Teacher Counselor Perceptions on Extent of Counseling in Addressing Selected Social Cultural Factors in School Pupil Retention in Keiyo South District, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

With the current socio-technological changes and educational demands, guidance and counseling is becoming a major area of concern for schools in Kenya. The main purpose of was establish teacher counselor perceptions on extent of counseling in addressing selected social cultural factors in school pupil retention in Keiyo South district. The study was guided by social leaning theory and perceptual organization theory. The research design used for the study was a descriptive survey. The study population was119 teacher counselors. The study adopted census sampling technique which enabled the researcher to survey the whole population. Questionnaires were utilized to collect data from the teacher counselors. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which included frequencies and percentages, and presented in tables and figures. Analysis of data was done with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programmeversion 17. Findings showed that teacher counselors were of the opinion that counseling teaches pupils on dangers of some rites of passage, sensitized pupils on the importance of education, teaches pupils on dangers of engaging in unprotected sex and encouraged pupils to come back to school after initiation. Therefore, the study recommends that the ministry of education should enhance training programmes to in services more teachers on counseling skills and create a programme where young girls married off at a tender age should be rehabilitated through guidance and counseling so as to encourage them to go back and pursue their dreams through education. Teacher counselor should enhance sensitization to the community on dangers of early marriage.Further, education planners should enhance sex education in the school curriculum for proper orientation of the pupils.

Key Words: Perception, Counseling, Early Marriage, Early Pregnancy, Teacher Counselor

1.0   Introduction

Need for counseling services in all learning institutions cannot be overstated or understated.   Globally, it is evident that students in all levels of learning and in educational institutions have needs that call for counseling services, which if unattended could lead to numerous disciplinary issues and wastage. Cooper (2007) argues that counseling is the professional advice given to a person (client) by a trained person (usually counsellor), in order to assist the client to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more positively, satisfactorily and resourcefully in society. He notes that counselling occurs only when there is a mutual understanding between the counsellor and the client which is brought about by information sharing and exchange of ideas. Counseling is the skilled and principled use of relationships that develop self-knowledge, emotional acceptance and growth. Counseling seeks to address and resolve problems, help one in decision making while also assisting one to cope with crises. Counseling is also concerned with helping individuals to work through feelings and inner conflicts so as to improve relationships with others (Ndichu, 2005).

Internationally, each child is different but most would need six sessions at minimum and some may need ten times that depending on the trauma experienced and who the offender is. In the United States of America (USA) for instance, among American-born high school graduates in the 18-24 age range, 42% were attending school, and only 25% of foreign-born Americans in this age group were enrolled in an institution. Among the social factors affecting retention are close friends in schools, peer culture, social involvement (service learning, organizations), informal contact with faculty, identification with a group, and social integration. Ethnic identity development is another social-cultural factors affecting student retention in school. Ethnic identity refers to "one's knowledge of personal ownership or membership in the ethnic group, and the correlated knowledge, understanding, values, behaviors, and proud feelings that are direct implications of that ownership" Rothney (2006), suggested that a developmental challenge faced by students is the conflict between the need to establish their personal identity within their ethnic heritage as well as within the culture and cited several conditions influencing students' identity: this include their generational status within the country, the environment where they grew up, and their self-perception.

In Africa, the problem of pupil dropout is disquieting to policy makers since it partly reflects the inadequacy of an educational system in terms of either school quality or quantity. Worth noting is that school dropouts are usually associated with chronically high unemployment levels, low earnings, poor health outcomes and persistent poverty among certain segments of society. Taken aggregately, these individual-level consequences of primary school dropouts are perilous to national development by undermining national human capital development efforts. Given the glaring dropout rate of pupils and ghastly effects of primary school dropout, there is therefore an urgent need to establish the socio-cultural factors that influence the probability of pupils dropping out of school (Kamau, 2012). Mali, Cameroon and Nigeria only student retention has become a challenging problem for the academic community; therefore, effective measures for student retention must be implemented in order to increase the retention of qualified students in schools. Institutional administrators, faculty, and students play a vital role in improving student retention. For instance institutional administrators can help students stay in school by providing them with the appropriate funding, academic support services and the availability of physical facilities in addition to the effective management of multiculturalists and diversity in the school. School management members can help to maintain a positive learning environment for students by using multimedia technology and innovative instructional techniques such as cooperative and collaborative learning in the classroom (Shield, 2004).

In the Kenyan context, Mwathi (2007) indicates that to improve negative self-concept and low educational aspirations among primary pupils with problems of social cultural factors such as initiation, early pregnancy and early marriage, counseling program is vital as it would help these pupils to appreciate themselves by focusing on their strengths and individual differences within specific ability type. However, the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) in its draft (2006- 2011) reports that in June 2005, there was an evaluation of Kenya Counseling Educational Program, the main program of the Ministry of Education for counseling Education of the students and which found that the program is delivering the much needed counseling services to the pupils affected with social cultural factors but KESSP recommended that the KIEP needed to change its approach to service delivery, capacity building and advocacy in the current era of education and Sector-wide approaches in order to achieve greater institutionalization and government ownership. The evaluation also recommended that the counseling program be restructured to support more sustainable district-led and child centered planning and implementation of services.

