



## Assessment of the Forms of Peer Counselling Providing Psychosocial Support for Mental Wellness of Students in Public Boarding Secondary Schools in Kericho County, Kenya

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**ABSTRACT:** There is a widespread concern among stakeholders and the ministry about the mental wellness of learners in secondary schools. The role of peer counselling in the helping processes of their fellow students cannot be under rated in the modern life for their proper growth and development. The study therefore focused on Assessment of the Forms of Peer Counselling in Providing Psychosocial Support to Students in Public Boarding Secondary Schools in Kericho County, Kenya. The study objective was to explore the forms of peer counselling providing psychosocial support for mental wellness of students in boarding secondary schools. Social Cognitive theory by Albert Bandura and Social Development theory by Lev Vygotsky guided the study. Data was generated from 12 schools, among 398 students and 48 peer counsellors selected by simple random sampling. Additionally, 12 heads of guidance and counselling and principals were included. The study adopted pragmatic paradigm, used mixed method research approach. The data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussion. The results of the study revealed that the forms of peer counselling in boarding secondary schools use the roles of befriending (74.0%), mediation (72.8%), mentoring (72.8%), tutoring (72.6%) and educators (72.3%) in their helping process. The study concludes that the forms of peer counselling in public boarding secondary schools has a positive influence in providing psychosocial support to the students. The study therefore recommended that schools should use peer counselling for the psychosocial support of the learners. Sensitization of principals, teachers and heads of guidance and counselling on the benefits of Peer counselling on students' psychosocial support is essential.

**KEY WORDS:** Assessment, Peer Counselling, Psychosocial Support and Mental Wellness

### INTRODUCTION

Peer counselling is a helping process that involves one-on one interaction or interaction between members of a group with many things in common (White Swan Foundation, 2016). Adolescent friendships are crucial for their growth and give assistance in the interpersonal process. The practice of discussing feelings and behavior with peers gives adolescents a sense of personal connection. Friendship enhances teenagers' feeling of well-being and protects them from peer group issues (Bukowski, *et al.*, 2009 in Wang *et al*, 2021). All teenagers need support to cope with developmental challenges. Psychosocial support from peer counsellors can help learners develop confidence to cope with challenges.

In the classroom, peer mediators can mediate issues between learners without the involvement of the teachers. For teachers, it involves a commitment to permitting learners to work out differences peer-to-peer. In some circumstances, learners involved with a conflict will meet in a closure, often with a skilled student mediator on hand. Well-handled peer mediation, can lead to fewer dropout, suspensions and fights among students. (Fresno Pacific Staff, 2019). Peer mediation depend on a neutral third party to enable the problem-solving process and help learners' communication, mediation, and problem-solving skills to reach a conjointly favourable resolution (Samy & Ahmed, 2018).

In most cases, peer groups learn to form relationships for discussing their interest that they be cannot share with adults. Friends and peers are a key source of free-spirited enjoyment, companionship and psychosocial support during challenges. When learners lose peer group support, they are pushed to a fragile space. Peer-to-peer relationships for some students provide them their sole source of connection to school and make them feel good when they laugh and joke together because they make them feel so alive (Gowing, 2019).



## OBJECTIVE

To explore the forms of peer counselling providing psychosocial support for mental wellness of students in boarding secondary schools.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The most common forms of peer counselling include befriending, mediation/conflict resolution, mentoring and peer tutoring.

### Forms of Peer counselling in Boarding Secondary Schools

#### *Befriending*

Befriending providing psychosocial support for mental wellness focuses on enabling the learners to apply the skills of helping in everyday interactions with peers. The aims of befriending are to promote personal development in helpers and having a positive influence to the peers by reducing stigma of mental health issues and improve self-efficacy (Mattingly, 2017). Through psychosocial support, peer counsellors' helps learners develop moral values through role-play, drama, educational games, debates, discussions and group work. These techniques help the students to engage critically with important issues while considering the morals values and other life-worlds through matching and sharing similar experiences (Chowdhury, 2016).

Peer pressure can produce feelings of regret or guilt. Yet it remains a powerful force among adolescents. As social beings, adolescents want to fit in, have friends, and avoid loneliness and gain approval from others. Learners often give in to peer pressure because they fear rejection by friends. Since students face many new circumstances in high school, they can find themselves in a circumstance where they lack the skills or resources to get themselves out of a poor situation (Staff Writers, 2020). Peer pressure is something that lasts through high school and throughout one's life. Learning how to live with it now would benefit one for the rest of one's life. (Damm, n.d.). Learners should understand that peers provide social support but they are accountable for the decisions they make.

