

**CONTEXTUAL FACTORS INFLUENCING LONELINESS AMONG  
LEARNERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA**

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## DECLARATION

### **Declaration by the candidate**

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a conferment of a degree in any other University or for any other award.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to all teachers and learners in secondary schools whose daily interactions determine experience of loneliness.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>CDE</b>	-	County Director of Education
<b>KCPE</b>	-	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
<b>PALs</b>	-	Perth A-Loneness scale
<b>PATS</b>	-	Positive Attitude Towards Solitude
<b>MKO</b>	-	More Knowledgeable Other
<b>NATS</b>	-	Negative Attitude Towards Solitude
<b>SCDE</b>	-	Sub-County Director of Education

## ABSTRACT

The impact of loneliness on productivity among human beings and especially learners in secondary schools continue to be a subject of great concern to philosophers, educationists and policy makers. The contextual factors that influence loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Kenya and particularly in Murang'a County are not clearly known and documented. The purpose of this study was to assess the contextual factors that influence loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County in Kenya. The objectives of the study were to; examine prevalence of loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County, compare the correlates of loneliness among learners and evaluate the effectiveness of counselling in managing loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County in Kenya. The study tested the following null hypothesis;  $H_{01}$ : there is no statistically significant difference in correlates of loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County. The study was guided by Vygotsky's Social Cognitive Learning Theory. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. The target population was 100,684 learners found in the 303 public secondary schools in the County. Krejcie and Morgan Table was used to determine the sample size and stratified random sampling was used to select between 10% and 30% of the schools to participate in the study. All form two learners in the selected schools were purposively sampled to participate in the study. A questionnaire was used to collect demographic data. Scales to measure teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school were adapted by the researcher for the study while PAL scale was used to measure level of loneliness. The scales and the questionnaire were piloted in similar type of schools in Kiambu County. Cronbach's alpha Correlation Coefficient test of reliability of the questionnaire and scales yielded 0.83 which was acceptable. Descriptive and inferential statistics analysis was done using SPSS version 20. The study found that 39% to 55% of learners had had serious episodes of loneliness. Correlates of loneliness were found to vary by gender, school type and perception on effectiveness of guidance and counselling services. The study concluded that coeducation boarding schools presented unique challenges in management of loneliness. The study recommends strengthening of guidance and counselling services which should be tailored to specific school environment for effective management of loneliness.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives and justification of the study. The significance, scope, limitations, assumptions, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and lastly the operational definitions of terms are also presented.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Loneliness is a psychological phenomenon that has affective, cognitive, and social dimensions. Loneliness is a psychological phenomenon that is widely prevalent among human beings in society. In education, loneliness adversely affects productivity of learners in secondary schools especially during the stage of adolescence which is greatly characterized by a sense of personal sensitivity and identity crisis in human beings. The interplay of contextual factors that influence loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Kenya, who are in their peak of adolescence, is not clearly known and documented. There is hence a compelling need to conduct an empirical study to establish the effects of contextual factors on loneliness of learners and suggest appropriate intervention measures in order to promote holistic development among learners in Kenya.

The American Psychological Association (2017) defines loneliness as an affective and cognitive discomfort or uneasiness from being or perceiving oneself to be alone or otherwise solitary. Loneliness is defined as the perceived difference between desired level of social relationships and the actual or experienced level for a person (Peplau &

Perlman, 1982). The quantity of relationships could easily be seen as number of friends in the persons' network while quality of a relationship could be viewed as personal openness to and intimacy towards friends. A person can be emotionally lonely because she lacks someone to share with her personal life, that is, lack of intimacy despite being surrounded by many acquaintances and friends. It is also possible to be alone and not be lonely.

Many negative outcomes in life have been significantly linked to loneliness; for example, low academic engagement and achievement, poor psychological adjustment, poor social skills acquisition, mental and physical health challenges, dropping out of school, increased risk of cognitive impairment, depression and anxiety, psychosis (Jobe-Shields, Cohen & Parra, 2011; Shevlin, Murphy, Mallett, Stringer & Murphy, 2013). Also intention to leave school (Frostad, Pjil, & Mjaavatan, 2015), peer victimization and bullying (Acquash, Topalli, Wilson, Junittila & Niemi, 2016); deliberate self-harm and increased mortality (Qualls, 2014). Loneliness has also been a major source of distress and a developmental risk that predispose children to immediate and lifelong negative consequences (Sharabi, Levi & Margalit, 2012). These are serious consequences of loneliness that cannot be ignored.

In an inviting school model, people, policies, place, programmes and school processes were identified as important components in determining school climate (Purkey & Novak, 2008). People related factors for example social relationships were singled out as the most important in influencing the school climate. In a school context, teachers-learners and learners' peer relationships would be the major determinants of the school social climate. It is the school climate that determines the experiences of learners'

loneliness. Changes in school contexts would slow or aggravate loneliness in the schools. In terms of numbers and contact time, teacher- learner, learners' peer relationships and sense of belonging to school stand out to be the major factors in defining learners' perception of school climate. Mouratidis and Sideridis (2009) observed that perceived school belongingness is associated with learner's academic and emotional adjustment and that loneliness predicted higher absenteeism, lower academic achievement, and problems in social relationships among middle school learners. Also Kalkan and Epli-koc (2011) while investigating perceived social support from friends (peer relationships), as a determinant of loneliness found that social support was significantly and negatively correlated to loneliness.

Vickers, Finger, Barker and Bodkin-Andrews (2014) findings while developing a measure for impact of social relations and values on education, identified parental support, teacher-learner relationship and learners' peer relationships as important areas when studying social environments in a school. They further noted that learners' sense of belonging to school determined school engagement and loneliness among the learners. Poulou (2015) concluded that supportive teacher-relationship resulted to warm learners' peer relationships, good psychological health, connectedness to school (sense of belonging to school) and that teacher-learner relationships influenced learners' level of loneliness.

