Difference in Perceptions between Head Teachers and Teacher Counsellors of the Effectiveness of Peer Counselling Among Students in Public Secondary Schools in Molo Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study sought to determine the difference in perceptions between Head teachers and Teacher counsellors on the effectiveness of peer counselling among students in public secondary schools in Molo sub-County, Kenya. A descriptive survey research design was used involving a random sample of 42 head teachers and 42 teacher counsellors. A structured questionnaire was used to measure perceptions of the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program for Windows. The study found that the perception of head teachers and teacher counsellors on the effectiveness of peer counselling among students was negative. It also found that the designation and gender of an individual does not influence their perceptions. The author recommends that the Ministry of Education, among other stakeholders, should strive to provide professional training on counselling to the head teachers and teacher counsellors in secondary schools to make them competent in promoting effective provision of peer counselling services among students. The findings of the study could be used by the government in the formulation of educational policies which would focus on effective implementation of peer counselling programmes in secondary schools in Kenya.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Head Teachers, Teacher Counsellors, Perception, Peer Counselling, Public Secondary Schools, Differences

1. Introduction

1.1. Roles of Head Teachers and Teacher Counsellors in Peer Counselling

The Ministry of Education through the Report of the Presidential Working Party in Education and Manpower Training for the next Decade and Beyond (The Kamunge Report, 1988) and the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (The Koech Report, 1999) recommend that Peer Counselling (PC) services be established in all educational institutions. Sisungo (2002) observes that problem-solving is one of the responsibilities of the head teacher (HT) and PC on the other hand is one of the methods of solving problems in secondary schools. With effectiveness of PC among students in secondary schools, the HT will have fulfilled the responsibility of problem-solving.

The school administrator's role in promoting the implementation of the PC services involves clarifying the need for the PC programme, outlining the benefits of putting efforts in its establishment, showing the relationship between successful learning and constructive relationships, ensuring that the PC programme is: firmly established, motivating involvement and encouraging individuals to maintain effort (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2009).

The HT is overall in charge of the school. S/he supervises the whole school programme and bears the ultimate responsibility for performance, proficiency and effectiveness of all school programmes, peer counselling programme inclusive (Wango & Mungai, 2007).

In addition, the HT ensures the continuing professional development of teacher counsellors (TCs) through training, attendance of seminars, conferences and workshops and relevant courses. Where the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has not appointed a Head of Department (HOD) for Guidance and Counselling (G&C), the HT identifies a teacher to be in-charge. He therefore works closely with the TCs. The G&C department plays a vital role in the effectiveness of PC among students. This entails selection of Peer Educators (PEs), formulation of the scope of PC, budgeting for the training and induction of PEs on their roles and responsibilities, establishing a time schedule for the PC and planning on other relevant aspects such as awareness, rousing, discussions and debate on PC (MOE, 2009).

Makinde (1984) observes that the TC in the secondary school plays a vital role through planning and developing the counselling programme based on the students' needs. The TC also through counselling relationship assists each student to understand oneself in relation to the social and psychological world in which the student lives. The student therefore is able to accept oneself, develop personal decision-making competences and resolve personal problems. Hendrix (1986) notes that a school counsellor is a planner and manager of educational experiences of his/her students which will contribute to the development of knowledge, skills, personal qualities, habits of thoughts, decision-making and proper attitude towards themselves and others as a preparation to adulthood.

The TC acts as the peer coordinator by providing supervision for peer group members and looking after the welfare of the students involved in the scheme, not only the important issue of their emotional welfare, but ensuring that, time-wise, they can cope with their academic work. The TC also organizes and provides appropriate training to the PEs and helps the group maintain a flow of new volunteers. In addition, s/he provides assistance with general administration especially when it comes to raising money from the school bursar and providing the group with an administrative budget for publicity and badges among others. The TC acts as a mediator within the group when problems arise and deals with difficult issues within the group, for example, a member breaching confidentiality (MOE, 2009). According to the MOE (2009), PC among students in secondary schools is guided by the following objectives:

1. Promoting personal development in helpers.

2. Creating a positive influence on the emotional climate in the school environment

3. Providing a bridge between troubled peers and friends: by listening rather than
 necessarily giving advice

4. Offering basic skills in supporting the other peers who might need psychological support for example the bereaved, alienated and drug users

5. Enabling the individual to meet personal needs in order to be more fully functional and take control of his/her life in different settings

6. Reducing the amount of bullying in school by supporting those involved

7. Acting as an additional service to that provided by staff, that is complementing rather than competing with it

8. Providing support to pupils to act as a half-way house for situations which may need
   to be dealt with by those further up the school hierarchy (MOE, 2009)

1.2. Value of Peer Counselling Among Students

The importance of counselling in schools is presented by Ndichu (2005) when he states that the modern society has changed so much. The social safety nets that existed in traditional societies and ensured a somewhat stable environment for children to grow up in have all but gone. Ndichu (2005) further adds that in a school setting, there are many difficulties which students may express through any of the following ways: withdrawal, unhappiness, annoyance, anger, and inability to meet needs, lack 'of knowledge, partial or total failure, inability to turn aspirations Into fruition, anxiety and hyperactivity. The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2009) observes that because PC takes advantage of the universalistic norms; that is, similarity of a particular set of people and their problems, and the particularistic norms, that is why other peers are suffering socially and personally, there is ease of understanding of each others' problems and approachability. Wango and Mungai (2007) state that people will only listen and absorb each other's ideas and opinions in the formal and informal groups of their choice.

This is equally true of PC group in the secondary school situation where students are often more perceptive and sympathetic than the teacher counsellor. They are the first to notice when their own fellow student is worried or depressed, and they often confide in one another's immediate concerns, fears and issues that disturb them. Their reaction is immediate acceptance, both understanding and consoling, as well as provision of a warm and physical support. PC thus promotes peer groups support (Wango & Mungai, 2007).

According to Lines (2006), peer counselling group is the best alternative for the adolescents' need to identify with their peers. Peers join cliques and groups for the various divergent reasons such as provision of personal needs of affiliation and companionship, for reward that is either material or psychological; that is, prestige and recognition, enjoyment and excitement, provision of information for raising of their self-esteem and as a means of gaining identity. In PC programmes, students address problems at home and at school, problems of substance abuse and career planning. Evidence indicates that both PEs and students experience increased self- esteem and greater ability to deal with problems (Tindi & Silsil, 2008).

Training of PEs equips the youth with skills that enable them to assist each other with the developmental changes and issues emanating from the changes such as the physical sexual, interpersonal, changing values, morals and religious beliefs and the move to independence (Thomas, 1990). Furthermore, PC promotes peer group interaction which caters for the adolescents' transition period from egocentrism to higher cognitive abilities. This is a significant development from the form of thinking that Jean Piaget described as 'concrete operations' to a higher form of reasoning and abstract thinking, known as 'formal operational thought' (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). When a student attains this level of development, the thoughts are not on self, but also on the opinions of others (Geldard & Geldard, 1999). The youngster's ability to resolve the tensions and trials throughout adolescent transition depends upon socialization within a peer group and this is enhanced through PC.

PC enable PEs increase their own personal growth and become more functional at higher levels; they become role models and the new skills gained can be used in community service (MOE, 2009). PC programmes integrate into the range of preventive strategies that promote harmony between the students and the school administration. PC reinforces the value of discussing problems and difficulties experienced by the students amicably without resulting into violence that is, talk it out rather than act it out. This creates ownership, amongst the students, of the need to maintain peace by recognizing the peers' role in problem-solving (MOE, 2009). Frequently cited benefits from the use of PEs include: expanded services and reduced costs because professionals are freed for other duties; traditional counselling services enhanced by the unique abilities and skills of PEs; the opportunity to gain special insight into the needs and problems of the group being served; and a bridge for the gap between professionals and the diverse groups they serve (Mamarchev, 1981).

