the guidance and counselling programme. Inferential statistics included t-test and Pearson coefficient test used to test the hypotheses of the study. The posited hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that the guidance and counselling programme was perceived positively by all NYS stakeholders. The study thus recommended that there was need to offer more appropriate training to officer counsellors and provide the necessary adequate resources for effective service delivery.

Keywords: Basic paramilitary training programme, guidance and counselling, National Youth Service, trainees, trainers

Introduction

According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2013), when high school graduates join colleges for the first time, they experience new forms of independence and freedom from direct adult and family supervision. The students are faced for the first time with the challenge of making crucial decisions by and for themselves. At the university, some students may face, intense academic pressures, forming new social groups, problems with keeping a balance of social engagements with academic and other life responsibilities. In addition, the students may be exposed to normative values that are valued by the youth culture that differ from parental values. Further, UNODC postulates that these perceived norms motivate the youth to indulge in unhealthy behaviours such as smoking and alcohol and drug use.

The growing number of social problems affecting the lives of African youths has been a great concern among the educators. This has led to a determined approach towards making their education systems play a much more active and positive role in promoting the growth and development of the young people entrusted to their care (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001). Beekman

(2008) as cited in Chiira (2014) points out that youth are the backbone to a sustainable development of a nation. As such, nations ought to invest greatly on the issues affecting the young people in areas of nation building. Further, institutions ought to be put in place to ensure the young people's needs are put into perspective. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) broadly highlight that the ever-growing complexity of society, coupled with social problems and the rapid development of science and technology, place heavy demands on education. The school, as an important social institution, is required to adapt quickly to changing patterns, and helping prepare young people for tomorrow's challenges (Marx, 2006 as cited in Chiira, 2014). The role of counselling in education set up provides a vital tool for the empowerment and liberation of the youth.

The Kenya National Youth Service (NYS) was implemented immediately after independence and every year, it takes in new recruits, who are to be trained in vocational skills. The servicemen/women undertake major projects that are part of the national development plan. Vocational training under the NYS is carried out at some 22 schools, institutes and training centres throughout the country. At least once a year, a new group of volunteers is admitted to the service. Before the NYS recruiting team goes out, the dates of recruitment are made public. A quota of vacancies is allocated to each province in proportion to its population. Those to be recruited should be without dependants and an age of 18 to 26 years is preferred. Complete physical fitness is essential and each would-be recruit must undergo a thorough medical examination. A good educational background is an advantage. All recruits sign a two-years contract period which can be extended to three or four years if more time is needed in order to complete some particular form of training. They receive free board, lodging and uniforms and are given a monthly allowance, of which some is retained for them in a compulsory saving account until they are ready to leave the service (Omondi, 2005).

Basic training is carried out at the Gilgil training college. The recruits are taught the aims and methods of the service and are given the various skills such as camp craft and first aid that they will need when serving in remote units and projects in the country. Basic training is intended to instil discipline and to accustom the recruits to working together as an efficient and orderly team. Rigorous cleanliness of body, uniform and kit is demanded and there is a good deal of parade-ground drill and physical exercise. Basic training is designed to be tough. The recruits who are merely motivated by the hope of finding an easy way to getting a job are likely to have a shock during the first week and may possibly run away. Provided they do not take any kit with them, the service will not attempt to bring them back, since it considers it is better off without such people (Oud, 1987).

The end of each basic training period is marked by a major ceremonial parade in the distinguished presence of the Vice President. A small percentage of the servicemen and women leave the NYS either to look for jobs or to join the army, the police or prisons departments, where they are expected to get further training. A few go to teacher training colleges or medical training college. The majority, however, opt for vocational training within the service (Omondi, 2005). In assigning a serviceman or woman to a course, the NYS considers his or her record of conduct and work, the result of an aptitude test and the person's own ambitions. An information film on training opportunities within the NYS help servicemen and women to determine their preference. Most of the courses prepare them for Government Trade Test grade II and grade III. In addition to the formal courses, various units involve on the job training programmes that cover the same subject matter, but rely more on practical teaching methods, putting less emphasis on theory. On the job training programmes prepare the youth for the Trade Test grade III in a variety of building, mechanical and auto motive trades (Oud, 1987).