Similar observations were made by Uslu and Gizir (2017) who stated that an attachment to even a single teacher improved learner's sense of belonging (sense of belonging to school) and further found that teacher-learner relationships and learners' peer relationships were predictors of sense of belonging to school. They further observed

that peer rejection led to low sense of belonging to school and desire to drop out. These human contextual factors were highlighted by Latsch (2018) who found that learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school played a critical role in adolescents' psychosocial wellness and were negatively correlated to stress, depression and loneliness.

These relationships (peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships, and sense of belonging to school) in the school's context shape thoughts, behaviour and learners' feelings. They are a major contributor to learners' socialization and psychological wellbeing at school. Presence of boys has been observed to influence the behaviour of girls and vice versa. Clark (2004) while reviewing on co-education remarked that schools are extensions of the society and as such will propagate culture and gender imbalance in the larger society. It was further observed that girls got more affected by the boys' presence than boys' response to girls' presence.

Brutsaert (2006) further observed that gender stereotypes are at play in co-educational gender schools and are more visible due to stereotype threat with girls in the receiving end and that gender role identity lender a person to comply with expected cultural standards of femininity or masculinity. Dominant gender in the school takes the mantle to dictate the behaviour that is acceptable in the school community. While emphasizing on importance of school contexts, Raufelder, Bukwoski and Mohr (2013) observed that learners' behaviour was largely determined by personality, gender stereotypes, gender role expectations and group norms. Baig (2014) reiterates that even teachers at school will be biased in compliance to gender stereotypes as dictated by the society. Thus

gender composition of the school would bring a different context that favours or disadvantages one of the genders in development of loneliness.

Research by Liu, Li, Purwono, Chen and French (2010) found boys to be lonelier than girls. To the contrary, Ilhan (2012) studying university learners in Turkey found that there were no significant differences between boys and girls in their levels of loneliness. As to which gender is lonelier, the findings are still conflicting as some authorities have found significant differences between the genders while others find none. While overall loneliness level is important, the experiences of loneliness by each gender in varying schools' contexts is needed to yield useful information on how to address loneliness better in differing gender contexts.

Globally, studies on loneliness were found to be confined to developed countries like United States of America, Canada, Australia, China and Europe only a few studies have been done in Africa, which include, Rokach (2002) in South Africa and Kasomo (2013) in Kenya. However, the Kenyan studies do not relate loneliness to learners' social relationships in different types of schools. This study intends to add to the loneliness and gender debate from Kenya. There are various types of schools depending on classification chosen.

Public schools are divided into National, Extra County, and County and Sub County schools depending on the form one admissions' catchment area of the school. Furthermore, a school can be co-educational or single gender, day or boarding. This research focused on sub county schools which were single gender boarding, co-educational boarding and co-educational day schools. Learners in Kenya spend more

than 75% of their time in school, making school context important as it impacts on all areas of growth and development of the learners longer than other environments. The government recognizes the importance of schools in the holistic development of the learners. To this end, guidance and counselling services have been emphasized to support the learners throughout the school life.

School counselling programmes are widely varied in content and practice. Salgong, Ngumi and Chege (2016) identified the main goal of guidance and counselling as that of helping people to become self-understanding, self-directing and resolve life challenges in a healthy manner. According to Hearne, Gearya and Martin (2017) guidance and counselling services covers career, academic guidance and personal and social development. Information and advice giving, general education and individualized attention are necessary to cater for groups as well as personal needs. Wamugunda, Gachahi and Kimosop (2019) points out to guidance and counselling as a tool to enhance discipline among learners. Egbochuku and Aihie (2018) found that peer counsellors can be effective in helping learners go through teenage crisis. Effective guidance and counselling programmes would provide a therapeutic community that observes conditions of respect for all, genuineness in interactions and deeply empathic. The resulting high quality of relationships would mitigate against levels of loneliness. None of the studies reviewed was found to evaluate effectiveness of counselling programmes.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The Academic performance of learners in the sub-county secondary schools in Murang'a has been dismal. The county director of education in Murang'a decried that over 36 schools performed below expectations.

**Table 1.1 Academic mean scores of Murang'a county public secondary schools**

Year	County mean score out of 12
2015	5.205
2014	5.15
2013	4.884
2012	4.96

Educationists and policy makers continue to be concerned with the influence of loneliness of learners on the academic performance in secondary schools in Kenya. Learners' wellness influences greatly their productivity. Loneliness is known to affect adversely learners' activities and impair their drive towards goals in life. High life goals were found to be significantly and negatively related to loneliness. Loneliness also decreased academic participation. Students who feel isolated tended to spend their time idly enmeshed in concerns of getting out of loneliness rather than in productive academic rigour (Bek, 2017). Similar observations were made by Stoliker and Lafreniere (2015) who stated that feelings of loneliness and learning burnout influenced negatively educational experiences of learners. Gurses, Merhamentliz, Sahin, Gunes and Metin (2011) was blunt that low academic performance triggers loneliness. Social cognitive theory grounds learning as socially transmitted thus loneliness can curtail learning. Learners' loneliness is greatly affected by relationships in the school environment. Within the schools, there are contextual factors that influence loneliness of learners which include learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and the learners' sense of belonging to a school. These correlates of loneliness have the potential of greatly stimulating the development of loneliness among learners while at

school, which greatly impacts on their academic and social output. There is scanty research and literature regarding the influence of the contextual factors on the loneliness of learners in schools in Kenya especially in Murang'a County.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the contextual factors influencing loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County, Kenya.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were to;

- i. Examine prevalence of loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County.
- ii. Determine the uptake of loneliness-counselling among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County.
- iii. Compare correlates of loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County.
- iv. Evaluate the effectiveness of counselling in managing loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County.

### **1.5. Hypothesis**

The study tested the following composite null hypothesis;

HO: There is no statistically significant difference in the correlates of loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County.

