

# The Role of Counseling on Delinquency among selected Secondary Schools, Ngando, Nairobi County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** The prevalence and growth of delinquency among selected secondary schools in Ngando, Nairobi County, is causing growing concern. The goal of this study was to look into the role of counseling on delinquency among students in selected secondary schools in Nairobi County, Ngando. The study was guided by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's Self-Determination Theory of Motivation and used an embedded mixed methods design. The study's objectives were to assess the prevalence of delinquency and to investigate the types of counseling used among students in Ngando's selected secondary schools. The target population consisted of 400 students and teachers, and the sample consisted of 200 respondents chosen using random and purposive sampling methods. However, only 189 participants were able to take part in the study which includes 185 students and 4 teachers. To collect data, the researcher used both questionnaires and interview guides. The collected data was analyzed in light of the research objectives. The researcher used frequency tables, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations to analyze quantitative data. Using the research objective themes, the qualitative data was presented in narrative form. According to the study, the most common types of delinquent behavior among students were violence, drug abuse, substance use, stealing, truancy, and unhealthy indecent relationships, while the most common types of counselling used were individual counselling, group counselling, and career counselling, with family counselling being rarely used. The study also found a link between different types of counseling and a reduction in delinquent behavior among students. The study recommended the use of trained psychotherapists in secondary schools to reduce and treat delinquent behaviors.

**Keywords:** Delinquency, Counseling, Secondary School Students, Adolescents, Behavior

## I. INTRODUCTION

Delinquency encompasses a wide range of behaviors, from socially unacceptable acts committed as a minor that parents describe as "naughty" and psychologists refer to as "acting out" to violent and destructive illegal behaviors (Dryfoos, 2020). It is a serious societal issue that affects not only the individual, but also the family, community, and society as a whole (Obsuth, Murray, Knoll, Ribeaud, & Eisner, 2021). Delinquency, according to Nguku, Chege, and Odera (2017), has become a social problem that affects all members and processes of a social structure.

The school environment is one aspect of society that is affected by what happens in society at large. Without doubt, delinquent behaviors seen in today's society manifest themselves in the school environment. In today's educational system, delinquent behavior among secondary students is not a new occurrence. In a school, delinquency is referred to as indiscipline (Kamau, 2011). Adolescent delinquent behavior has been a plague confusing the educational system, and this has been of great concern to stakeholders in the system of education (Hanimoğlu, 2018)

In the United States (US), youth experience problem behaviors such as interpersonal violence, delinquency and substance use and school failure at high rates. One strategy to address these problems is to reduce their prevalence through the use of prevention programs that have been tested and proven effective (Smith, 2004)

It has been observed in recent years, that there has been heightened attention to bullying, speaking down on others, manipulating other students and violence victimization, throwing objects at people in U.S. schools (Gordon, Conron, Calzo, Reisner, & Austin, 2016). Such social stressors are associated with adverse mental and physical health outcomes, including depression and suicidality. Less research has focused on bullying and violence directed at adolescents (Gordon, et al. 2016).

In Ghana, suspension is a form of punishment used by schools. This implies that students who have disobeyed the rules in schools such as smoking cigarettes, throwing objects at other students, taking marijuana-hashish, sneaking out of school, are not allowed to attend school for a specific number of days. This serves as a component for the modification of such a behavior. Some studies suggest that suspension is ineffective and can lead to further social problems, such as drug use and other societal crimes. Also, in Ghana, educators have been seeking out solutions to curtail the behavioral issues within the classroom and among students (Aklamano, 2016). This study provided a rather positive response to corporal punishment as a way of positive behavior modification.

In Nigeria, a study investigating the strategies for curbing indiscipline in elementary school teacher, it was observed that the use of the approach to promote acceptable behaviors is very important. As a result, school authorities being good models, giving moral education in schools, adopting behaviors such as punishment, high parental supervision and referral to appropriate helping personnel are some of the behavior modification strategies that could be used to curb indiscipline among students (Odebode, 2020).