Approval by peers is a vital part of adolescent self-identity and has a strong influence on psychological adjustment (Harter in Mosha, 2017). Psychosocial support through befriending can be very effective type of counselling for peer counselling especially developing moral values and in making wise choices in life. It also helps learners express their views without fear. Learners with poor social relationship with their peers do not adjust well to boarding life.

Further, Akers in Levey *et al* (2019) expounded that social learning theory confirmed that by observing modelling their friends' behaviour, teenagers engage in behaviour directly strengthened by peers and are therefore socially rewarding. Similarly, Gremmen *et al* (2018) discovered that choosing similar people as friends makes interactions more valuable, consistent, and with fewer clashes because friends understand each other better, speak more easily, trust, and respect one other.

High school students who have better best friendships enhance their mental health in numerous ways over time, but teenagers who are popular with their classmates throughout secondary school may be more vulnerable to social anxiety later in life (Efstathiou, 2017). Intergroup friendship both regulates and mediates the correlation of contact and prejudgment. The more inter-group friendships adolescent has, the more effective intergroup contact will be at reducing adolescent's prejudgments against a certain outgroup (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006 in Prow, 2018).

#### *Peer Educators*

Peer educators help in reducing effects of negative peer pressure like drug and substance abuse and teenage pregnancies. Scholars believe that peer group interaction enables both peer educators and other students experience increase in learners understanding and retention of content in their academics (Oloo, 2016). Unquestionably, Mundia *et al* (2016) validated that most learners prefer using peer counsellors when in need of help. This is because, they seem to have confidence and trust on their peers than school counsellors and they feel freer to confide in fellow learners.

Peer educators learn as they educate their peers. Students who pay close attention learn more by having a good time. Peer education fosters both collaboration and sociability among students by allowing individuals to pass on their knowledge to their peers (Karadag *et al*, 2018). Peer educators who put what they teach people into action, like managing peer pressure, are seen as role models and trustworthy sources of new insight and expertise (Mead in Kalunga, 2016). Peer educators are normally volunteers, in order to maintain an equal-opportunity partnership. Learners of peer education may go on to become community leaders, passing on what they have learned to others (Rabinowitz, n.d.).

For helping process to take place between peer educators and their peers there has to be collaboration and cooperation by listening to what others have to say as mentioned by Lev Vygotsky. The communication ought to be open and regular to make



collaboration work well. Peers will be able to share issues related to peer pressure and their fears in a free environment in the absence of the adults. Peer counsellors through scaffolding at the zone of proximal development become handy. Administrators in secondary schools can take advantage of peer educators in dealing with negative peer pressure.

### **Peer Mediators**

Peer mediation is a communication process where the two persons with issues work with the help of a third impartial party and cooperate to solve their conflict in a peaceful process. Both parties choose a win-win option (Akbalik in Allan, 2016). Conflict is inevitable when people are in a relationship. Students are willing to join and practice peer mediation groups because it has had a positive impact on their feeling of responsibility (Eman & Eman, 2018).

Nevertheless, Jorbozeh *et al* (2014) argued that a learner might fear mediating during conflict but end up gaining confidence after observing other learners mediating and ends up being very good in it. Additionally, Christine *et al* in Atieno *et al* (2016) emphasized that collaboration is a road not often travelled during conflict. This is because it is long and requires effort and sinfulness. It requires one to observe issues positively, in all ways and being detailed and acknowledging differences and seeking for alternative solutions without victimizing others.

Similarly, Valente and Lourenco (2020) established that peer counsellors could help learners to use their emotions to increase creative and innovative thinking during games to create a favourable emotional state instead of fear. Additionally, according to social cognitive theory in Forsythe (2019), verbal persuasion from peer counsellors encourages a learner to belief that they have what it takes to succeed and to avoid focusing on their weakness by working hard. Fresno Pacific Staff (2019) revealed that peer mediation allows learners to work out their disputes with each other, rather than disciplinary action. The students meet in a private, safe setting to work out their issues. Properly trained peer mediators can lead to fewer suspensions and fights among students.