Simatwa (2007) states that in Keiyo South District, pandemic school dropout and retention in primary schools is alarming. For instance, in a period of ten years, 1992 - 2010, every primary and secondary school cohort suffered not less than ten percent school dropout for instance the highest dropout rate for the girls was fifty percent in the 1997/2010 cohort. The average dropout and completion rates for girls in the period under consideration were 20% and 80% respectively. For the boys they were 14% and 87% respectively. Some of the reasons that lead to the pandemic secondary school dropouts include initiation, early pregnancies/marriages, and culture. Importantly, every secondary school dropout in Kenya signifies unfulfilled objective, goal, and aim for the individual as well as for the community at large (Simatwa, 2007). Although the estimated drop rate for pupils declined slightly from 2010–2013, thisdeclineishardly felt since the decline is so slow and slightly constituting to wastage and problematic to the state, parents and individual pupils. In additional, these are dismal numbers, but if proper mechanisms are put in place to reduce drop out by about 50% each year through the introduction of compensatory or remedial education, competency-based teaching and automatic promotion in some selected primary schools in the country.

The study therefore aimed at establishing the teachers counselor's perceptions on the extent of counseling in addressing selected social cultural factors on school pupil retention in Keiyo South District and the findings used to make recommendations that would otherwise help policy makers to positively strategize for the success of counseling in schools.

1.1   Problem Formulation

As far as the Government's commitment in the area of provision of adequate counseling to students and pupils are concerned, national aspirations and expectations have not matched the existing needs. The guidance and counseling program also helps to tackle the insecurity imposed on pupils by their conditions and some of their hostile social environments and social cultural factors. The number of learners enrolling in lower primary is higher compared to the number completing class eight. This dropout rate may be attributed with initiation among the boys and pregnancies among the girls which might lead to early marriages. Despite the introduction of counseling for these pupils, it is concerning that the number of learners dropping out ofschoolhas remained consisted for the last four years. Therefore in view of the issues mentioned above, there was need to assess the teacher counselor's perceptions on the extent of counseling in addressing selected socio-cultural factors on

school pupil retention in Keiyo South District, Kenya.
This paper specifically examined

i.   Teacher counselor perceptions on the extent of counseling in addressing initiation as a factor influencing pupil retention in Keiyo South District.
ii.   Teacher counselor perceptions on the extent of counseling in addressing early marriage as a factor influencing pupil retention in Keiyo South District.
iii.   Teacher counselor perceptions on the extent of counseling in addressing early pregnancy as a factor influencing pupil retention in Keiyo South District.

The paper is expected to shed light to the teachers, teacher counselors and students on the role of guidance and counseling in addressing social-cultural factors on school pupil retention in Keiyo South District. It may also provide information to head teachers and teacher counselors on the possible ways in which counseling can be improved in school to address the social cultural factors. Moreover, the other institutions may use the findings of this study in making policies on supporting guidance and counseling. The findings of this research can be useful to the head teachers, teachers, teacher counselors, parents and pupils as they can be able to be aware of the social cultural factors affecting pupil retention and how counseling can help address this problem. The study will inform the management of the primary schools on how to direct their finances to best achieve the provision of counseling. Findings of the study may provide useful literature for other scholars who may wish to explore the area of role of counseling further.

2.0   Literature Review
2.1   Dropout out rate in Africa
The numbers on access tell their own story. In the midst of an increasingly knowledge-based global economy, 30 million primary school-age children in Africa—one in every four—are out of school, along with 20 million adolescents (UIS, 2012). UNICEF (2003) reported that in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of children out of school each year has risen from 20 million in 1990 to 24 million in 2002. Of the 25 selected countries studied, fifteen (15) were in sub-Saharan Africa. The criteria studied were: low enrolment rates for children; gender gaps of more than 10 percent in primary education; countries with more than one million children out of school; countries included on the World Bank's Education For All Fast Track Initiative and countries hard hit by a range of crises that affect school opportunities for children, such as HIV/AIDS and conflict. The fifteen countries included Chad, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Eritrea, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The dropouts are highly influenced by poverty in the school locations. Dropout factories are mainly found in 15 states primarily in the North, West, and South of the U.S. (Balfanz&Legters, 2004). These schools are only 12% of the national total yet they are estimated to produce about half of the nation's dropouts overall (Balfanz&Legters, 2004). Slight good news is that dropout factories have continued to decline; estimated at in 1,634 in 2009 compared to 2,007 in 2002 and 1,746 in 2008, according to America's Promise Alliance (2011). However, an estimated 2.1 million students still attend dropout factories as of 2009; 183,701 students fewer than in 2008 (America's Promise Alliance, 2011).

However, nearly half of the nation's African American and Latino students attend high schools in low-income areas with dropout rates that hover in the 40-50% range (Balfanz&Letgers, 2006; Children's Defense Fund, 2004). There is no single prominent risk factor predicting dropout. Rather, there are numerous risk factors that in combination with each other raise the probability of youth leaving high school early (Gleason &Dynarski, 2002). These factors fall into four broad categories related to individuals e.g., truancy, poor school attitude, families (e.g., low-income, lack of parental involvement, schools e.g., negative school climate, low expectations), and communities e.g., high crime, lack of community support for schools, according to the Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA (2007). Dropout rates particularly correlate with high poverty rates, poor school attendance, poor academic performance, grade retention i.e., being held back, and disengagement from school (Hammond, Linton, Smink& Drew, 2007). Fortunately, there is a growing and encouraging body of research for schools on how to prevent dropout by addressing problem behaviors, promoting academic success, and enhancing overall health and wellbeing for students.