The Governance, Justice, Law, and Order Sector (GJLOS) Reform Update (Njuguna, 2005) revealed that about 20,000 children and youth live or work in the streets of Nairobi alone. They regard the street as their home; they fend for their survival with high risk of exploitation, drug abuse, HIV infections and other diseases. They are in a state of hopelessness and are causing

insecurity and concern to people walking on the streets. Omondi (2005) reported that in order to arrest this situation, the Government of Kenya decided in early 2003 to rehabilitate street children and families. National Youth Service was to carry out this task.

The first batch of 300 street youths were enlisted in April 2003 and introduced to the first phase of a basic training programme to transform them to be obedient team players with good conduct. The department designed a training programme for the street youths whose objective was to produce disciplined, skilled and self-reliant youths through the aforementioned training, which was done through three phases. These phases included; basic training that lasted six months, serving the Kenyan nation which took between six to eighteen months, and the final stage which was vocational training that involved skills development and capacity building of the youth in various technical trades such as artisans and craft courses (Omondi, 2005).

There must be a basis for discipline if a large body of men and women are to live together peacefully and work efficiently since the people concerned are young adults. A school type of discipline is felt to be inappropriate. Instead, the service has adopted a similar system to that of the uniformed forces. National Youth Service does not form part of the army nor does it carry arms. It has only a symbolic 'weapon' in the name of a spade (Omondi, 2005). Kenyan National Youth Service headquarters in Nairobi controls all the units and subunits throughout Kenya. Commandants control units while the sub-units and projects are headed by senior training officers (Njuguna, 2005).

Gebreslassie et al. (2013) postulated that young adults of college age are faced with developmental transitional challenges. The challenges include; adjusting to academic life, developing academic skills, and planning a career as well as struggling with personal identity, developing social relationships, learning to live with roommates, and forming intimate, romantic partnerships. This may result to use of psychoactive substances. Gebreslassie et al. (2013) revealed that psychoactive substance use has become an urgent problem also among undergraduate university students. This calls for the NYS to monitor and teach their trainees with special focus on the health risks and social economic problems and efficacy of guidance and counselling.

Results and Discussion

In line with the study objective, the study sought to determine the trainees and trainers' attitude on the efficacy of guidance and counselling programme in the paramilitary establishment in training college, Kenya. In order to achieve this objective, the following null hypothesis was stated:

H01 There is no statistically significant difference of trainees and trainers' attitude on the efficacy of guidance and counselling programme in the paramilitary establishment in Gilgil training college, Kenya.

A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient test analysis was carried out to establish whether there was a significant relationship between trainees and trainers' attitude of the efficacy of guidance and counselling programme and paramilitary training programme on service men's and women's behaviour change.

Table 1 indicates that there was a strong positive and statistically significant difference between guidance and counselling programme and paramilitary training programme on trainees and trainers' behaviour change.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on Trainees and Trainers' Attitude Difference between Paramilitary Training Programme and Guidance and Counselling Programme on Trainees and Trainers Behaviour Change

Variable	Statistics	Paramilitary Training Programme	Guidance and Counselling Programme	a
Paramilitary Training Programme	Pear Correlation	1	0.998 ^{xx}	
	Sig (2-tailed)			
	N	25	25	
Guidance and Counselling Programme	Pear Correlation	0.998 ^{xx}	1	
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	1	
	N	25	25	

^{xx} Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2- tailed)

Table 1 shows that there was a strong positive and significant correlation between paramilitary training programme and guidance and counselling programme on trainees and trainers' behaviour change ($r = .998$, $P < 0.01$). Since $P < 0.01$, the null hypothesis was rejected to conclude that there was statistically significant correlation between paramilitary training programme and guidance and counselling programme on behaviour change of trainees and trainers in paramilitary establishment. Both paramilitary training programme and guidance and counselling programme were found to be significant in instilling behaviour change. Sadker and Sadker (2000) noted that colleges can only do this through an established guidance and counselling programme, with a broad and comprehensive curriculum that can assist students to adjust to their family situations. Students also experience crisis in their lives like death of parents, teacher or fellow students, relationship problems and inability to adopt to paramilitary training. Thus, there is need to establish a recovery plan through an effective guidance and counselling programme that will provide social, psychological and emotional support to the victims.

A t-test analysis test was carried out on whether there was no statistically significant relationship between trainees and trainer's attitude of the efficacy of guidance and counselling programme and paramilitary training programme on service men's and women's behaviour change (see table 2).