#### **1.5.1 Sub-null hypothesis**

From the composite null hypothesis, the following sub-null hypotheses were tested;

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in loneliness levels among learners by gender and school type in secondary schools in Murang'a County in Kenya.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in the learners' peer relationships in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding sub-county secondary schools in Murang'a County.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationships in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding sub-county secondary schools in Murang'a County.

HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding sub-county secondary schools in Murang'a County.

### **1.6 Justification of the Study**

The contextual factors that influence loneliness among learners are not clearly documented and established. Loneliness is known to affect the academic and personal output of learners in the world and Kenya in particular. In secondary schools, the learners are at the peak of the adolescence stage of development which is characterized by sensitivity and identity crisis among the learners. The adolescents are known to be extremely conscious and sensitive on their interactions while in school, which may lead to personal isolation and hence loneliness.

In schools, there are contextual factors, such as the peer learner relationships, teacher-learner relationships and the learners' sense of belonging to school, which significantly stimulates the feelings of loneliness among individuals in educational institutions.

Learners who experience loneliness may not perform well in their examinations. In Murang'a County, learners in many sub-county schools continue to perform dismally in their examinations. The learners exhibit loneliness related behaviours such as anxiety, withdrawal, isolation, low self-esteem and personal effectiveness which have an immense influence on their academic performance. Hence there is need to conduct a study to clearly establish the influence of contextual factors that support loneliness of learners in order to suggest appropriate intervention measures necessary to promote performance among learners in schools in Kenya.

### **1.7. Significance of the Study**

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the study generated information regarding the prevalence of loneliness among learners in Murang'a County. The findings of the study created awareness among stakeholders in education regarding the challenge of loneliness on the wellness and productivity of learners in Schools in Kenya.

From the practical sense, the study provided educationists, teachers and school counsellors with strategies on how to manage the problem of loneliness among learners in schools in Kenya.

### **1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study was conducted in Murang'a County in Kenya. There were two national schools, 22 extra-county, 37 county and 242 sub county secondary schools. The majority of the schools are co-educational day schools. The study confined itself to sub-county schools to enable collection of data from learners who largely hail from the County in order to ensure similarity in cultural values. The exclusion of national and

extra-county schools was done because the school types admit learners who are largely outside the County who may demonstrate cultural diversity that could confound the results of the study. The study selected respondents from among the form two learners since the class was psychologically at the height of the adolescence where majority of individuals are believed to suffer from identity crisis especially loneliness.

### **1.9 Assumptions of the Study**

The study was based on the following assumptions.

- i. That the respondents would freely participate in the study.
- ii. Respondents would provide honest responses to the research questions.
- iii. That loneliness is a universal psychological concept that cuts across all cultures and peoples.
- iv. That effective guidance would lead to better learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships, improved sense of belonging to school and low levels of loneliness.
- v. That form two learners possess the requisite characteristics that would provide relevant data for the study.

### **1.10 Theoretical Framework**

The study was informed by the Vygotsky (1978) Social Cognitive Learning Theory. The theory explains that learning is essentially a social process where learners construct their own knowledge, perceptions and attitudes as they interact among themselves and other members of society. The theory posits that as individuals interact in society, they construct knowledge that can lead to personal effectiveness or in ability to get along well with others. Loneliness is such a behavioural outcome that emanates out of such interactions. When loneliness occurs in an individual, such persons may construct

negative perceptions about themselves that may lead them to isolate and withdraw from the same society they find themselves in.

Thus the theory emphasizes the need for positive social interactions that may lead to construction of appropriate behaviour that promotes personal growth and performance. According to the Vygotsky's theory, learning takes place through four steps namely; - modelling, scaffolding, fading and coaching.

During modelling stage, the learner observes and focuses on an expert doing a task. Scaffolding stage is characterised of support given to the learners he or she performs the task to be learnt. The trainer takes a step back and allows the learner to practice the behaviour or perform the task alone gradually. The trainer provides many opportunities for the learner to practice and offers motivation. The learner is taken through the process accompanied by a more knowledgeable other (MKO) who could easily be an older student, peer counsellor or teacher (in a school situation). Schools offer informal learning in the hidden curriculum. It is in such times when learners socialize and learn way of life from peers. Social learning processes leads to adoption of gender roles, social expectations and values on solitude, isolation, friendship and other important determinants of loneliness' experience. Each gender is brought up and appraised differently.

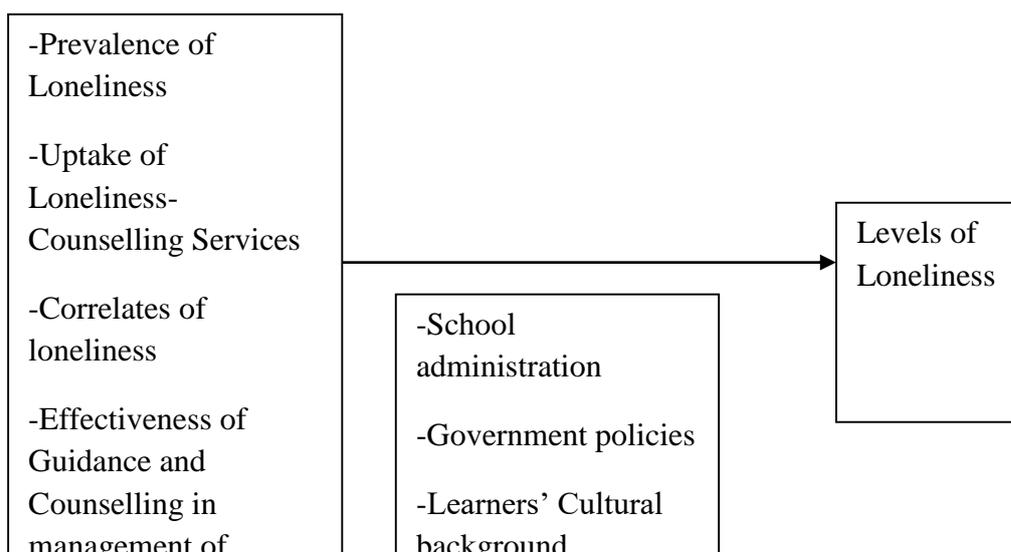
The Agikuyu ethnic group is patriarchal and girls and women learn to take second place after the boys and men. It is from the socialization process learners will learn to assess, appreciate and perceive relationships with the other gender. This backdrop will play a part in the perception and how each person moves out to satisfy the belongingness need. The cultural training implies that there would be gender difference in the way

individuals experiences and seeks to alleviate feelings of loneliness. Some of the schools are co-educational and therefore gender influence can be playing a role in such environments.