2.2   Initiation as a Factor Influencing Pupil Retention
Initiation is a rite of passage marking entrance or acceptance into a group or society. It could also be a formal admission to adulthood in a community or one of its formal components. In many African tribes, initiation involves circumcision/genital mutilation of males and sometimes circumcision/genital mutilation of females as well. Initiation is considered necessary for the individual to be regarded as a full member of the tribe. Otherwise, the individual may not be allowed to participate in ceremonies or even in social ritual such as marriage. A man

will not be allowed to marry or have any special relationship with a woman who did not go to an initiation, because she is not considered to be a woman. Initiation may be thought of as an event which may help teens prepare themselves to be good husbands and wives (Kirk, 2009).

Moreover, many communities (including the Keiyo) accept initiates as adults, but teachers or schools continue to consider them as children and this may create tension. Initiation ceremonies thus affect girls' and boys' access to schooling differently in different contexts. More research also highlights a link between age and drop out for girls. In most communities, initiation rites take place soon after a girl starts menstruating, with varying levels of formality in the way the rite is performed. As soon as it is known that a girl has started her first menstruation, elderly women (usually excluding the girl's mother) come together to provide counseling to the girl on how she should take care of herself when menstruating; how she should carry herself, be obedient, and respect elders since she is no longer a child but an adult. When girls start to menstruate or reach maturity/puberty, they might be withdrawn from schools. In some cases this might be to ensure the girls' reputations are kept 'intact'. In other cases girls are withdrawn from school at this time to marry (Munthali, 2006).

2.3   Early Marriage as a Factor Influencing Pupil Retention

Marriage at an early age is alarming, especially among the girls. Even though statistics are elusive, estimates show that 40 to 50 percent of marriages in India involve a girl under 18 or a boy under 21, the legal ages for marriage. In fact, as per NFHS Survey-3 (2005-06), 45 percent of women of 20-24 years were married before the legal age of marriage of 18 years, compared with 50 percent, as reported in NFHS. Further, in urban slums 40.5 percent of males get married before the age of 21 and 55.5 percent of girls before the age of 18 years (AggrawalSraddha, 2006). Thus, early marriage is one of the important reasons for children dropping out from the school, especially in the states of Bihar,Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, etc. Slums represent the culture and customs of different states as the residents are migrants from different parts of India. These migrants follow their state specific rituals in marrying off girls at an early age. After marriage these students do not return to school and school policy also does not encourage their return to school either. Most of the time, these students also do not possess any information regarding future educational possibilities due to which most of the girls do not attend school or any other course or training after marriage. It was found that 17 children had got married and dropped out, of which 15 were girls of less than 17 years of age. Around 20 percent of girls reported that they would get married in the next year. In general, early marriage of girls impairs the realization and enjoyment of virtually all of their rights. The imposition of marriage on children or adolescents who are in no way ready for married life deprives them of freedom, opportunities for personal development, health and well-being, education, and participation in civic life. (UNICEF 2000).Unless measures are taken to address early marriage; it will continue to be a major stumbling block to the achievement of human rights. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide information that can be used to end the silent misery of thousands of girls in the region, to open up new horizons for them, and contribute to the development of policies, programs, and advocacy to bring this about (Bruneforth, 2007).

Verner (2007) argues that for both girls and boys, early marriage has profound physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impacts, cutting off educational opportunity and chances of personal growth. For girls, in addition, it will almost certainly mean premature pregnancy and childbearing, and is likely to lead to a life-time of domestic and sexual subservience over which they have no control. Yet many societies, primarily in Africa and South Asia, continue to support the idea that girls should marry at or soon after puberty. Their spouses are likely to be a few years older than they are, but may be more than twice their age. Parents and heads of families make marital choices for daughters and sons with little regard for the personal implications. Rather, they look upon marriage as a family-building strategy, an economic arrangement or a way to protect girls from unwelcome sexual advances. More recently, advocates of safe motherhood have turned their attention to this issue. Pregnancies that occur 'too early' when a woman's body is not fully mature constitute a major risk to the survival and future health of both mother and child (Mark, 2007). Concern with the special health needs of adolescents has also recently been growing in a world where young people are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. However, from a demographic and health perspective, early marriage is seen primarily as a contributory factor to early child-bearing. And sometimes, even in this context, its role is overlooked: the phrase 'teenage pregnancy' is typically understood to mean pregnancy outside marriage. Yet far more adolescent or teenage pregnancies occur within marriage than outside it(Zheng, 2003).

During the past decade, the movement for Education for All has stressed the need to enroll more girls in school and to keep them from dropping out before completion. In this context, the custom of early marriage is acknowledged as one of the reasons for girls' exclusion from school, especially in cultural settings where girls are raised for a lifetime con-fined to household occupations and are expected to marry very young(Grant, 2007).

Very recently, the situation of children in need of special protection, notably girls vulnerable to sexual abuse and HIV/AIDS, suggests that early marriage is being used as a strategy to protect girls from sexual exposure, or to pass the economic bur-den for their care to others. Thus, early marriage lingers on as a culturally and socially sanctioned practice according to some traditional sets of values and, among some highly stressed populations, it may even be on the rise (Hunt Francis, 2008).