1.3. Concept of Perception

Perception refers to opinions, attitudes, views and beliefs towards a phenomenon. The knowledge or sets of belief about something shapes our expectations and hence what we perceive. There are various theories of perception. These are:

1.3.1. Environmental Theories

These comprise of the behavioural, ecological and empiricists theories. They emphasize on the fact that the environment shapes perceptions. In the behavioural theory, the interplay between the individual and the environment is emphasized, and that perceptions are due to environmental conditions (Santrock, 2005). According to Skinner (1938), a behaviourist says what is done is not because of in-born motivation but rather because of the environmental conditions experienced. Ecological theories emphasize that the environment and the information it proffers is what shapes perception. According to behavioural theorists, the motivation to do something is determined by the environmental conditions that are experienced. Ecological theory limits itself to only the information on simulation where information in the environment suffices and no mental processes are required.

Environmental theorists do not see any role for memory and related phenomena in perceptions out emphasize the ambient environment and the information it proffers to the observer (Norman, 1983). Empiricists emphasize that perceptual processes are largely a matter of learning. That in their young stage babies have little or no ability to form perceptions but as they grow gradually they learn adult-like perceptions on the basis of cues that the environment provides.

Empiricists also argue that knowledge must be imposed on sensory data in order to organize it (Rock, 1983). Therefore, the HT and TC level of professional counselling training will influence their perceptions.

1.3.2. Cognition Theories

These include social cognition and constructivists' theories. The theories emphasize that perceptions are shaped by cognition. According to cognitive theories, stored schemata and past experiences play an important role in perception. The term cognition refers to individual's use of mental representation to understand the job in terms of perception, knowledge, and expected behaviour. Workers seek to create meaningful, coherent representations of their work regardless of its complexity. They learn what the job is all about by monitoring and checking their own behaviour. Their needs, personal beliefs, and previous experiences become the bases for constructing organizational reality and interpreting their work. Their motivation and cognition are influenced by such factors as beliefs about personal control and competence; individual goals, personal expectations for failure and success and work motives (Hoy & Miskel, 1996).

According to Rock (1983), some proponents of cognitive theory suggest that perception is intelligence due to the fact that it is based on operations similar to those that characterize thought. Emphasis is laid on the ways in which the mind processes information about environment and that humans are not passive agents subjected to the influence of the environment. Constructivists' theorists emphasize that memory, past experiences and cognition play an important role in perception. Therefore the HTs' and TCs' level of professional counselling and experiences affects cognition which in turn determines their perceptions.

1.3.3. Biological Theories

These include the nativist's view which emphasizes that perceptions are shaped by biological processes and that man is born with sophisticated perceptual skills which improve with age and experience. Feldman (1987) defines perception as the sorting out, interpretation, analysis and integration of materials from our sense organs, that is, what we know about our world depend on the interpretation of what our senses experience. Therefore, the age and experience of the HT has the bearing of their perceptions.

1.4. Perceptions of Head teachers and Teacher Counsellors on Peer Counselling

According to Schiffman (1990), perception involves the physiological processing and integration of sensory data. Feldman (1987) emphasizes that the Gestalt approach to perception involves how pieces of information are organized into meaningful wholes. In Social Psychology, perception refers to opinions, attitudes, views and beliefs about a phenomenon. In this respect, the teacher counsellors become aware of peer counselling through their senses and this enables them to develop their perception of the programme. The teacher counsellors single out the challenges that students' face and the patterns of behaviour that they display as a result of these challenges that hinder their progress in learning. They then use this to perceive the students' situation as a whole and organize for appropriate intervention to remedy the situation. It is the responsibility of the higher institutions (HI) to establish counselling services in their learning institutions of which peer counselling is included (Kamunge, 1988). Although the TCs and PEs are seen as agents of positive change in the lives of students, the reality is that, little takes place without the HTs' approval and support. It is important that the head teachers do not pay lip services to peer counselling without real commitment of time and financial resources (Hall, 1984). Their positive perception of PC promotes its development and effectiveness. However, in contrast to this study 41.5% of the students strongly disagreed on the fact that the school administration had provided the required materials for PC programme.