In Kenya, a study done on the effect of counseling or modeling on behavior modification of juvenile delinquents in Eldoret and Kakamega rehabilitation centers showed that the growth and prevalence of juvenile delinquents in rehabilitation centers was a growing concern. The findings of the study showed that counseling had a significant effect on behavior modification (Nguku, Chege, Odera, & J, N. 2017). This implies that counseling is an effective tool on behavior modification in Eldoret and Kakamega rehabilitation centers.

Counseling is a collaborative effort between the counselor and client. Professional counselors help clients identify goals and potential solutions to problems which cause emotional turmoil; seek to improve communication and coping skills, strengthen self-esteem, and promote behavior and optimal mental health (Ebizie, Enajedu, & Nkechi, 2016). In other words, counseling is a transformative process of helping people to learn all that are to be learnt both in and outside the school. In addition, (Oviogbodu, 2015) noted that counseling is a number of procedures in assisting an individual to solve his problems.

There are various types of counseling services such as individual counseling, group counseling, couple counseling, support groups, family counseling, career counseling, organizational counseling, grief counseling used to reduce delinquency among students. The researcher focused on individual and group counseling, family and career counseling services in this study.

Individual counseling is a one-on-one counseling process between a client or a student and a counselor in which the client strives to achieve specific goals. Group counseling is counseling a group of clients or students who are dealing with similar issues. Career counseling is for students who are about to make a career decision. Family counseling is a type of psychotherapy that aims to identify and help family members break bad habits that contribute to family dysfunctionality (Kowalczyk, 2021).

There are a lot of studies done on behavior modification generally in United States, Europe, African and Kenya (Nguku, et, al. 2017). Nevertheless, not much studies have been done specifically on delinquency among students in selected secondary school in Ngando, Nairobi County. Also, some behavior modification strategies have been provided such as punishment, guidance and counseling for modification of general behavior of students but not much has been said about counseling as a strategy for behavior modification,

especially in delinquency among students in the above selected secondary schools, Ngando.

The prevalence of delinquency among students in selected secondary schools in Ngando, appears concerning and requires careful consideration. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the prevalence of delinquency and the types of counseling used to reduce delinquency among students in selected schools in Ngando.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study used an embedded mixed methods design and a mixed methods approach. The target population comprised of 400 students and teachers, and the sample size consisted of 200 respondents. However, 189 participants participated in the study. This included 185 students and 4 teachers who have been involved in counseling the students in the school under study. The sample size was determined using the sample random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. The researcher used both questionnaires and interview guides to collect data. The data collected was analyzed in light of the research objectives. To analyze quantitative data, the researcher used frequency tables, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations. The qualitative data was presented in narrative form using the research objective themes. Attempts were made to explain the research process and the respondents' participation so that they understood what they were doing. They were also assured that their responses would be kept strictly confidential.

## III. RESULTS

The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of counseling on delinquency among students in selected secondary schools in Ngando, Nairobi County. The data analysis was based on the study's objectives. The data collected in the field was presented and analyzed using frequency tables, standard deviations, Pearson correlations. The data from the interviews was analyzed using some common themes.

### *The Demographic Information of the Respondents*

The study sought to establish the demographic information of the respondents in order to put them in their right perspective. The demographic data included age, gender, form and religion. Table 4.1 presents the findings.

Table 4.1 Demographic Distribution

Age	Frequency	Percent
12-14	32	17
15-16	61	33
17-20	92	50
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	100	54
Female	85	46
<b>Form</b>		

Form 1	54	29.2
Form 2	43	23.2
Form 3	36	19.5
Form 4	52	28.1
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	167	90.3
Islam	10	5.4
Others	8	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>100</b>

The age distribution shows that students aged 17-20 (50%) outnumbered all the other age groups. They were followed by those aged 15-16 (33%) and the least were aged 12-14 years at 17%. This implies that student respondents were aged between 12-20 years.

The gender distribution indicates that there were 54% male respondents and 46% were females. This is an indication that male respondents outnumbered their female counterparts. However, the small disparity of 8% between males and females did not affect the outcome of this study in any significant way.

The class distribution shows that Form 1 produced the highest number of respondents at 29% followed by Form 4 at 28%, then Form 2 while the least number came from Form 3 at 19%. The distribution shows that each Form was represented albeit in different proportions.