2.4 Early Pregnancy as a Factor Influencing Pupil Retention

Pregnancy related school dropouts have become a matter of public concern in the world today. Several studies have shown that age at first intercourse is reducing, suggesting that today's young adults are becoming sexually active at an increasingly younger ages. In addition, some studies have shown that few adolescents use contraceptives and are at risk of pregnancy. This results in situations such as dropping out of school, poverty, early marriage and contracting sexually transmitted diseases (Hallman, 2006). As reported in the December 2000 edition brief of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), in the developed countries such as the USA, early parenthood is seen to be adding a great burden to the already challenging navigation of adolescence. Each year, it is estimated that some 500,000 adolescent females become parents before completing high school in the United States. Research reports also indicate that the United States records the highest teen birth rates in the industrialized world, twice as high as that of the United Kingdom which is the developed nation with the second highest rate of teen pregnancy, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. The educational stakes are also very high for young parents in the developed countries whereas a high percentage of young mothers drop out of school, making early motherhood the number one reason for dropping out of school among young girls in these countries (Bray, 2007).

In Africa, especially the sub-Saharan Africa countries, there are concerns about high rates of pregnancy-related school dropouts, also leading to the reported gender disparities in education in the developing world (Mensch et. al.). Schoolgirls who become pregnant have fewer opportunities to complete their education after childbirth and have fewer opportunities for socioeconomic advancement. Among policy makers and even the media, pregnancy is increasingly being mentioned as a reason for premature school leaving in the region. Anyone who has lived or travelled in Africa and read the local papers is familiar with the attention given to "schoolgirl pregnancy"- a term which draws attention to the risks schoolgirls face when they stay in school beyond the age of sexual maturity (Lloyd & Mensch, 2005). In most of the countries, schoolgirls whose pregnancies are detected are required to drop out of school, at least temporarily.

In most cases, schoolgirls who become pregnant in countries like Nigeria, Mali and even Zambia either had to resort to unsafe abortions or they face official school expulsion. Because girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy usually never returned to school to complete their education after childbirth, their opportunities for socioeconomic advancement are limited. While in many settings, rules are currently being liberalized to provide for possibility of re-entry, the number of those returning back to school is still very low. And due to the fact that a pregnant schoolgirl has to choose between dropping out of school and undergoing an abortion in order to remain in school, it poses a high cost associated with becoming pregnant while still in school. On the other hand, boys who get the girls pregnant do not face the same risks(Ersado, 2005). Many African governments have also included family life education programs in their school curriculum in an attempt to educate adolescents about the consequences and responsibilities associated with sexual activity. The high rates of schoolgirl pregnancies suggest that these family life programs have their shortcomings and indicate that educational policies should be used not only to reduce the incidence of schoolgirl pregnancies but also to assist pregnant schoolgirls to complete their education(Francis, 2008.)

In Kenya, the youth population with young people between ages 15 – 19 is large, accounting for 25% of the population of the country. As in other parts of Africa and the rest of the world, these young people are faced with tremendous challenges in the transition to adulthood. The challenges are serious such that many young people especially young girls are leaving school early due to pregnancy. 23% of young women aged between 15 – 19 years are pregnant with their first child and 50% of young people have begun child bearing by age 20 years (CSA Kenya, 2007). It is important to note that most of the Kenyan young girls in this age bracket are still pursuing education in secondary schools and the pregnancies at this very age definitely interfere with their education efforts at that level. The introduction of free primary school education by the Kenya government has also led to increased numbers of school enrolment including those already in the sexually active age groups. A growth in the percentage of girls attending school after puberty inevitably leads to a rise in the risk of pregnancy among students being that they are already sexually active.

Given the fluidity of the traditional African marriage process, the onset of sexual relations and childbearing prior to formalizing a union was not unknown in Kenya in the past. The rapid expansion in education has led,

however, to an increasing association in the public mind between premarital sexual activity, childbearing and schoolgirl dropout. Kenya's education policy also fully embraces the "Education for all" notion irrespective of sex, religion, ethnic and social background, economic status and color. The Ministry of Education endeavors to eliminate gender disparities and promote social equity through provision of basic education to all, including female (Johnson, 2011). One of the Ministry's strategies to meet educational objectives is to increase the course completion rate through reduction of dropout rates. The Ministry is fully aware that the dropout rate for girls is higher than that of boys and also that pregnancy and subsequent drop out of the girls from school contributes to the very disparities the educational policy seeks to eliminate. The statistics on school drop out of the teenage mothers in Kenya reveal that the problem has been demanding urgent solution (Cynthia & Barbara, 2006).

2.5   Theoretical review
The study was based on Albert Bandura's Theory of Social Learning (Bandura, 1977). The theory focuses on the learning that occurs in a social content. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observation learning, imitation and modeling. The theory show those teachers' perceptions and expectations of students' willingness to communicate (WTC) have been determining factors in the extent to which teachers interact with students (McCroskey& Richmond, 1988). This happens more so based on ones values and interpretation system.According to Freeman and Freeman (1994), teachers' counselor perception of learners and learning are one of the most critical and decisive factors in the teaching and learning process, and more clearly, in constructing teaching (cited in Crookes, 1997, p. 67). These views and aspects are associated with a wider agenda relating to the way teachers see themselves and the work they are doing. Cooper et al. (2004) stated that once one starts to try to find out about teachers' counselor of students, the investigation would usually link the researchers to what students have achieved and how knowledge about the students shapes teacher know

3.0   Research Methodology
The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Keiyo South District; Kenya which is administrative district in the ElgeyoMarakwet County of today. The target population of the study consisted of teacher counselors drawn from 119 primary schools in Keiyo South District. A sample of 119 teacher counselors was required for the study. The study adopted census sampling technique to select the teacher counselors. A census eliminates sampling error and provides data on all the individuals in the population. Questionnaire was used to collect primary data from teacher counselors. A Likert scale rating was used to measure the perceptions of teacher counselors on the extent of counseling in addressing the selected social cultural factors in school. Validity was also arrived at by designing the research instrument items in line with study objectives. Cronbach alpha was used to estimate the reliability of the research instrument. Reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained indicating that the research instruments were reliable and therefore adopted for data collection. Quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques which were frequencies and percentage. The findings were presented by use of frequency distribution tables that gave record of a number of times a score or a response occurs. From the frequencies and observation made, the researcher made conclusions and recommendations.