A lonely learner can be viewed as going to satisfy the social need of belongingness but somewhere in the process of connecting, establishing and sustaining desired levels of relationships, challenges are met but not fully overcome, hence manifestation of loneliness. Social learning theory gives hope that what the learner has gone through can be unlearnt in school social environment where effective guidance and counselling programmes are in place.

### 1.11 Conceptual Framework

The study utilized a conceptual frame work developed by the researcher. It comprised of contextual factors as independent variables. Independent variables were prevalence of loneliness, uptake of loneliness-counselling, correlates of loneliness and effective use of guidance and counselling services in management of loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County. Independent factors were moderated by intervening variables such as school culture, government policy, school administration, and parental attachment.





**Figure 1.1: Contextual Factor Influence on Loneliness**

Learners’ levels of loneliness were a product of contextual factors and intervening factors. The study views variables under investigation as interacting and exerting influence as shown below in figure 1. The arrows show direction of hypothesized influence, but don’t reflect the strength of the influence.

These contextual and intervening variables interplay is in schools provide different environments. Some schools are co-educational while others are single gender. Further to gender composition the school could be day or boarding, with boarding schools restricting learner to school premises for most of the time during school days.

**1.12 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Contextual factors** - refer to variables that are inherent within the schools’ environment such as gender and correlates of loneliness.

**Correlates of loneliness** - refer to learner-peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and learners’ sense of belonging to school as they stimulate feelings of loneliness among learners while in school.

**Learner-peer relationships** – refer to interactions and associations that learners form while at school which stimulate feelings of loneliness among them.

**Learners’ productivity** - Refer to academic and personal outcomes in terms of posting good results and appropriate relationships among learners while in school.

**Loneliness** - Refer to a person's behavioural tendency to withdraw or isolate oneself from others which impacts negatively on their academic and personal output.

**Perth A - Loneliness scale (PALs)** - is a multidimensional scale that measures loneliness using 24 Likert scale items covering four factors, namely friendship, isolation, positive attitude towards solitude and negative attitude toward solitude.

**Social support-** this the perceived availability of help, care, respect and love from others especially teachers and peers to the learners.

**Sense of belonging to school** - refers to perceived generalized feeling of connectedness or 'being a part of' that a learner has towards school as an entity.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores concept of loneliness, its causes, prevalence and how its correlates interact in school types and gender. How psycho-social support through effective guidance and counselling programmes service moderates loneliness through impact on correlates of loneliness is analysed. The sense of belonging to a school and teacher-learner relationships' influence are discussed in relation to loneliness in different schools' contexts. The chapter closes with summary of gaps that study intends to address.

#### **2.2 Concept of Loneliness**

Loneliness is a common term that is used synonymously to aloneness, isolation or solitude. While these aspects may be present in a lonely person, it is not always true that their presence indicate loneliness. Loneliness is a subjective concept and requires the individuals to express themselves and define their condition. Some clarification on loneliness and solitude is necessary. Solitude is an experience of life sought after by someone who was in need to be in touch with the inner self. It enables the 'I and myself' to dialogue in safety away from others. It means that a person can be in solitude regardless of presence of other people in the surrounding. In solitude each person stands before self and may be totally devoid of untruths. It is in such moments a person examines self against values, goals and standards. In the state of solitude one was able to find friendship and harmony within self. A person at peace with self will better able to relate and assess relationships accurately (Costache, 2013). Positive attitude towards solitude would mean that the person seeks and finds solitude useful while negative

attitude would mean that the person was stressed, anxious and un-desiring to be alone. May be such a person was not able to stand before self and access self-resources. Attitudes towards solitude can be seen on continuous spectrum from positive to negative end. From this view, loneliness can be seen as painful aloneness (solitude) which is perceived as undeserved solitude and aggravated by negative attitude towards solitude and isolation. In solitude an evaluation of relationships can take place leading to experience of relationships' deficit or loneliness or satisfaction that brings esteem.

American Psychological Association (2017) defines loneliness as an affective and cognitive discomfort or uneasiness from being or perceiving oneself to be alone or solitary. Loneliness was defined as the perceived difference between desired level of social relationships and the experienced level by the person (Peplau & Perlman, 1982). The quantity of relationships could easily be seen as number of friends in the persons' network while quality of a relationship could be viewed as personal openness to and intimacy towards friends. A person can be emotionally lonely because she lacks someone to share with her personal life, that is, lack of intimacy despite being surrounded by many acquaintances and friends. It is also possible to be alone and not be lonely. Thus, loneliness is a relational deficit which is personal and dependent on subjective perception. It is the lonely person who gives loneliness depth and breadth depending on subjective experience.

Some authorities have looked at loneliness as a multidimensional concept. Qualter, Brown, Munn, and Rotenberg, (2010) while carrying out a longitudinal study concluded that loneliness has cognitive, affective, and behavioural components that reflected an unfulfilled desire to have closer contacts with people. Margalit (2010) identifies four

types of loneliness; emotional loneliness - lacking emotional connectedness; social loneliness – lacking social group recognition or alienation; representational loneliness - fearing to be misunderstood and existential loneliness- feeling hopeless and not energetic to face life, as one considers life worthless. Margalit (2010) defines loneliness as a subjective, distressing emotional experience that is triggered by unfulfilled relational needs.