The respondents' religion analysis shows that Christianity had the highest representation as indicated by 90% of the student respondents. They were followed by far by the Muslims while other denominations shared 8%. This is a strong indication that most of the respondents were Christians. It would therefore be interesting to see whether their religious inclination was playing any role in the prevalence of delinquency in schools under study.

#### *Prevalence of Delinquency among Students*

This objective aimed to determine the prevalence of delinquent behaviors in the schools under investigation. On a 5-point Likert Scale, respondents were asked to rate their agreement on a series of attributes. For each of the 20 items, the Standard Deviation was calculated. The results, were shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Standard Deviation on Prevalence of Delinquency

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Taking things without permission	185	3.0378	3.43949
Knowingly holding stolen property	185	2.5622	1.52788
Taking money or other things from family members	185	3.1027	3.41277
Taking items from school illegally	185	2.2378	1.43242
Speaking down on others	185	2.4703	1.44855

Manipulating others	185	2.4378	1.62443
Restricting friends from having other friends	185	2.3459	1.48152
Controlling behavior of others	185	2.7189	1.62418
Lack interest in education	185	2.5135	1.53265
Sneaking out of school	185	2.0000	1.41421
Avoiding authority	185	2.3243	1.42673
Missing classes	185	2.0162	1.47617
Drinking alcohol	185	2.4000	1.63919
Taking marijuana	185	2.0486	1.49376
Smoking cigarettes	185	1.9081	1.57328
Taking Viagra	185	1.8162	1.32647
Throwing objects at people	185	2.0649	1.40886
Attacking others to hurt them	185	1.7243	1.29577
Involvement in gang fights	185	2.0973	1.53270
Hitting and threatening others	185	2.3459	1.57746

The findings from the table above, the study revealed that from students' perspective, the levels of delinquency were significantly low as they ranged between a low of SD 1.29 and a high of SD 3.43. However, moderate or mild delinquency existed in form of stealing items and money. This could be interpreted to mean that cases of students manipulating others were statistically insignificant. This demonstrates that students have low delinquent behavior. As a result, a large number of students were interested in education. Hence, students' delinquent behavior is likely to be low or mild. As a result, statistically, a significant number of students did not consume alcohol. As a result, low delinquent behavior among students is implied.

From the interviews, it was apparent that there was a prevalence of delinquency and there were several and varied types of delinquent behaviors in the schools under study. The most common ones included violence, drug and substance use, stealing, truancy, unhealthy and indecent relationships. However, bullying was also mentioned but was described as minimal. For instance, Participant A had the following to say about the types of delinquent behaviors experienced in his school:

The delinquent behaviors in my school are violence, which manifested in using abusive language among the students. Some students also abuse drug and other substances. Stealing has also been rampant among students. There are specific individuals who take other people's things. Truancy is also one of the delinquent behaviors among students in my school. Another delinquent behavior among the students is unhealthy and indecent relationships. Bullying is also a delinquent behavior in my school but it is minimal (Interview, 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021).

Adding her voice into that of Participant A on the types of delinquent behavior was Participant B who had

almost similar views. The views are well captured in the following excerpts:

There is truancy among students whereby students miss classes and absent themselves from exams. This is very common with them especially during the exams. There is misconduct among students, which resulted to unwanted pregnancy among the students. Stealing among the students is very common. These are some of the delinquent behaviors in the school. The students invaded the school library and stole all the books in it and this made the school to put a stop to the use library in the school. They go to the office to steal and also steal among themselves. Cases of violence are very minimal. It is not so much. It is very minimal. There is no much cases of bullying in the school. It has not been so much here. (Interview, 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021).

Participant C identified truancy, drug abuse, stealing and fighting as common delinquent behaviors among students. He had the following to say about the types of delinquent behavior in his school:

The delinquent behaviors in my school are manifested in truancy. Truancy is really rampant. Most of the students miss school for no reason and they are not also at home. There is so much violence in the school. They fight each other. Some of them even have the attitude to fight the teachers. Some of them are actually very violent. There is also stealing. They are stealing from each other. (Interview, 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021).