1.5. Gender and Perception of Peer Counselling Programme

The goal of education in Kenya is to give all children equal opportunities for education irrespective of gender, ability or geographical environment (Koech, 1999).

This requires a relevant PC programme that will assist students develop their cognitive, affective and normative skills. Perception is the mental representation of objective reality (Larsen & Buss, 2000). It is true that the male brain is analytical while that of the female is intuitive, but this may not interfere with their perception (Pert, 1997). This is because the same amount of information is received from the senses and thus the mental representation may not vary between males and females.

On the other hand, Macomber (1972) observes that gender differences in perception can be noted in crisis counselling. This is because the female inclination towards emotional dimensions of issues tends to make them more perceptive than their male counterparts (Gothard & Goodhew, 1987). For instance, maternal instincts in female counsellors are believed to influence their perception than the males (Geldard & Geldard, 2003). Deaux and Lewis (1984) posit that females are generally better able than males both to recognize the emotions of others and to communicate their own emotions. Martin (1984) observes that gender perceptions largely depend on the cultural and environmental situations of both the counsellor and counselee which socialize them along gender roles. Hence depending on the circumstances, the HTs' or TCs' gender mayor may not influence their perception on the effectiveness of peer counselling programme.

1.6. Importance of Peer Counselling among Students in Secondary Schools

According to Mutie and Ndambuki (1999), peers in the African communities had control over each other's behaviour through open disapproval of unacceptable behaviour, continuous rebukes till unacceptable behaviour ceased and keeping sexual violators from interacting with their peers. The Ministry of Education through the Report of Presidential Working Party in Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond (The Kamunge Report, 1988) and The Commission of Inquiry into the Education System in Kenya (The Koech Report, 1999) recommend that peer counselling (PC) services be established in all Educational Institutions to motivate the youth to express their desires to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS and other social and psychological problems. PC was therefore integrated into the Guidance and counselling programmes as a remedy for clients whose struggle revolve around problems in coping with demands of life and learning.

The Development Plan (1997-2007) also recommended that counselling be enhanced in learning institutions. In response to this, peer education and counselling clubs (PECC) have been established in schools and training colleges (KIE, 2004). Wango and Mungai (2007) and Tindi and Silsil (2008) opine that the head teacher (HT) and Teacher Counsellor (TC) continuously consult on issues of moral interests and concern that pertains to the school. Through their supervision, the Guiding and Counselling Department fulfils its activities which include effective implementation of PC among students. Perceptions enable an individual to construct an effective model of reality using psychological processes (Ruch & Zimbardo, 1971). According to Bor *et al*. (2002), perception of HTC on PC as an interactive helping process is crucial in effectiveness of peer counselling. The TC offers intellectual skills to the students and teaches good morals and values (Landsberg, 1993).

According to the Report from the District Education Officer (DEO), Molo sub-County (MoEST, 2008), student absenteeism, drug and substance abuse, unwanted pregnancies and promiscuity among others had resulted in pregnancy and poor academic performance in secondary schools. Further, the DEO's Report indicated that the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) mean score had remained below 5.00 from the year 2005 to the year 2008. This raised questions on the effectiveness of peer counselling services among students. It is the responsibility of HTs and TCs to promote effective PC among students in schools. The study on which this paper is based, therefore, sought to establish the perceptions of HTs, TCs and students on the effectiveness of PC among public secondary school students in Molo sub-County, Kenya.

The findings of the study are likely to provide useful information on the effectiveness of PC among students in public secondary schools in Molo sub-County. The Ministry of Education among other stakeholders can utilize this information to intensify in service training for both the head teachers and Teacher counsellors on professional counselling training to benefit them in various ways of enhancing effective PC programmes in schools. This paper also contributes to the existing pool of knowledge on the provision of effective PC services among students. The study findings could be used by the government in the formulation of education policies which would focus on effective PC services in secondary schools in Kenya.