Houghton, Hattie, Wood, Carroll, Martin and Tan (2014) while developing a scale for loneliness identified four dimensions of loneliness, namely positive attitude towards solitude, negative attitude towards solitude, friendship and isolation. The study summarised loneliness into cognitive dimension (attitudes towards aloneness) and in the social dimension (friendship and isolation). They further observed that someone can be alone but feels restful, free and not at all bothered by the aloneness. However, someone else would be alone but feels isolated and the situation is unbearable. Thus loneliness can be seen as painful aloneness.

Short lived loneliness is transient and normal experience. However, loneliness can be chronic and bothersome. Chronic loneliness usually occurs together with negative self-assessment as lacking in ability to handle or manage the situation. A thought that dominates a lonely person's mind includes a sense of helplessness or inability to take control of the situation and hopelessness. This makes the person's efforts to fight loneliness weakened. This results to loneliness being chronic and painful. Loneliness can also be chronic with painful feelings of being stuck. It is when loneliness becomes chronic that it's dangerous to the lives of learners and must be addressed.

Loneliness can also be looked at as an emotional response to a mental process of evaluating the quality of relationships in someone's life. Normal loneliness is transient and deemed necessary as a drive to engage others in a lasting healthy relationship. One of the benefits of loneliness is that it drives the person to reach out and search for relationships or work positively on existing relationships. Desire to belong is a universal need and exists throughout life. How it is satisfied and experienced in the stage of development varies culture and time.

Loneliness in this study will refer to the condition of learners in which loneliness is persistent and uncomfortable to bear. This study utilized Perth aloneness loneliness scale which is multidimensional for loneliness measure in an effort to be inclusive of emotional, cognitive and social dimensions of loneliness.

Loneliness can be evaluated as uni-dimension or multi-dimensional concept. Loneliness has been measured using university of California, Los Angeles loneliness (UCLA) scale for a long time. This scale consists of 20 descriptive items assessing subjective feelings of loneliness or social isolation. It was developed by psychologists Russell, Peplau and Cutrona in the 1980s. Other scale is children loneliness and social dissatisfaction scale developed by Asher, Hymel and Renshaw (1984) for children ages 8-12 years. More recently, in 2014, psychologists in Australia have developed Perth Aloneness scale which is a multi-dimension scale consisting of 4 subscales. The Perth Aloneness scale (PALs), which comprises 24 items measuring four dimensions of loneliness in young people. These are friendship, isolation positive attitudes towards solitude and negative attitudes towards solitude. Participants respond to six point likert scale 1=never, 2= rarely 3= sometimes 4= often 5= very often 6= always. Each sub

scale utilizes six statements with a balance between negative and positive statements. Higher scores correspond to higher levels of loneliness. PALs were used in this study.

Loneliness does not have easily recognizable symptoms and is commonly mistaken for aggression, anxiety and depression. Lonely people feel alienated and their perception of being cut off from social group makes individuals feel vulnerable, triggering a range of cognitive, behavioural and physiological responses for self-protection. This is close to what Blossom and Apsche (2013) reported; that a child without peer support will self-preserve in one of 5 ways, over-eating, join clubs, become actively solitary, and seek help from teachers or parents and finally aggressive behaviour. Chronic loneliness has been associated with various negative like anxiety and depression, involvement in risk behavior and alcohol consumption, poor academic achievement and psychosomatic illness (Lyyra, Välimaa & Tynjälä, 2018). It can also lead to depressive and suicidal thoughts (Cavanaugh & Buehler, 2016). Lonely individuals are also inclined to be less trusting, more anxious and pessimistic, tend to perceive others around them more negatively and approach social interactions in a hostile manner observed by Matthews, Daniel, Wertz, Odgers, Ambler, Moffit and Arseneault (2016). A Lonely person become hyper vigilant and is in danger of entering into a downward spiral that can lead to chronic painful experience of loneliness. For example the person may not be able to differentiate genuine friends seeking relationships, thus may not give expected response leading to failure to establish a useful relationship. This failure further triggers feelings of helplessness and sharpens the desire to be in a relationship. This heightened desire of relationship sharpens feelings of loneliness in the person.

Lonely persons were observed to associate more with other lonely persons. As thoughts of being rejected dominate, lonely person can get easily trapped through association with other lonely people as observed by Mercer and Derosier (2010). It was observed that lonely children tended to befriend other lonely children more than non-lonely children, making it difficult to leave the loneliness hook once it was established. The results were painful chronic loneliness.

### **2.3. Personal Factors and Loneliness**

Loneliness is subjective and as such, even when the well-known determinants of loneliness are visibly present it is not enough to conclude that the person is lonely. For example, a person can be alone but not lonely and with a crowd but lonely. Perceived ability to cope was important ingredient of loneliness. Loneliness can be chronic or just situational. A situational loneliness is attributed to a certain event or experience and is related to a sense of optimism that all will be well after a while or it was possible to manage through it. The person may experience loneliness but belief that she can go over it. With such a feeling of confidence, loneliness is seen as temporary and of no great concern. However, if the person views himself or herself as not able to navigate through the challenging situation, a sense of helplessness set in and this leads to reduced personal drive to face and resolve loneliness. This perceived lack of control of the situation leads to painful chronic experience of being trapped in loneliness.

Smith (2018), in efforts to clarify loneliness as a distinct concept, observed that the thought and attitudes of the person towards a social situation cannot be ignored in deciding whether a person was lonely or not. It was possible to be alone and not lonely.

Another person may live in isolation but was not lonely. What makes aloneness or social isolation cause loneliness was the personal or subjective view that such isolation or solitude was not desired. Further to this observation, the subjective analyses and appraisal of a social situation depends on persons' socialization. In conclusion, we agree to the proposal that loneliness was better defined at personal level and if possible addressed to unique causes as experienced. Loneliness is influenced by many factors in the personality and in the social environment. Some of these factors are highlighted below.