Table 2: Attitude Difference on Paramilitary Training Programme and Guidance and Counselling Programme

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig
Paramilitary Training Programme	25	25.84	61.96	0.952	.351
Guidance and Counselling Programme	25	25.04	60.09		

** $P > 0.05$

An examination of the results in Table 2 indicates that some mean attitude difference existed on paramilitary training programme and guidance and counselling programme. The mean attitude for the paramilitary training programme was 25.84, while the mean attitude for guidance and

counselling programme was 25.04. This implies that paramilitary officers preferred paramilitary training programme than guidance and counselling programme on service trainees and trainers' behaviour change. The obtained t -value ($t= 0.952, P > 0.05$) is indicative of statistically significant difference on service significant relationship between trainees and trainers' attitude of the efficacy of guidance and counselling programme and paramilitary training programme on service trainees and trainers' behaviour change attitude on paramilitary training programme and guidance and counselling programme.

The null hypothesis was rejected implying that there was a statistically significant trainees and trainers' attitude difference on the effectiveness on guidance and counselling programme, and paramilitary training programme of service trainees and trainers' behaviour change. The paramilitary officers preferred paramilitary training more than guidance and counselling services in service trainees and trainers' behaviour change in the paramilitary establishment. Levi (2002) noted that in the present situation, the youths are deprived of this essential guidance and counselling service, yet it should form part of treatment service for them. For example, the basically negative attitude of paramilitary officers needs to be worked on in order to become more positive, since it has been stated that attitude have great influence on behaviours (Levi, 2002).

National Youth Service Trainees and Trainers' Attitude of the Guidance and Counselling Service on Corporal Punishment on Behaviour Change

The study sought to determine trainees and trainers' attitude of the guidance and counselling service on corporal punishment on behaviour change. The descriptive analysis involved getting percentage response scores for each as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Selected Factors Influencing Trainees and Trainers' Attitude of the Guidance and Counselling Service on Corporal Punishment on Behaviour Change

	STATEMENT	SA/A	NS	D/SD
1	Remanding the culprit in the college cell	(19) 79.2%	(1)4.2%	(4)16.6%
2	Culprits given extra duties e.g., Night guard	(19)75%	(1)4.2%	(5)21.9%
3	Corporal punishment e.g., Canning, slapping, kicking	(7)29%	2%	(21)70.9%
4	Guidance and counselling the recruits and servicemen/ women culprits	(20) 83.3%	0%	(4)16.7%
5	Peer counselling	(12)58.3%	3%	(10)41.5%

Remanding Culprit in College Cells

Regarding the statement which inquired whether remanding the trainees would assist in behaviour change, about 79.2 percent of the 24 paramilitary trainers generally agreed with the statement while 16.6 percent disagreed and 4.2 percent were not sure. This implied that remanding the culprits in the college made them change their behaviour. The Wangai Report (GOK, 2001) of the task force on Student Discipline and Unrest in Secondary Schools also emphasized on the role of guidance and counselling in trying to alleviate indiscipline in secondary schools which hampers academic performance.

Extra Duties for Culprits

The response by the NYS trainees to the statement that was meant to determine whether extra duties like night guard for trainees would make their behaviour improve was that; 75 percent generally agreed while 21.9 percent disagreed and 4.2 percent were not sure. This implies that extra duties like night guard had an impact on trainers' behaviour change. A study by Golonka et al. (2017) used natural leaders as the agents of change and found significant levels of success between the control and experiment groups. Consequently, it argued that success in peer leadership will only be achieved when the natural leaders are selected because they appeal to the other members of their groups, which encourages them to follow in these leaders' footsteps.

Nansel et al. (2001) quasi-experiment also found a significant reduction in the levels of indiscipline among the trainees as a result of peer leadership programmes even though it was conducted in boys' and girls' secondary schools. In this case, the peer leaders were used to educate the other members of their groups.

Corporal Punishment

On whether corporal punishment would help on the behaviour change of trainees, 24 paramilitary trainers gave their opinions. Those who generally agreed with the statement were 29.2 percent and 70.9 percent disagreed with the statement. This implies that corporal punishment like slapping, canning and kicking were not effective to be used in behaviour change of the NYS trainees. The effectiveness of life skill programmes in relation to curbing high risk behaviours was the focus of the study by Chhadva and Kacker (2013).

Questionnaires were given to 400 students that were randomly selected and assigned to control group (200) and life skill group (200). The data collected was analysed and a number of conclusions were drawn. For instance, the study demonstrated that life skill education is important to help adolescents effectively deal with the challenges of life. The study also found that there was statistically significant reduction in cigarette smoking among teenagers who participated in the life skill training programme.