4.0   Results and Discussion
4.1   Demographic Description Of Participants
The study revealed that 51% of the respondents were male and 49% were female. The researcher was thus able to collect data from both male and female respondents. It also shows that there was no gender bias while sourcing for data. The study revealed that 48% of the respondents were of 40-49 years, 26% were of age 30-39 years, 18% were over 50 years of age and 8% were between 18-29 years old. This implies that the researcher was able to collect data from at least all the age groups. In regard to the level of education, 40% of the respondents had reached diploma level, 37% had a P1 level of education, 18% had a bachelors' degree and 5 % had a degree of masters. This implies that the researcher was able to collect data from all levels of education of the respondents. Hence the study was well informed. In regard to the working experience of the respondents, 77% of the respondents had a working experience of over 5 years, 15% had a working experience of 1-3 years, 3% had a working experience of 6 months- 1 year and less than 6 months respectively. This implies that the findings from this study were reliable since data was sourced from respondents who were very experienced in the study subject.

4.2   Teacher counselors' perception on the extent of counseling in addressing initiation as a factor influencing pupil retention in Keiyo South District

Table 1

		H	M	L	T
Counseling has encouraged pupils to come back to school after initiation	f	98	10	11	119
	%	82.4	8.4	9.2	100
Counseling offers alternative rites of passage to pupils	f	23	72	24	119
	%	19.3	60.5	20.2	100
Counseling teaches pupils on dangers of some rites of passage	f	75	33	11	119
	%	63.0	27.7	9.2	100
Counseling has provided pupils with mentors	f	3	14	102	119
	%	2.5	11.8	85.7	100
School counselors take time to create awareness in the community on importance of education	f	3	5	111	119
	%	2.5	4.2	93.3	100
School counselors take time to create awareness in the community on the dangers of some rites of passage	f	6	11	102	119
	%	5.0	9.2	85.7	100
Counseling has reduced pupil dropout influenced by initiation practices	f	9	85	25	119
	%	7.6	71.4	21.0	100
Counselors assist pupils to come up with clear life goals	f	3	15	101	119
	%	2.5	12.6	84.9	100
Counseling has come up with strategies that help pupils identify their rights	f	46	46	27	119
	%	38.7	38.7	22.7	100
Counseling offers information to pupils seeking protection on where to get help	f	50	41	28	119
	%	42.0	34.5	23.5	100
Counseling offers support to returnee pupils	f	65	30	24	119
	%	54.6	25.2	20.2	100

Key: f- Frequency, %- Percentage, H = High, L =- Low, M=Moderate T = Total

According to the study, a majority of the respondents (82.4%) were of the opinion that counseling has encouraged pupils to come back to school after initiation. This agrees with Greenberg et al., (2003) that through teacher counseling, schools will be able to accelerate the enrollment of children and improve their ability to keep children in school. In addition, 63 % of the respondents revealed that counseling teaches pupils on dangers of some rites of passage, according to Wekesa(2003) girls receive special counseling and training from pastors and respected women from the community.

More study findings revealed that 54.6 % of them teacher counselors indicated that counseling offers support to returnee pupils, 42 % of the respondents said that counseling offers information to pupils seeking protection on where to get help, 38.7 % of the respondents held that counseling has come up with strategies that help pupils identify their rights, 19.3% of the respondents opined that counseling offers alternative rites of passage to pupils. This coincided with Braxton, & Sullivan, (1999) that pupils who drop out of school often have socio-emotional problems that could be well addressed by proactive counseling services.

More findings showed that 7.6% of the respondents indicated that counseling has reduced pupil dropout influenced by initiation practices, 2.5% of the respondents noted that school counselors take time to create awareness in the community on the dangers of some rites of passage. This statement is echoed by Sharkin (2004) who suggested counseling centers collaborate with academic support services indeed; such collaboration may be particularly effective in retention efforts. Further, the study reveals that 5% of the respondents believed that counseling has provided pupils with mentors, school counselors take time to create awareness in the community on importance of education and that counselors assist pupils to come up with clear life goals.

Teachers counselor perceptions clearly shows that counseling plays a big role in giving direction to pupils in

Keiyo South District by encouraging them to come back to school after initiation. This could be interpreted to mean that the Keiyo traditional initiation practices greatly influences the way the initiates continue with their normal life experiences. This can be linked to the Keiyo community's believe that as the boy is circumcised to graduate to manhood, the same should apply to the girl who will be married by the man after circumcision. The Keiyo practice female circumcision as a rite of passage from girlhood to womanhood. Consequently, most school girl's dropout and get married after undergoing FGM. Counseling has thus helped most of the pupils, including girls, to go back to school after undergoing these initiation rites. This coincide with Lynch (2005) suggestion that school counselors need to develop, coordinate, and monitor female pupils who have undergone FGM as a means of ensuring retention of academic excellence for all pupils and to ensure that there is student retention

From the findings school counselors have come up with strategies that help pupils identify their right (33.7%), one of the strategies provided by Savage (2008) is that school counselors need to provide quarterly reports that identify the number of students receiving services. These services are categorized as: individual counseling, group counseling, classroom guidance, parent workshops, and other counseling activities. Quarterly reports provide school counselors with data critical to evaluate the services that have been provided and an ongoing opportunity to review student needs in order to identify faults in the system and correct them so as to ensure proper retention of pupils in schools and to ensure that they don't deviate from the established norms and rules.