### **2.3.1 Individual Thoughts and Loneliness**

Human beings are rational and their behaviour and emotions are connected to the dominant thoughts. Thoughts can be broadly described as positive or negative depending on the behavioural and emotional output related to them. Vanhalst, Luyckx, Raes and Goossens (2012) while investigating loneliness among university learners, observed that uncontrollable flow of ruminative thoughts about peer related loneliness, rather than their content, was harmful in the development of depressive symptoms. For example, thoughts of being isolated or rejected flooded the mind and persisted and that it could not be managed by personal efforts. It is the personal view of being unable to direct the thoughts that was weary, defeating and draining leading to helplessness and hopelessness about the situation.

### **2.3.2. Individual Cultural Background and Loneliness.**

Culture is a way of life of a group of people including their behaviours, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them. These beliefs are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next without much questioning. Thus culture determines the person's line of thoughts and values

system. In a comparative study of loneliness among children in Brazil, Canada, China and Italy, differences were found and they were attributed to varying cultural context. The results suggested that children's loneliness was affected by the broad socio-cultural context and that in each society, multiple factors, may be associated with children's feelings of loneliness (Chen et al., 2004).

It was therefore apparent that despite loneliness being a universal experience, it is never free of cultural influences. The respondents in this study are drawn mainly from Kikuyu ethnic group who dominates the central region of Kenya. The observations made in this study are limited to the cultural experiences of the region and ethnic group.

### **2.3.3 Change in Personal Social Networks and Loneliness**

In life, there are times when one loses some important social relationships and the person finds it hard to cope with. For example, learners who join boarding schools are separated from their home grounds and their families so they lose their established social support system from neighbours and family members. The new school environment requires starting new relationships with strangers which can be overwhelming when other adjustments are put in perspective. It's only the well-endowed with skills and social acumen that may sail through without risk of loneliness. Thus, learners may start their secondary school life with difficulties and with great vulnerability to loneliness.

### **2.3.4 Individual Parental Attachment Style and Loneliness**

Early childhood experiences with care givers influences the child's ability to trust and relate with other people for the rest of her life. Loneliness was found to be positively correlated to fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing attachment styles, while it was

negatively correlated to the secure attachment style (Kasomo, 2013). These findings mean that learners who had secure attachment to parents in childhood are less likely to be lonely than learners who never had security. Parents' acceptance of their children promoted secure attachment and positive social development. Fathers' influence was found to be significant. Le Roux (2009) study concluded that attachment to fathers had significant influence on children loneliness, while De-Minzi (2006) found that fathers' lack of interest in a child had a marked negative effect on the ability to trust and cope in social relationships. The current trend in Kenya where fathers are working away from home or are absent due other reasons may lead to increased prevalence of loneliness in the learners in the near future.

### **2.3.5 Personal Endowment in Social Skills and Loneliness**

Loneliness thrives on relationships. Ability to manage social interactions positively would most likely reduce chances of loneliness. Pro-social behaviours are important in starting and sustaining relationships. Sociability of a person was positively associated with learners' peer relationships.

If an adolescent was anxious and unable to make and sustain positive social contacts it's difficult to avoid loneliness. Sustaining relationships involves communication skills, listening, sensitivity; conflict resolution skills among other important personal attributes. According to Kasomo (2013) personal attributes such as self-confidence and self-esteem, the ability to make friends, interests in sports, and previous experience in handling change contribute to ease of adjustment especially during transition to secondary school. If the learner was not endowed with such skills loneliness was inevitable. Again inability to resolve conflicts among the teenagers can be a drawback in establishing sound and lasting friendships allowing loneliness to escalate due to lack

of the necessary life skills. For example, Ciftci, Demir and Bikos (2008) found a significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and loneliness. Thus social skills will determine the quality of experiences in relationships. Poor learners' peer relationships are basic raw materials for loneliness

### **2.3.6 Individual Genetic Predisposition and Loneliness**

Nature interacts with environment and potentials to develop in a certain way are determined. Genetic composition has been found to influence how individuals' processed and coped with negative emotion like loneliness, stress, fear, sadness and anger.

Genetic power was implied in the development of loneliness through people being unable to cope with feelings of loneliness. Thus carrying the gene can put the learner at risk, but does not cause loneliness. Genetic influence is powerful as demonstrated by a study of twins, (Waaktaar & Torgersen, 2012) reported that additive genetic influence accounted for 75% of variation in perception of loneliness and this perception reduced from age of seven at 58% to 26% at the onset of adolescence. Environmental influences are in interplay with genetic composition tipping the balance towards vulnerability to loneliness when environment was conducive. However, loneliness can occur when supported another risk factor, such as low maternal support, was present (van Roekel, Ha, Scholte, Engels & Verhagen, 2016). Thus, genetic composition remained as a potential cause until suitable environment was present.

Another way genetic composition of a person was thought to influence loneliness was through a baby's behaviour. Study by Waaktaar and Torgersen (2012) established that

some children had more tendency than others to develop a secure attachment, as they had innate competence to persuade their caregivers to satisfy their physical needs.

Therefore, the attachment system that children develop was the result of the interaction between the resources children bring at birth (genes) and the response capacity of their caregivers. Therefore, family history can provide a clue as to the vulnerability of the person. Further to genetical make up, the different school environments may provide rich grounds for loneliness to grow.

### **2.3.7 Personal Attribution Behaviour and Loneliness**

It can be viewed that a lonely person has tried reaching out to someone in order to address the feeling but something went wrong so that the intended outcome of bonding and relationships did not last. The cause assigned to this failure could be internal or external. If a learner attributed rejection by others to his or her shortcomings he or she would feel inadequate and as a failure. This would curtail efforts to make new connections. But if loneliness was attributed to failure was seen as caused by the others who have the problem, the adolescent may try to approach someone else some other time.

### **2.3.8 Peer Victimization and Loneliness**

Schools provide an important context where teenagers meet others and experience various relationships with each other. Adolescents highly depend on peers for support. Also notable is that in schools the learners spend a lot of time working together in formal and informal groups. Various negative relationships can thrive among the learners that can lead to loneliness. The internal environment of a school can be a breeding place for loneliness if right psychological environment was not maintained.