Likewise, Maxwell (2019) confirmed that the main goal of peer mediation is to help learners stop blaming each other instead look for solution beneficial for all parties. Peer counsellors can use some strategies for developing the mediation skills in the students like learning by solving problems. Students assigned to participate actively in peer mediation at their school develop lifetime 21st century abilities such as problem solving, teamwork, and communication (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2015 in Hassel, 2018).

According to social cognitive theory peer mediation during a conflict is possible if the parties' involved in the conflict are attentive in the negotiation process, hear and retain the information that has been said during the mediation, reproduce by giving feedback and are motivated to change after observing all that took part during mediation. Peer counsellors require some basic skills to help them in the mediation process whenever there is a conflict among the peers in school to resolve their differences.

### **Peer Mentors**

Peer mentoring is helping, guiding and forming of valuable relationships between two or more learners and plays a major role in the students' success emotionally, socially and academically (Murray, 2017). Learners benefit from multitude of mentors and mentees benefit from the exposure. Boundary of developing mentor-mentee relationship as friends is necessary to avoid distorting the focus of mentoring with friendship (Pye *et al* (2016). In many cases, administrators' source for mentors outside the school, it is important to take into consideration that peer counsellors can also mentor their peers positively.

Indeed, Hogan *et al* (2017) consented that peer-mentoring programmes benefit institutions since it reduced stress among learners, foster teamwork, collaborative skill development, anxiety and increased interaction between learners of different year level. Moreover, Smith in Judd (2017) expounded that service learning is an excellent example of meeting specific needs that tie directly to students' academic achievement and school success.

Mentoring will take place to a one-on-one basis. One peer mentor could assist one student mentee in this situation. Small groups or whole classes may also participate in events (Yeung *et al* in Dattoo, 2018). A mentor and mentee must face the same or similar challenges in order for the mentor to rely on personal knowledge and share how they could overcome obstacles. Peer coaches show you how to make healthy choices and manage your feelings. Mentees are not passive recipients of peer mentoring; through their collaboration with the mentor, they play an important part in forming and sustaining the relationship (Powell, 2016).

Mentoring has shown both positive social and academic outcomes. It has also shown improved mental health to learners (Bovier *et al* in Kukreja, 2018). Apart from using older students, peer mentoring is also done between more experienced students and new students in many institutions. They should be from similar backgrounds and have similar interest and life experiences. A peer



mentor should truly understand the strains and obstacles of a peer and can help them face these obstacles in a positive and productive way (Kuligowski, 2019).

When it comes to mentoring, peers can be more influential than teachers can because they have "street awareness" and recognize the authenticity of what they each learn (Philip & Spratt, 2007 in Powell, 2016). In peer mentoring, the mentor and the mentee work cooperatively and respect each other. It leads to valuable feedback and appropriate interaction occurring as effective classroom interactive skills are developed (Gyuse *et al.*, 2016).

Above all, Hobson in Kutsyuruba and Godden (2019) confirmed that supporting the mental wellbeing of mentees is a vital role of a mentor. This makes mentoring a relationship between the less experience learner and the more experienced learner. The mentor aims at supporting the mentees' learning development, well-being and their integration into the school system. Further, Holmes, *et al.* (2018) argued that mentoring is an important component for growth and maturation. The findings of the study by Aderibigbe *et al.* (2018) showed that there seems to be a challenge between the role of a mentor and a mentee. Teachers can equip peer mentors in secondary school with appropriate skills for them to help their peers.

### **Peer Tutors**

Peer tutoring is also known as peer-assisted learning, peer teaching, and learner-teach-learner, shared guidance, and collaborate learning, according to Wolfe (2018). Furthermore, Falchikov argued in Wolfe (2018) that traditional conceptions of peer tutoring saw the peer helper as a substitute teacher whose aim was information transfer. According to Dowd (2018), students who undergo peer tutoring are less likely to be afraid of or hate such subjects. Peer tutoring boosts self-esteem by showing tutors and tutees that they can learn challenging tasks and complex ideas without the assistance of teachers.

Peer tutoring, according to Ali *et al.* (2015), allows students to engage directly with one another, which is beneficial for promoting learning experiences among students. Individual consideration provided to each student. By tutoring the students, the tutors are both reinforcing and revising what they have already learned. Peers learn by entertaining one another, and learners in peer tutoring are more accessible and relaxed with their mentor.