4.3 Teacher Counselors' Perception on the extent of counseling on Early Marriage as a Factor Influencing Pupil Retention in Keiyo South District

Table 2 Teacher Counselors' Perception on the extent of counseling on Early Marriage as   a Factor Influencing Pupil Retention in Keiyo South District

		H	M	L	T
Counseling created awareness in parents on the importance of education	F	69	25	25	119
	%	58	21	21	100
Counseling sensitizes the community on dangers of early marriage	F	26	31	62	119
	%	21.8	26.1	52.1	100
Counselors work with ministry of education officers to ensure at risk pupils are in school	F	89	23	7	119
	%	74.8	19.3	5.9	100
Counselors work with child protection services to ensure at risk pupils are in school	F	69	34	16	119
	%	58	28.6	13.4	100
Counseling advocated for fighting practices that encourage early marriages among pupils	F	22	46	51	119
	%	18.4	38.8	42.8	100
Counseling identifies pupils at risk of early marriage	F	69	41	9	119
	%	58.4	34.8	7.8	101
Counseling provided clear structures that help the at risk pupil	F	21	43	55	119
	%	17.7	36.1	46.2	100
Counseling sensitized pupils on the importance of education	F	96	17	6	119
	%	80.7	14.3	5	100
Counseling identified marriage barriers to education	F	44	23	52	119
	%	36.9	19.3	43.7	99.9
Counseling reduces pupil drop out influenced by early marriage	F	47	31	41	119
	%	39.5	26.1	34.4	100
Counseling assists pupils to be conscious of their physical changes	F	70	35	14	119
	%	58.8	29.4	11.8	100

Key: f- Frequency, %- Percentage, H = High, L =- Low, M=Moderate T = Total

According to the study, a majority of the respondents (80.7%) were of the opinion that counseling sensitized pupils on the importance of education while 74.8 % of the respondents held that counselors work with ministry of education officers to ensure at risk pupils are in school. This is in line with AggrawalSraddha, (2006),

assertion that in urban slums 40.5 percent of males get married before the age of 21 and 55.5 percent of girls before the age of 18 years. Thus, early marriage is one of the important reasons for children dropping out from the school. Further, 58% of the respondents said that counseling assists pupils to be conscious of their physical changes whereas 29.2% of the respondents indicated that counseling identifies pupils at risk of early marriage while 29% of the respondents believed that counseling created awareness in parents on the importance of education since girls do not receive the same educational opportunities as boys. As postulated in the study findings, the early marriage custom tends to be a characteristic of the Keiyo community. Most often than not it terminates young girls' education especially in the rural communities. Not only do girls who give birth typically come from dysfunctional, poor families, but many of their peers are doing the same thing because of the imposition of marriage on children or adolescents who are in no way ready for marriage.

In addition, 58 % of the respondents noted that counselors work with child protection services to ensure at risk pupils are in school and 39.5% of the respondents held that counseling reduces pupil drop out influenced by early marriage simply because early marriage life deprives them of freedom, opportunities for personal development, health and well-being, education, and participation in civic life (UNICEF 2000).Additionally, 36.9% of the respondents pointed out that counseling identified marriage barriers to education while 21.8% of the respondents observed that counseling sensitizes the community on dangers of early marriage. These findings are also in agreement with Chebet (2002) observation that Keiyo traditional initiation's core values formed the basic doctrines in which every adult in the society was expected to be knowledgeable about. Similarly, 18.4% of the respondents held that counseling advocated for fighting practices that encourage early marriages among pupils, and 17.7% of the respondents indicated that counseling provided clear structures that help the at risk pupil. This is in agreement with Grant (2007) that when girls are given the opportunity to be educated, girls face barriers to the completion of their studies. In most cases, girls are excluded from school, especially in cultural settings where girls are raised for a lifetime confined to household occupations and are expected to married very young.

As indicated in the study due to the high occurrence of early marriage among pupils in schools in Keiyo south, it is important for counselors to understand the Keiyo population, especially the practice of early marriage. Primary data obtained from this study confirmed earlier findings that married and unmarried pupils shared the following characteristics: marriage to older husbands, low educational attainment, low social status, limited access to health services, increased risk of maternal and infant mortality, and increased vulnerability to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV. However the survey revealed that a limited number of women who were married as adolescents subsequently accomplished higher education, and resulting profession/career and leadership. Nevertheless, teacher counselors in Keiyo South indicated that they teach pupils on dangers of engaging in unprotected sex. As teachers' counselors, there is need to find ways to help these students achieve successfully because there is a great likelihood that they will be in the educational system. As a counselor, one should always be open-minded towards other cultures. A very important point to keep in mind is that when a married female pupil discloses to a counselor that she is married, she is breaking her silence and risks getting in trouble with her parents and the legal system.