Participation rights do not simply extend to the pedagogic relationships in the classroom but also in the guidance and counselling and the development plans. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) committee has frequently recommended that governments take steps to encourage greater participation by children in schools (Sakurai, 2010). Children can also play an important role in advocating for the realization of their rights by engaging adults in meetings where matters that are of concern to the children are discussed.

The Role of Guidance and Counselling on Behaviour Change

Respondents who were paramilitary trainers who were chosen for the study were required to give their opinions on whether guidance and counselling programme assisted behaviour change of the trainees. Out of 24 respondents who were paramilitary trainers, 83.3 percent completely agreed while 16.7 percent disagreed with the statement. This implies that guidance and counselling programme assists in behaviour change of the trainees. A report by United Nation International Children Emergency Funds (UNICEF, 2012) stated that the Convention on Right of the child demands that all children are protected from all forms of violence and indignity. However, frequent and severe violence, including emotional abuse and humiliation in school, remains widespread in countries throughout the world (Lindsay, 2010).

Paramilitary trainees continue to be exposed to violence during paramilitary training. The UNCRC Committee on the Rights of the Children has consistently argued that such punishments constitute a violation of the rights of the child and denial of children's integrity. Physical and other forms of humiliating and abusive treatment are not only a violation of the child's right to protection from violence, but also highly counterproductive to learning. Furthermore, it diminishes self-esteem and promotes the message that violence is acceptable.

Peer Counselling Programme

On whether peer counselling assists trainees' behaviour change, 24 paramilitary trainers were requested to give their opinions. Those who generally agreed were 58.3 percent while 41.6 percent disagreed with the statement. This implies that peer counselling assists in behaviour change of the trainees. In peer counselling; peer models are used to help students cope with personal problems and develop healthy attitudes and behaviour in all spheres of life. Peer counselling includes counselling *per se*; referral, tutorial, providing information about drugs, sex, and venereal diseases, community social problems like FGM, and assisting all the guidance and counselling functions of school (Reyes, 2015).

Lutomia and Sikolia (2002) revealed that peer counselling involves handling individuals who could be of the same age or status. They have the same feeling and can truly confide in each other. In schools or learning institutions, peer or group counselling can be carried out on class basis, club basis, house-dormitory or hostel arrangements, and religious movement such as C.U. (Christian Union) and YCS (Young Christian Society); thus, a peer group deals with people who have a lot of influence on each other. According to Kochlar (1994), peer counselling refers to counselling that is carried out among equals. In a school setting, it may be counselling between age mates, classmates, or friends. It focuses on someone (counsellor) from whom one student/client can seek help from when faced with a problem.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There was a statistically significant NYS trainees and trainers' attitude difference between the effectiveness on guidance and counselling programme and paramilitary training programme of service trainees and trainers' behaviour change. During paramilitary training, trainees were exposed to courses such as firefighting, National Youth Service Act and first aid, with little infusion of guidance and counselling activities, and services such as career guidance. Paramilitary trainers put more emphasis on paramilitary training on behaviour change at the expense of guidance and counselling services.

The National Youth Service at Gilgil College lacked professionally qualified counsellors, although guidance and counselling services were offered by two paramilitary officer counsellors who had a certificate in guidance and counselling. Both paramilitary trainees and trainers had a positive attitude of guidance and counselling programme in NYS College. Most paramilitary trainers, however, had low level of education, with no guidance and counselling training skills and knowledge and this made them unable to offer guidance and counselling services to the servicemen/women. Paramilitary trainers were in great need of guidance and counselling services to enable them adapt to better paramilitary training. Paramilitary trainers greatly influenced trainees' attitude on the guidance and counselling programme. This is because they were not trained in the field of guidance and counselling and only relied on corporal punishment for behaviour modification among NYS trainees. During paramilitary training, the paramilitary trainers only relied on giving advice and corporal punishment to trainees.

National Youth Service should review the paramilitary training programme by increasing guidance and counselling services and activities in the paramilitary training curriculum. This should be done through allocating guidance and counselling programme more time during paramilitary training. Additionally, the Ministry of Youth Affairs should introduce in-service training in guidance and counselling for all NYS paramilitary trainers who do not have basic skills training in guidance and counselling programme. Further, Guidance and counselling programme should be integrated in the instructional paramilitary training activities of the NYS College. It would be best to deploy full-time college counsellors, who meet the qualifications in professional counselling.

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