1.7. Limitations of the study

Due to the fact that the research study targeted head teachers and teacher counsellors of public secondary schools in Molo sub-County, generalization of the findings to other counties will only be done with a lot of caution. Nevertheless, the study has pioneered a framework on which similar studies could be replicated in other regions.

2. Materials and Methods

The target population of the study comprised HTS and TCs in the 54 public secondary schools in Molo sub-County. In essence there is one head teacher and one teacher counsellor as the Head of Guidance and counselling department in every school. This forms a total of 108 as the targeted population for the study. In order to determine the sample size of the head teachers and teacher counsellors from a total of 108 in the 54 public secondary schools in the study area, the formula by Kathuri and Pals (1993) was adopted. For the HTs and TCs a sample size n was estimated from a known population, size n:

N= X^2 NP(1-P)

D^2(N-1)+X^2P(1-P)

Where n=required sample size

N=the given population size

P=population portion, assumed to be 0.50

D^2=the degree of accuracy whose value is 0.05

X^2=Table of chi-square for one degree of freedom, which is 3.841

This resulted in 84 which was the sample size for head teachers comprising 42 and teacher counsellors comprising 42 respondents. Purposive sampling was used to select the TC and HT from each of the selected public secondary schools. The HTs and TCs were targeted because of the key and complementary roles that they play in the promotion of PC services among students in public secondary schools. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire for both the head teachers and teacher counsellors. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 was used to analyse the data. Frequencies and percentages were used to determine effectiveness of peer counselling as perceived by head teachers and teachers counsellors in public schools in Molo sub-County. T-test was used to determine the difference in perceptions between head teachers and teacher counsellors on the effectiveness of peer counselling among students. It was also used to determine the gender difference in perceptions of head teachers and Teacher counsellors. All statistical tests were subjected to tests of significance at α = 0.05.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Perceptions of Head Teachers and Teacher Counsellors

It can be observed from Table 1 below that 21 HTs (51.2%) agreed that PC has helped students to utilize their leisure time well. Further, 30 HTs (75.4%) agreed that PC had helped to reduce frequent occurrence of riots and strikes in school. This implies that HTs are aware of the importance of the role played by PC in enhancing students' positive behaviour in secondary school

Table 1: Perception of Head Teachers on the Effectiveness of Peer Counselling Among Students in Public Secondary Schools

Statement	Response (Frequencies and Percentage)									
	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Peer counselling exists in school	3	7.2	20	48.2	6	14.4	12	29.0	1	2.4
2. Students make use of peer counselling programme in school	3	7.2	19	45.2	5	12.0	11	26.2	4	9.6
3. Peer counselling has helped the students to utilize their leisure time well	3	7.2	21	51.2	5	12.2	8	19.6	3	7.4
4. Peer counselling has helped students to discuss issues that touch on their private lives	3	7.2	20	48.2	9	21.6	9	21.6	1	2.4
5. The school administration has provided the required materials for peer counselling programme	2	4.8	6	14.2	9	21.4	24	57.2	1	2.4
6. The school administration has facilitated the training of peer counsellors	3	7.4	6	14.6	10	24.4	16	39	6	14.6
7. Peer counselling has assisted students with psychological needs to learn desirable behaviours so as to adapt to the school life	3	7.2	16	38	13	31.0	10	23.8	0	0
8. Peer counselling has helped students to acquire effective study habits	2	4.8	21	50	12	28.6	4	9.6	3	7.2
9. Peer counsellors have assisted students to manage their time well through balance of academic work and other activities	2	4.8	18	42.8	14	33.4	4	9.6	4	9.6
10. Peer counsellors have been able to help needy students who may not be free enough to talk with the school teacher counsellor	3	7.2	21	50	12	28.6	5	12.0	1	2.4
11. Peer counsellors have been a link between the needy students and the school teacher counsellors	1	2.4	20	48.2	13	31.4	5	12.0	2	4.8
12. Peer counsellors have been carefully selected by the school teacher counsellor	1	2.4	11	26.6	13	31.4	15	36.2	2	4.8
13. Peer counsellors have helped to reduce crisis situation in schools	2	4.8	24	57.8	10	24	5	12	1	2.4
14. The needs of students have been identified through peer counselling interactions in schools	1	2.4	23	45.4	11	26.6	5	12	1	2.4
15. The needs of students have been addressed through planned counselling programmes in schools	2	4.8	21	50.6	11	26.6	5	12	1	2.4
16. Peer counsellors have gained more knowledge in counselling in schools	3	7.2	15	36.2	13	31.4	7	16.8	3	7.2
17. Peer counsellors have developed effective communication skills in counselling in school	1	2.4	13	31.8	16	39	8	19.6	2	4.8
18. Peer counsellors have adequate information on ways of reaching out to different groups of needy students	1	2.4	12	28.6	18	42.8	10	23.8	1	2.4
19. Peer counselling has helped to reduce school drop-out rates	3	7.2	27	64.2	5	12	4	9.6	3	9.2
20. Peer counselling has helped to reduce frequent occurrence of riots and strikes in school	3	7.2	30	75.4	2	4.8	4	9.6	3	7.2