All teacher counselors should work with ministry of education officers to ensure at risk pupils are in school and advocated for fighting practices that encourage early marriages among pupils. Individual and group counseling in primary school can serve as early prevention for deterring early marriage for female adolescents. Counselors can start providing individual and group counseling regarding goal setting and educational planning forKeiyochildren as young as in primary school. Students need to visualize that attaining an education is a possible reality after marriage. Schools should have qualified professional staffs (teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.) to serve as positive role models or mentor.
The girl child is unduly affected by early marriages as they are the majority of the victims. Their overall development is compromised leaving them socially isolated with little education and leads them more vulnerable to poverty. According to Kasente, (2004), Kakuru, (2003) it is perceived by parents that marrying off the girl child is an escape route from poverty which usually not the case. Further, Odaga and Heneveld (1995) note that parents worry about wasting money on the education of girls since they are more likely to get pregnant or married before completing their schooling and that once married hence their parents investment would have been wasted. Thus parents discourage the girl child from continuing with school.
Study findings indicated that teacher's counselor's perception showed that counseling creates awareness of their sexuality in pupils. The findings are supported by Stone &Dahir (2004) that counselors also monitor student

progress towards achieving the National Standards of creating awareness on dangers of unwanted pregnancies among pupils. Counselors review delivery strategies to support every pupil's academic, career, and personal social development. Progress is assessed by analyzing pupils' achievement data and achievement-related data, monitoring through student self-reports, report card grades and comments, assessment data and student portfolios. These strategies allow the experts in guidance and counseling to retain more and more students in their institutions.

4.4   Teacher Counselors' Perception on the extent of Early Pregnancy as a Factor   Influencing Pupil Retention in Keiyo South District

Table 3 Teacher Counselors' Perception on the extent of Early Pregnancy as a Factor Influencing Pupil Retention in Keiyo South District

		H	M	L	T
Counseling assists pupils to be conscious of their emotional changes	f	71	40	8	119
	%	59.7	33.6	6.7	100
Counseling teaches pupils on dangers of engaging in unprotected sex	f	81	32	6	119
	%	68.1	26.9	5.0	100
Counseling helps pupils to identify activities they can take up in spending their free time	f	113	3	3	119
	%	95.0	2.5	2.5	100
Counseling creates awareness of their sexuality in pupils	f	50	34	35	119
	%	42.0	28.6	29.4	100
Counseling embraces pupil self esteem	f	58	34	27	119
	%	48.7	28.6	22.7	100
Counseling disseminates reproductive health education to pupils	f	50	31	38	119
	%	42.0	26.1	31.9	100
Counseling identifies pupils in crisis	f	71	24	24	119
	%	60.6	19.7	19.7	100
Counseling assists pupils in crisis to cope with the situation	f	85	27	7	119
	%	72.1	22.1	5.8	100
Counseling reduced the number of early pregnancies in school	f	47	49	23	119
	%	37.9	43.2	18.9	100
Counseling reduced pupil dropout influenced by early pregnancy	f	38	35	46	119
	%	33.0	31	36.0	100

Key: f- Frequency, %- Percentage, H = High, L =- Low, M=Moderate T = Total

According to the study, a majority of the respondents (95%.) were of the opinion that counseling helps pupils to identify activities they can take up in spending their free time, 72.1% of the respondents held that counseling assists pupils in crisis to cope with the situation, 68.1% of the respondents indicated that counseling teaches pupils on dangers of engaging in unprotected sex, 59.7% of the respondents noted that counseling assists pupils to be conscious of their emotional changes, 60.6 % of the respondents observed that counseling identifies pupils in crisis, 48.7 % of the respondents were of the opinion that counseling embraces pupil self-esteem, 42% of the respondents indicated that counseling creates awareness of their sexuality in pupils, 42% of the respondents said that counseling disseminates reproductive health education to pupils, 37.9% of the respondents believed that counseling reduced the number of early pregnancies in school, and 33% of the respondents opined that counseling reduced pupil dropout influenced by early pregnancy.

It is evident from the study that counseling has played a major role in reducing early pregnancies by helping pupils in Keiyo South district in identifying activities that they can take up in spending their free time. Initiation period comes with lots of free time for the initiates. Given that idle minds are the devil's workshop, counseling the Keiyo youth on activities they can engage in in their free times would come in handy. Since early pregnancies (mostly due to idleness and a lack of parental guidance) are a major contribution to reduced pupil retention, these activities will help to engage the pupils hence distracting them from other immoral practices and behavior.

Cognate to study findings, Mensch et. Al (2005) assert that in the African continent especially the sub-Saharan Africa countries, there are concerns about high rates of pregnancy-related school dropouts. Often times, the already financially-challenged are never keen to send them back. Thus leading to increased gender disparities in education in the developing world. This is partly because they do not have enough money to pay for their fees,

but also because they do not believe in educating girls. Study findings also showed that counseling reduced the number of early pregnancies in school since the Keiyo community held belief that girls are a source of wealth to their parents, who should be given away for marriage as soon as they reach puberty. In agreement with study findings, Bray (2007) asserts that a high percentage of young mothers drop out of school, making early motherhood the number one reason for dropping out of school among young girls in these countries. Likewise, Usha (2000) argued that early pregnancy can also affect the girl's future by delaying or terminating education, decreasing the chance of education beyond high school and increasing the chances of a poor marriage, unemployment or a low paying job. Further, Hallman (2006) argued that few adolescents use contraceptives and are at risk of pregnancy thus the need to counseling pupils on dangers of engaging in unprotected sex as shown in the study. Research findings are also in agreement with Francis (2008), assertion that educational policies should be used not only to reduce the incidence of schoolgirl pregnancies but also to assist pregnant schoolgirls to complete their education.