Chiefly, Wolfe (2018) confirmed that Lev Vygotsky's theory strongly supports knowledge acquisition through peer tutors. The tutor, according to Vygotsky, is more versed in a subject than the tutee. At the 'zone of proximal development,' according to Vygotsky, the tutor is extremely beneficial to the tutee (ZPD). In addition, Topping in Vance (2016) noted that, due to excessive workloads, bigger class sizes mean that teachers have less time to provide after a session. Peer tutoring services have become more popular because of less engagement with students.

Above all, Duran (2016) confirmed that peer tutoring entails a more capable learner assisting another. The learner teacher can gain knowledge by coaching, and the tutee can gain knowledge by providing customized assistance. Peer tutors obtain primary training or ongoing training in how to carry out their responsibilities. When peer tutors get proper guidance by being equipped with the appropriate skills, they are able to provide personalized help to the tutees through one-on-one counselling or group counselling through their interpersonal relationships.

Additionally, Duran further argued that peer tutors have the ability to guide learners on good study habits, social and emotional adjustment to challenges, which may deter their confidence and competence. This can then help in enabling learners to have high self-efficacy and adjustment on boarding secondary schools. Vandeveld *et al.* (2016) agreed that peer tutoring promotes self-disclosure among the tutees. This is because the tutees receive more praise and encouragement that is motivating since it is affective leading to greater learning. This is why Putra (2016) claimed that tutorial does help in overcoming fears, solving problems by helping learners outside the classroom during spare time to adjust to school. Tutor-tutee also assist learners to understand materials one did not understand while in class.

Learners gain practical skills in teaching and giving critical feedback when they use peer tutoring in class activities. Students learn how to participate in non-teacher-led learning and may participate more actively in class discussions. In a group settings, questions and answers can be looked at from multiple perspectives and new ideas brought in. Instead of the teacher giving answers to issues, the students get to explore the various methods to come up with an answer. Conflicts is resolved through several approaches instead of going to the teacher for the final say (Wessel, 2015).

Collaboration is through teamwork, group work, sharing and cooperation. Peer tutors and tutees can collaborate when doing assignments. During collaborations, peer tutors and tutees should learn to listen to others by making effort to hear and understand the message from team members. They should also learn to contribute freely their thoughts and viewpoints on the topic or



question at hand, give compliments and constructive criticism (Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology in Africa, CEMASTEIA, 2017).

Peer tutoring has a positive impact on learners’ adjustment based on the findings of Wolfe (2018). The unique support that peer tutors play to their colleagues in the classroom when they face challenges with their classwork is huge. They help their peers in solving difficult problems and understanding concepts during their free time. Peer tutors play a very vital role in helping their peers to take their studies seriously. Their help is very vital at the zone of proximal development of the tutee according to Vygotsky.

**METHODOLOGY**

The researcher adopted pragmatism since pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy. Pragmatist do not see the world as an absolute unity instead many approaches for collecting and analyzing data can rather than subscribing to only one way (Cherryholmes, 1992 as cited in Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The study utilized a mixed method research approach where both quantitative and qualitative data were integrated. The study was conducted through convergent parallel mixed methods research design.

The sample consisted of 398 students, 48 peer counsellors who are students, 12 heads of guidance and counselling and 12 principals. The data was generated using questionnaires for the students, focus group discussion for the peer counsellors and interviews for the heads of guidance and counselling and principals. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the students. The questionnaire contained items, positively worded for the respondents’ feelings towards forms peer counselling providing psychosocial support for mental wellness of students.

The study used focus group discussion to collect qualitative data from the peer counsellors from five main questions. Benefit of focus group discussion was that it generated a great amount of information over a relatively short period (Nyumba, *et al*, 2018). The study used face-to-face Interviews to collect information from the principals and heads of guidance and counselling. The purpose of the interview was to get opinions and ideas from the heads of guidance and counselling and principals on forms of peer counselling in providing psychosocial support for mental wellness of students. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistical techniques. The study presented qualitative data from the focus group discussion and interview schedule using thematic analysis.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Data collection was by using questionnaires from students, focus group discussion from peer counsellors and interview schedule from heads of guidance and counselling and principals.

**4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics of Forms of Peer Counselling**

The first research objective was to explore the forms of peer counselling providing psychosocial support for mental wellness of students in boarding secondary schools. The study used descriptive statistics to give a meaningful description of the variables under study in line with the expectations of the research design. The respondents rated their views on the five items reflecting forms of peer counselling using a 5-point Likert scale as summarized in Table 1. In Likert scale, 1 represent strongly disagreed; 2 disagreed; 3 moderately agreed, 4 agreed and 5 as strongly agree which was collapsed into: agreed, moderately agreed and disagreed.