Participant D also identified absenteeism, drug abuse and violence as common types of delinquent behaviors in schools. The Participant's opinion was as follows:

The students are so defensive in a way that they are ready to fight the teachers back and they don't want the teachers to talk to them about their behaviors. Some of them abuse drugs. Students missing lessons have always been there especially if they don't like the teacher (Interview, 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021).

From this observation, it is important to point out that truancy, school absenteeism; stealing and promiscuity were very common. However, bullying was found to be very moderate. This is in tandem to what the student respondents reported.

#### *Types of counseling used to reduce delinquency among students*

The objective embarked on establishing the type of counselling that were being used in the schools under study. Their responses are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Types of Counselling used to reduce delinquency.

Types of Counselling	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Individual counselling	185	3.3189	1.56070

Group counselling	185	2.9459	1.49175
Career counselling	185	3.2595	2.55754
Family counselling	185	2.7297	1.58541

The finding revealed that statistically, individual and group counselling were rarely used.

The use of career counselling was found to be low as shown by the following scores (N= 185; M= 3.25; SD = 2.55). Hence, statistically, career counselling was rarely practiced. There was little evidence of the use of family counselling. In conclusion, the schools under study were rarely use family counselling as one of the interventions towards delinquent behavior.

From the interview, it emerged that individual counselling, group counselling and career counselling were some of the most common used types of counselling in the schools under study. However, the present study revealed that to some extent, family counselling was rarely offered mainly because of the complexity involved in getting the parents to participate.

Individual counselling was one the most dominant kinds of counselling employed in most schools. Participant A had the following views regarding the types of counselling being used:

Delinquent students are provided with individual counseling which involves one-on-one counseling with the counselor and the student. There is a group counseling whereby female students are counseled together differently from the male students and male students as well are counseled differently from the female students. Career counseling is also provided to delinquent students whereby they are guarded to make career choices. Family counseling has been provided twice this term. Its frequency has reduced because it is difficult to get the parents to come to the school (Interview, 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021).

According to Participant B, group counselling, family counselling and individual counselling were offered. In addition, Participant B had the following to say about the types of counselling offered:

There is group counseling. In some serious cases, like drug and substance use, parents have been involved in counseling the students. Career counseling has been provided once to the students. Group counseling is provided. An organization known as Akilidada has come to talk to the female students about sexual purity. Members of Nairobi Chapel which is a church organization come every Fridays to talk to the students on the spiritual aspect. Career counseling is given to Form Two to help them choose their subjects. Not much has been done in this area (Interview, 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021).

Participant C pointed out that their school offer different kind of counselling services.

The present study however noted that some schools were also sometimes forced to request families to intervene in delinquent cases. Participant C had the following to say about the circumstances under which parents may be involved in counselling:

The school provides individual counseling to delinquent students in the school. Career counseling is also provided to the students in class and at individual level. Group counseling is provided whereby the students are counseled together on common delinquent behaviors among them. In extreme cases like drug use, parents are invited and they are informed about the students' delinquent behaviors so they can talk to them (Interview, 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021).

Participant D pointed out that individual counselling, group counselling, family counselling and to some extent career counselling were common features. He had the following to say about the types of counselling:

Currently, the first thing we do is to identify students that need counseling session, then we do individual counseling which is one on one counseling. Currently we are co-working with two organizations. The members come here every Fridays to give guidance to all students together. It is more or less a group counseling session but they do it at the spiritual aspect. We have scenarios we have to involve the parents when we do counseling session with some those noticed students. In the area of career counseling, I will say we have done poor on that (Interview, 15<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021).

In conclusion, the study revealed that there was some element of the use of individual counselling, career counselling, group counselling and to some extent the family counselling as interventions towards delinquent behaviors among students.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The present study advances scholarly understanding about prevalence of delinquency and the counseling used to reduce delinquency among students in selected secondary schools in Ngando, Nairobi County. The findings established that prevalence of delinquency is mild among students. The findings also revealed that there are some elements of delinquency amount students in the schools under study. This finding is validated by that of Obokata, (2020) which found out that some students displayed mild delinquency as well as in-school issues such as lack of interest in education, taking alcohol beverages and marijuana-hashish. These manifestations are similar to those identified by the studies conducted by Kaimal, Vidhukumar & Razeena (2021); Lawrence (2020); Moracha, et. al., (2021). This is accordance with the study of Mercer, Crocetti, Meeus, and Branje (2017), which also implies that most students did not significantly suffer from social anxiety and delinquency behavior.