These findings agree with James (2009) view that, since complete sexual abstinence is the only certain form of contraception, many adolescents and young adults could potentially benefit from counseling about how to prevent unintended pregnancy. Teenage mothers are not likely to return to school after giving birth since they need to look after the new born baby as they may not have anyone to assist them. Some teenagers are said to be negatively affected by their pregnancies so much that they either leave school temporarily or permanently. Thus, school dropout is in most cases caused by a child heading the family, coupled with double responsibilities of being a pupil at school and a mother at home, and a low self-esteem. Additionally, the relationship between pregnant teenagers and their peers is generally poor. The reasons are that pupils who are not pregnant classify themselves as being fortunate not to fall in the trap and as a result they undermine those who are pregnant. Pregnant pupils usually suffer from inferiority complex, lack of confidence as in thinking that others are laughing or gossiping about them, and they also have a problem of low self-esteem. Others show a reserved behavior or are not willing to associate with their peers any more. Early pregnancies can be prevented, basing on the importance of making pupils aware of the importance of education and their future. Therefore, those pupils who have not yet started engaging in sexual relationships should be encouraged to delay engaging in sexual intercourse or possibly abstain from sex until they get married. Counseling pupils at Keiyo South district on alternative activities that would keep their minds occupied during their free time would thus go a long way in helping avert the cases of early pregnancies; thereby increasing retention at school.

In Keiyo adverse social and medical consequences are most consistently observed for teenaged childbearing, most of which is attributable to unintended pregnancy (GoK, 2008). Teenage mothers are less likely to get or stay married, less likely to complete school and more likely to require public assistance and live in poverty. The adverse consequences of unintended pregnancy and childbirth are not restricted to teenagers. Women who become pregnant unexpectedly forego the opportunity to receive preconception counseling to improve the health of the fetus. Hence, one of the most effective programs combined a school curriculum with free contraceptive services through a school-linked clinic based program that included contraceptive services demonstrated early success in preventing adolescent pregnancy, but not in later years after contraceptive services were dropped. Kirby et al (1993) reviewed the effects of 23 school programs providing sex and HIV education. They noted isolated positive effects of some programs on use of contraception at first intercourse, but less effect on contraception use among sexually experienced teens. they found no evidence that education about sexuality or instruction about contraception led to earlier or more frequent sexual activity among teenagers. All effective programs went well beyond simply providing factual information about contraception and sexuality; most sought to reinforce specific norms about sexual behavior and to develop skills to help teens resist sexual pressures. The effectiveness of counseling depends on the age, maturity, sex, and experience of the patient, as well as on the level of training and counseling skills school counselor. As documented in the WHO report, school counselors in primary schools are less variable and often limited. Many counselors are reluctant to prescribe contraceptives for adolescents without parental consent, although most states explicitly or implicitly permit minors to consent to contraceptive services without parental approval.

5.0   Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to assess teacher counselor's perceptions on extent of counseling in addressing selected socio-cultural factors on school pupil retention in Keiyo South District, Kenya. The study aimed at establishing teacher counselor perceptions on the extent of counseling in addressing initiation, early marriage and early pregnancy as factors influencing pupil retention. On the basis of the study findings the following

conclusions based on different individual objectives were made.

1. Teacher counselors consider counseling as programmethatencourages pupils to come back to school after initiation and teaches pupils on dangers of some rites of passage. The study also conclude that teacher counselor perceive counselingas channel of reducing pupil dropout influenced by initiation practices. In addition, teacher counselor opined that counseling offers alternative rites of passage to pupils

2. Teacher counselor perceive counseling as way of creating awareness in parents on the importance of education, it also assist pupils to be conscious of their physical changes. In addition teacher counselor consider counseling as tool of working with child protection services to ensure at risk pupils are in school and sensitizing pupils and the community on dangers of early marriage.

3. It was concluded that teacher counselor consider counseling as way of teaching pupils on dangers of engaging in unprotected sex and also to helps pupils to identify activities they can take up in spending their free time. Counseling assists pupils in crisis to cope with the early pregnancy and to be conscious of their emotional changes.

5.1   Recommendations

1. The ministry of education together with teacher counselors should sensitize parents and pupils on the consequences of dropping out of school

2. Teacher counselor should enhance sensitization ofthe community on dangers of early marriage.

3. Government should create a programme where young girls married of at a tender age should be rehabilitated through guidance and counseling so as to encourage them to go back and pursue their dreams through education.

4. In relation to early pregnancy teacher counselors, in conjunction with various stakeholders for example NGOs, churches, community, education officers shouldenhanceorganize seminars and workshops where the girl-child will be sensitized on the need to shun early pregnancy.

5. The government should enhance effective implementation of policies on early pregnancy, initiation by increasing budgetary allocations and strengthening legal processes

6. Further, education planners should enhance sex education in the school curriculum for proper orientation of the pupils.

This study makes the following suggestions for further research:

   i.   The methods of increasing pupil retention and enhancing academic performance in schools
  ii.   Socio-economic factors influencing academic achievement in schools
 iii.   The influence of cultural factors on female learners in schools

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