**Table 1.** Peer Counselling Providing Psychosocial Support for Mental Wellness of Students

Form	Agreed		Moderately Agreed		Disagreed		Mean	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1. Befriending.	297	74.6	69	17.3	32	8.1	4.03	1.06
2. Peer mediators	290	72.8	65	16.3	43	10.8	3.98	1.09
3. Peer tutors	289	72.6	71	17.8	38	9.5	4.01	1.07
4. Peer mentors	290	72.8	68	17.1	40	10.1	4.03	1.12
Peer educators	288	72.3	70	17.6	40	10.1	4.01	1.12
Mean							4.01	0.68

Note. N = 398, F = Frequency



On friendship providing psychosocial support for mental wellness, majority of the respondents, 297 (74.6%) agreed that it was helpful in developing learners' moral values, with 69 (17.3%) moderately agreed and only 32 (8.1%) disagreed ( $M=4.03$ ;  $SD=1.06$ ). This is an indication that the respondents who were in support that friendship providing psychosocial support for mental wellness helped in developing learners' moral values were more, therefore positive results.

These results echoed what Chowdhury (2016), who emphasized that through psychosocial support, peer counsellors help learners develop moral values, which helps them to engage critically with important issues while considering the morals values and other life-worlds. Equally, Gowing (2019) established that peer groups learn to form relationships for discussing their interest that they cannot be able to share with adults. Friends and peers are a key source of free-spirited enjoyment.

In order to strengthen and support the quantitative data, the researcher analysed the qualitative data by conducting focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews. The researcher assigned the respondents fabricated numbers and developed composite profiles to mask, anonymity and respect of the respondents' consent when reporting their findings (APA, 2020).

Some of the respondents had the following quotations:

*A peer counsellor should have big ears to hear any kind of information no matter how difficult it is. I should have big eyes to see the big problems my peers are encountering and a small mouth to keep secrets and issues we share during peer counselling sessions but to encourage them to be morally upright. I sometimes reach them through their friends whenever I see them acting against morally accepted values. I also encourage my friends to help others who are misled by their friends (Extract, Focus group Discussion, 2020).*

On the aspect of peer mediation, Table 1 shows that most of the respondents 290 (72.9%) agreed that peer mediators as a psychosocial support for mental wellness helped learners express their views without fear, 65 (16.3%) moderately agreed and 43 (10.8%) disagreed ( $M=3.98$ ;  $SD=1.09$ ). These results revealed that majority of the participants' agreed that peer mediators helped learners express their views without fear.

This is in line with Valente and Lourenco (2020) who established that peer counsellors could help learners to use their emotions to increase creative and innovative thinking during games to create a favourable emotional state instead of fear. Similarly, according to social cognitive theory in Forsythe (2019), verbal persuasion from peer counsellors encourages a learner to belief that they have what it takes to succeed and to avoid focusing on their weakness by working hard. Eman and Eman (2018) confirmed that conflict is inevitable when people are in a relationship. It is therefore important for learners in a conflict to learn how to express their views without fear.

In conjunction with the quantitative findings, the responses during focus group discussions with the peer counsellors were:

*At times, a student lacks confidence on how to express himself when faced with challenges. Some of these students come to me for help. I have readily encouraged them to have self-confidence and to reach to teachers for help especially on how to improve in their academics' performance. I have also help them in discussing some difficult questions and an encouraged them to approach the subject teachers with confidence for further clarification (Extract, Focus group Discussion, 2020).*

On the third aspect of forms of peer counselling, majority of the respondents 289 (72.6%) agreed that the peer tutors as a psychosocial support for learners' mental wellness helped them take their studies seriously, 71 (17.8%) moderately agreed and 38 (9.5%) disagreed ( $M=4.01$ ;  $SD=1.07$ ). From these results, majority of the participants agreed that peer tutors helped learners take their studies seriously.