Peers who are victimized and relationally abused show low levels of self-esteem and are at a higher risk of loneliness as observed by Storch, Brassard and Warner (2003) and Stoeckli (2010). Woodhouse, Dykas and Cassidy (2011) found that victimized learners tended to be alone and other learners avoided them in fear of being victimized through association. The victims were not also able to bond among themselves making them potentially high for loneliness. On the other hand, social acceptance among the peers helped the adolescents connect positively with others reducing loneliness. Thus, psychological safety in schools needs to be enhanced and the vices of bullying and victimization eliminated.

#### **2.4. Prevalence of Loneliness**

Loneliness is found in all stages of life. Children were for a time thought not to be lonely. However, Cassidy and Asher (1992) while investigating children loneliness in a school context found that loneliness was a fairly common problem. A considerable proportion of children (over 10%) expressed feelings of loneliness or dissatisfaction with their social relationships at school. Also 10% of children were reported as being lonely in Asher et al., (1984). The prevalence of loneliness was given at 10-15% among learners population by Galanaki and Vassilopoulou (2007). In India adolescents studying in a public school reported high levels of self-esteem, moderate loneliness and a secure attachment style (Dhal, Bhatia, Sharma & Gupta, 2007). While 60.2% of the participants experienced loneliness in a study carried out by Ozdemir and Tuncay (2008). Other studies points out that 15- 30% of young people had persistent feelings of loneliness, and 66-79% of them reported being lonely at some point (Houghton et al., 2014; Houghton, Hattie, Carroll, Wood & Baffour, 2016). It is observed that prevalence of loneliness varies widely with regions.

### **2.4.1 Gender and Prevalence of Loneliness**

Many constructs vary between genders. Loneliness is one of them as it depends on socialization of each gender by the society. Gender differences have been observed in the way each gender prefers relationships packaged. The differing expectations on quality of relationships can translate to vulnerability for one gender than the other depending on the situation. While investigating attributions and loneliness, Inderbitzen and Clark (1986) concluded that boys were more prone to be lonely if they felt that they had no control of a relationships outcomes. Thus, boys wanted to be determinate and in charge but girls were lonelier in relationships that they felt were unstable and would not last long. Boys also preferred many general friendships unlike girls who wanted few trusted sensitive friends who shared resources together. This tendency of the genders in relationships' preferences, can easily lead to different experiences of loneliness despite similar environments.

The debate as to which gender is lonelier continues as research reports give different verdicts. Lau, Chan and Lau (1999) while studying loneliness among the Chinese adolescents found no difference in loneliness between genders in secondary schools. To the contrary, Liu et al., (2010) found boys to be lonelier than girls.

However, Ilhan (2012) studying university learners in Turkey found that there were no significant differences between boys and girls in their level of loneliness. These studies confirm the universality of loneliness and variation of its prevalence from culture to culture. The debate as to which gender was lonelier is still continuing. Thus this study will contribute to the varying views on loneliness' prevalence from Kenya.

#### **2.4.2 School Type and Prevalence of Loneliness**

Sub-county public single gender boarding schools are characterized by restricted movement in and out of school of boys and girls. Parents and neighbouring communities are also locked out unless on special functions which are rare. The programmes are highly academic oriented with little time left for social relationships. The programmes are supervised by teachers and prefects. Teachers further play an increased role in guiding the learners beyond the working hours into weekends. Restrictions of movement make learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school to be limited to daily experiences in the closed school community.

Co-educational boarding schools have both genders sharing most of the facilities in the school and programmes which are mainly geared to academics. The teachers exercise control and supervise the programmes in and out of class. Movement of students in and out of school was highly restricted. The parents and family members or community do not interact with the learners unless on rare and few days designed for their involvement. The presence of the other gender elicits different behaviour from teachers as well as learners. The awareness of presence of the other gender can prompt differing behaviours some of which can promote loneliness.

Co-education day schools have boys and girls who learn together in the same classroom and share other facilities in the school. Those in day schools spend nights and non-school days with family members and in their neighbourhood community. The day scholars enjoy privacy at home, varied diet and have time to spend as they wished for especially socializing. Day scholars report at 8.00 a.m. leave school premises at 4.00 p.m. The rest of the time, including the weekends, are spent free from schools'

guidelines. There could be an exception for girls who join mothers in caring for the family's daily needs like food, water, firewood, cleaning, laundry and others. The day scholars have a wider network of relationships available on daily basis to compensate for shortcomings in the school environment unlike the boarders. Furthermore, the learners had peers whom they grew up with in neighbourhoods, who provided alternative ways of satisfying belonging needs. This occurrence would lead to lowered loneliness despite school learners' peer relationships being weak.

Cross gender peer relations can be part of influence in co-educational school. For example, romantic relationships could be part of interactions between adolescent girls and boys. Teens get lonelier if they perceive that others have had romantic relations with opposite gender member and they haven't. They feel left out of the normative event. The feeling of being odd one out was heightened by the fact that romantic talk and experiences are central to teenage story time (Woodhouse et al., 2011). This view was also supported by Maes, Vanhalst, Noortgate and Goossens (2017) who found that intimate relationships led to intimacy loneliness as opposed to general relationships loneliness. Presence of the other gender increases the chances of developing romantic relationships which may increase levels of loneliness.

Pro-social behaviour especially towards the opposite gender was masked by the social stereotyping that could generate a different scenario from the single gender schools, where cross gender romance cannot be socially possible. De-Minzi and Sacchi (2004) observed that hetero-sexual relationships are valued among youth for prestige and not necessarily intimacy. In schools where both boys and girls study together, the aspect of

cross gender relationships can influence teacher –learner relationships as well as learners’ peer relationships.