Source: field data, 2010

It is also clear from Table 1 above, that 27 HTs (64.2%) agreed that PC has helped to reduce school drop-out rates. In addition to this, 24 HTs (57.8%) accept the fact that PEs have helped to reduce crisis situations in schools. This supports the fact that HTs acknowledge the value of PC in enhancing an environment conducive to learning in secondary schools and hence good academic performance. These positive perceptions are in line with what was forwarded by Tindi and Silsil (2008) that PC is an effective intervention programme that aims at addressing the behavioural, social and academic adjustment of at-risk children and adolescents so they can receive maximum benefit from their school experiences.

From Table 1 above, it is examinable that 21 HTs (50%) acknowledge the fact that PEs have been able to help needy students who may not be free enough to talk with the school TC. This agrees with what has been observed by Arudo (2006) that in the school situation students are likely to contact fellow students when they are experiencing problems before they approach their teachers especially in matters they consider embarrassing such as rape and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Lutomia and Sikolia (2002) further concur with the HTs that in PC, when a student counsels a fellow student, she/he is at ease, especially when they share the same environment, social status, economic status and class among others. Furthermore, 21 HTs (50.6%) agreed that the needs of students have been addressed through planned counselling programmes in schools. This indicates that HTs recognize the importance of PC in addressing the needs of students and hence promoting their academic achievements. This is also emphasized by Arudo (2006) who observes that through PC students enjoy self-definition, reduce anxiety, have confidence and improve performance.

It can also be observed from Table 1 that 24 HTs (57.2%) disagreed that the school administration has provided the required materials for PC programme. Further, 15 HTs (36.2%) disagreed that PEs have been carefully selected by the school teacher counsellor. In as much as it is true that the HTs recognize the importance of PC in secondary schools, they have not provided the much needed administrative support as well as facilitating the selection and training of PEs for effectiveness of PC among secondary schools. This contrast with what was forwarded by Arudo (2006) that PEs are paraprofessionals selected from the group to be served, trained and given on-going supervision to perform some key functions generally performed by professional. Arudo (ibid.) further stresses that when PEs are supported and developed, they may become the best group to reach out to the needy students. From the results, 18 TCs (42.8%) agreed that PC has helped to reduce school drop-out rates. Moreover, 19 TCs (43.2%) applauded the fact that PC has helped to reduce frequent occurrence of riots and strikes. There is therefore a very strong probability that TCs' perceptions are positive as they acknowledge the important role played by PC in ensuring an environment conducive to learning for students as well as monitoring completion of the school studying period by every student. This consents to what MOE (2009) observes that PC programmes integrate with the range of preventive strategies that can promote harmony between the students and the school administration, reinforcing the value of discussing problems and difficulties experienced by the students amicably without resulting into violence, that is, talk it out rather than act it out. This creates ownership amongst the students of the need to maintain peace by recognizing the peers' role in problem-solving.