However, the few who had the potential to manifest delinquent behaviors need to be assisted to enhance their self-

control, involve them in school activities such as clubs and improve parental monitoring and supervision as recommended by Obokata (2020). This finding was however contradicted by that of Kariuki-Githinji, (2020) which investigated prevalence of teenagers' anti-social behavior such as taking other students' things, manipulation of others, gang fight and attacking and established that adolescents' delinquency is on the rise in Kenya especially in urban Kenyan secondary schools.

Conversely on the forgoing, this finding is in agreement with that of Mercer, Crocetti, Meeus, and Branje, (2017) who had established that delinquency is a common manifestations of problem behavior during adolescence, and both are associated with negative interpersonal relationships in adolescence and emerging adulthood.

The findings revealed that the types of counseling used to reduce delinquency among students are rarely used such as individual, group, career and family counseling services.

This was contracted by a study conducted by Biolcati, Palareti, and Mameli, (2018), which found out that the individual counseling can serve the most vulnerable adolescents. Similarly, Anyanwu, Ileri, and Kitonga, (2019) study had established that individual counseling was perceived to have a positive effect on inter-personal relationships among young people. Failing to use individual counselling may imply that the concerned schools are not able to appropriately handle hard cases of delinquent behavior among students. This is unfortunate because as Audu, Ali, and Pur, (2017) found out, group counseling had significant effect on the attitude of senior secondary school students towards schooling in Federal Government College, Maduguri. Group counselling therefore promotes favorable attitude of students towards schooling.

This finding was contradicted by that of Upoalkpaor (2020) in Ghana which had established various benefits of career counselling such as assisting students to connect what they learn to their interests, capacities, and aspirations and matching these with available opportunities. The concerned schools therefore seem to be missing in services such as identification of students' strengths, abilities, and learning styles. They are also likely to miss in making appropriate career pathway selections and setting educational and career goals as was noted by Abubakar (2019).

This finding is supported by that of Gichuo (2015) which has observed that 60% of parents are rarely involved in the guidance and counselling of their secondary school going children.

These findings were supported by other researchers such as Odera, and Ndaita, (2017) who had also established the important role played by individual counselling and group counselling on behavior modification of Juvenile Delinquents.

The study revealed that counseling services such as individual, group, career and family are used in the school under study.

This was beneficial as indicated by Valentine, Gottlieb, Keel, Griffith, and Ruthazer, (1998) who's study on adolescent drug prevention program provided individual, pair, and group counseling to high-risk students identified by school personnel. These interventions were found to improve students' self-esteem, social coping, depression, interpersonal violence, school involvement and aspirations, school attendance, and academic performance. Similarly, Eliamani1, Richard, and Peter (2014) had established that guidance and counselling services was instrumental in enhancing students' school life, attitude toward studies, and career choices.

This finding is in line with the study of Upoalkpaor (2020) in Ghana which had established various benefits of career counselling such as assisting students to connect what they learn to their interests, capacities, and aspirations and matching these with available opportunities. Audu, Ali, and Pur, (2017) found out, that group counseling had significant effect on the attitude of senior secondary school students towards schooling in Federal Government College, Maduguri. Group counselling therefore promotes favorable attitude of students towards schooling. In addition, this was observed by a study conducted by Biolcati, Palareti, and Mamei, (2018), which found out that the individual counseling can serve the most vulnerable adolescents. Similarly, Anyanwu, Ireri, and Kitonga, (2019) study had established that individual counseling was perceived to have a positive effect on delinquency and inter-personal relationships among young people.

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the most common forms of delinquent behaviors among students included violence, drug abuse, stealing, truancy and unhealthy indecent relationships. The study also concludes that the most common types of counselling used to reduce delinquency among students included individual counselling, group counselling and career counselling while family counselling was rarely used.

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