This finding established connection to a study by Johnson in Watson (2020) who affirmed that peer tutoring offers a unique opportunity for learning to the tutees for they receive individual support from a peer rather than a teacher. Receiving instruction from a peer's perspective echoes differently and may be key to some students' learning and increasing student confidence. According to social development theory in Wolfe (2018), the tutor is very helpful to the tutee at the zone of proximal development. The tutor helps the tutee by scaffolding to make the wise choices in decisions. Youde (2020) added that for peer tutoring to benefit both tutee and tutor, it is important for students to switch roles so that they can each contribute in the decisions.

The responses on the aspect of peer mentors showed that 290 (72.8%) respondents agreed that peer mentors as a psychosocial support for learners mental wellness helped them make wise choices in decisions, 68 (17.1%) moderately agreed and 40 (10.1%) disagreed ( $M=4.03$ ;  $SD=1.12$ ). The results statistically indicated that majority of the participants agreed that peer mentors aided learners make wise choices in decisions. Indeed, these results concurred with (Powell, 2016) who argued that peer mentors can demonstrate how to make good decisions and how to control emotions.



Equally, Kuligowski (2019) confirmed that a peer mentor should truly understand the strains and obstacles of a peer to help them face these obstacles in a positive and productive way in making wise decisions. According to social cognitive theory in Brouwer (2018), the learner will be more likely to model the person observed in vicarious experience. The learner models the wise choices made by the peer mentors.

On the fifth aspect of forms of peer counselling, Table 1 showed that majority of the respondents 288 (72.3%) agreed that peer educators as a psychosocial support for learners mental wellbeing are helpful in overcoming peer pressure, with 70 (17.6%) moderately agreed and only 40 (10.1%) disagreed ( $M=4.01$ ;  $SD=1.12$ ). From these findings, majority of the respondents were in support that peer educators are helpful in overcoming peer pressure.

These findings are in line with Mead in Kalunga (2016) who established that, peer educators practicing what they teach to peers such as overcoming peer pressure are role models and reliable to disseminate new information and knowledge to peers. Equally, Mundia *et al* (2016) confirmed that most learners prefer using peer counsellors when in need of help because they have confidence and trust in their peers than school counsellors. Social development theory in Myteacherlearn (2020) confirmed that during peer interaction through collaboration and cooperation, learners could model behaviour from their peers and avoid negative peer pressure.

A strong argument in favour of the quantitative findings from the focus group discussion were as follows:

*Many students in boys' schools engage so much in premarital relationships. Some feign sickness to get permission to go home during the course of the term. I normally educate my peers to try as much as possible to keep themselves busy in schools by taking their studies seriously and to avoid entertaining some distractive thoughts. By the way, he paused and smiled, I also face the same challenges, but I try as much as possible to distract thinking about issues like premarital sex by studying or playing in the field (Extract, Focus group Discussion, 2020).*

*I encourage my peers to avoid bad company of students who like sneaking out of school, premarital sex and using drugs. I encourage my peers to accept their background and not to live the life of other learners especially those who come from needy background. I encourage learners to have good relationship with their teachers and to befriend them for good guidance in whenever they face challenges (Extract, Focus group Discussion, 2020).*

According to the interview done with the heads of guidance and counselling and the school principals, eleven schools mentioned that peer counsellors help their peers in the form of befriending, mediators, mentors, tutors and educators. In one school, the head of guidance and counselling and the principal reported that some peer counsellors have undergone training on mediation.

From the findings of the Table 1, the five statements used to measure peer counselling had an overall mean of 4.01. Similarly, the standard deviation of 0.68 deduced that the responses on peer counselling statements were not deviating much from the expected. The findings established that friendship has helped learners in developing good moral values; peer mediators have helped learners express their views without fear. The peer tutors have helped learners take their studies seriously, with peer mentors helping them make wise choices in decisions. Peer educators have been helpful in overcoming peer pressure among the learners in public boarding secondary schools. These findings revealed that most learners agreed that befriending as form of peer counselling has helped learners develop good morals in boarding secondary schools (74.0%) whereas peer education was the least in helping learners avoid peer pressure 72.3%.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings revealed that different forms of peer counselling used by learners in boarding secondary schools. This is attributed to the fact that majority of the learners agreed that peer counsellors use these forms when helping them adjust to boarding secondary schools. The peer counsellors in boarding secondary schools in Kericho County should be made more aware of the various forms of peer counselling such as befriending, educating, mediating, mentoring and tutoring so as to utilize them appropriately during their helping process of their peers. This would enhance peer counselling psychosocial support for mental wellness of students in public boarding secondary schools in Kericho County.



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