Further, 17 TCs (41%) disagreed on the fact that the needs of students have been addressed through planned counselling programmes in school and that PEs have gained more knowledge in counselling in school. It can also be observed from the table that 19 TCs (43.2%) disagreed that PEs have adequate information on ways of reaching out to different groups of needy students. From the above observations, there is a clear indication that TCs applaud the role of peer counselling in promoting academic performance of students in secondary schools. However, they have not helped PEs to acquire adequate PC skills in order to assist their fellow students address their needs. This is not in line with what was recommended by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2009) on the role played by the TCs in organizing and providing appropriate training to the PEs. Thomas (1990) also emphasizes that training of PEs equip the youth with skills that enable them to assist each other with the developmental changes such as physical, sexual, inter-personal, change in values, morals and religious beliefs and the move to independence.

3.2. Differences in Perceptions between Head Teachers and Teacher Counsellors
The study also sought to determine whether or not there was any significant difference in perceptions on the effectiveness of peer counselling among students between HTs and TCs. A sample t-test was used to determine this difference.

The t-test was used to establish whether the difference in the means between the two samples was significant or not. The group variable or designation was nominal and this represented the HTs and the TCs, while the test variable or perceptions was continuous and this represented the actual scores. The table below gives a summary of the results of the t-test.

Table 2: T -test Results on Gender Difference in Perceptions of Head teachers and Teacher Counsellors

		No. of cases	Mean
Designation	head teachers	42	2.34
	Teacher counsellors	42	2.81
Mean difference			0.47

T-value = 1.67, P value =0.119> 0.05, df= 2.82

Since p value > 0.05 significance level, this shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of HTs and TCs on the effectiveness of peer counselling among students in secondary schools. This is an indication that perceptions do not depend on the designation of an individual in the school. This could be attributed to the fact that perceptions on the effectiveness of PC among students is influenced by the information an individual has about the PC programme and tile importance attached to it. Ruch and Zimbardo (1971) concur with this by asserting that perceptions of HTs and TCs on the effectiveness of PC is more influenced by an individual's construction of an effective model of reality using psychological processes and not the designation of the individual.

3.3. Gender Difference in Perceptions of Head Teachers and Teacher Counsellors

The study further sought to determine the gender difference in the perceptions of HTs and TCs on the effectiveness of PC. Sample t-test was used to determine whether the gender difference in perceptions is significant or not. Table 4 below gives a summary of the results of the t-test.

Table 3: T-test Results on Gender Difference in Perceptions of Head Teacher and Teacher Counsellors

		No. of cases	Mean
Gender	Male	56	2.67
	Female	28	2.57
Mean difference			0.10

T-value = 0.62, P-value 0.49> 0.05 df=2.82

Since p value > 0:05 significance level, there was no statistically significant gender difference on-the-perceptions of HTs and TCs on the effectiveness of PC among students. This suggests that perceptions do not depend on thy gender of the HT or TC. This could be attributed to the fact that their training in PC programme in secondary school is not based on their gender. These findings are supported by Pert (1997) who observes that although the male brain is analytical and that of' the female is intuitive this may not interfere with their perception. This is because the same amount of information is received from the senses and thus the mental representation may not vary between males and females; hence, gender may not influence the perception of HTs and TCs on the effectiveness of PC among students.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that the perceptions of head teachers and teacher counsellors on the effectiveness of peer counselling among students in public secondary schools were negative. Moreover, the perceptions of head teachers and teacher counsellors on the effectiveness of peer counselling among students in public secondary schools do not depend on the designation of individuals. Apart from that, gender does not influence the perceptions of head teachers and teacher counsellors on the effectiveness of peer counselling among students in public secondary schools.

On the basis of the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since there was no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of head teachers and teacher counsellors, this should form the basis for them to facilitate effective provision of peer counselling services among students in secondary schools.

2. Effective peer counselling among students in secondary schools should not be influenced by gender of the head teachers and teacher counsellors.

3. The Ministry of Education should strive to provide professional training on counselling to the head teachers and teacher counsellors in secondary schools so as to be competent in promoting effective provision of peer counselling services among students.

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