In a co-educational school, there was a possibility of intimate cross gender relationships to occur. It was also possible that, in co-educational gender schools the girls and boys share and interact in the same environment for most part of the day. These interactions between the gender can result to healthy relationships that could lower the levels of loneliness compared to single gender schools where only same gender relationships among peers was possible. Clark (2004) argued that girls desired to be popular which meant that they comply with gender stereotypic behaviour. Girls also valued compliance and acceptance unlike boys who focused on independence and competition. Clark further observed that, girls in co-educational schools took more traditional roles and ‘care centred’ subjects like nursing, teaching, social work and others that was in tune with caring roles done by women at the family level, as opposed to engineering and mathematics based careers that were left for boys.

The girls extended their gender role of care to boys who benefited by becoming more sociable and sensitive in relationships. Schools being part of the society would reflect and propagate societal values, attitudes and skills of the community. Schools in this research are grouped according to gender and learners’ whether there is a commute to school or not, giving rise to three categories: - single gender boarding, co-educational boarding and co-educational day schools. Its observed that many aspects of the schools will be common but not without differences that might influence loneliness levels, learners’ peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships, sense of belonging or another relevant way.

### **2.4.3 Learners' Gender and Loneliness**

Gender has been defined as a set of ideas, actions and feelings related to being a boy or a girl in a certain culture and time. Gender was socially constructed and therefore the region and the people where and when the research was done are of great importance in determining the findings. The culture of the people may propagate ideas that may make one gender more vulnerable to loneliness than the other.

Learners in boarding schools spent daytime and evenings during the school term restricted within the school compound under teachers' close supervision. The boarding schools have congested dormitories, monotonous poor diet and tight programmes governing the whole time in school. Movement in and out of boarding schools was highly restricted; outsiders have to come on invitation. The total and subjective experiences of the physical and psychological aspects of the school environment give rise to different sense of belonging to school. Low sense of belonging to school generates a feeling of disconnect and having nothing to do with the school. This state leads to loneliness (Frostad et al., 2015)

Bofah and Hannula (2016) observed that notable outcomes in single gender schools include improved behaviour, higher achievement, increased learner self-confidence and self-concept, fewer school dropouts, an enhanced social climate and improved learner and parent attitudes toward schooling, especially for girls. The increased self-confidence could lead to a better way of relating with others. It would be expected that girls in single gender boarding schools to exceed those in co-educational boarding schools in learners' peer relationships, sense of belonging and in teacher-learner relationships.

However, boys in single gender boarding schools practiced masculinity on weaker boys who replaced 'girls'. It was found that putting boys in a single gender class led to increase in bullying of weaker boys and indiscipline (Clark, 2004; Brutsaert, 2006). Contrary to girls, boys will have a higher level of loneliness and poor levels of learners' peer relationships with teachers as well as their peers due to indiscipline and conflict (aggression, bullying and victimization) of weaker boys. The sense of belonging to school will be lowered especially if a large number of boys are being harassed. The boys will have better scores in the learners' peer relationships and teacher-relationships and a sense of belonging in the co-education boarding schools because girls will take care of the boys' ego needs.

Brutsaert (2006) while conducting a study in church based schools concluded that gender role identity lender a person to comply with expected cultural standards of femininity or masculinity. These gender roles developments in a school were subtle and shaped by daily activities small and large, significant and insignificant, but due to presence and persistence over time it bore the changes. The dominant gender in the school takes the mantle to dictate the behaviour that was Table in the school community.

The causes of gender differences were studied by Velasquez, Santo, Seldarnaga, Lopez, and Bukowski (2010) who concluded that gender group norms determine the contextual dynamics and variability behind peer relationships and loneliness. This research was conducted in a patriarchal ethnic group. Boys assumed a superior status and dominated while girls cherished compliance as they were already socialized at home to occupy

second position that of men. The girls' scores in the variables of learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school depended on the girls' population of the school. Baig (2014) study in Pakistan observed that socialization process and gender identity formation took place in schools contexts daily as a way of life. A lot of imitation and learning of gender roles were not formal but came informally as learners made choices and went on with their business of life. Boys and girls will join secondary schools with mind-set based on gender experiences in the families and previous schools. There is a need for counsellors to debrief those who might experience crashing of values and expectations when then join secondary schools.

Teacher-learner interactions and learners' peer interactions played a great role in propagating gender roles and stereotypes. That is, their interactions were gendered. Teachers were found to reinforce gender stereotypes for example, passiveness for girls and aggression for boys. This awareness is important for counselling teachers so that girls in co-educational schools are not left to be disadvantaged by girls' stereotypic conduct. Also it has implications on cross gender interactions both for learner-learner or teacher-learner relationships due to possible cultural barriers.

The choice of teacher counsellor may be limited if the genders are not represented in the counselling department. This may influence counselling service delivery and uptake. This is also likely to reduce or strain social relationships in the school. The school type was found to be significant in determining self-concept (Clark, 2004; Egbochuku & Aihie, 2018). Single gender schools' girls had higher and positive self-concept than those in co-educational schools. In the single gender schools, girls may be expected to have lower levels of loneliness and higher sense of belonging to school than

those in co-educational schools due to development of high esteem in single gender boarding schools.

#### **2.4.4 Learners' Age and Prevalence of Loneliness**

Loneliness is found at every age and stage of development from childhood through adulthood to the old. At each stage of life the person's desire to belong remains active but how this need was experienced and satisfied varies. Perlman (1990) while studying loneliness over lifetime found that loneliness was highest among young adults, declined over midlife, and increased modestly in old age. Loneliness was observed among children by Asher and Parquette (2003) and was found to increase in episodes to a peak during adolescence.

A longitudinal study by Van Roekel, Scholte, Verhagen, Goossens and Engels (2010) showed that the levels of loneliness were highest in early adolescence and slowly decreased throughout adolescence. Rokach (2002) also agreed that adolescence was the developmental stage which was most frequently associated with loneliness and alienation, since being included, accepted and loved was of such crucial importance in the formation of one's identity. The adolescence stage has a raft of changes that may overwhelm the adolescent. The emerging capacities in cognitions, physical, social and emotional development all pile demands on the adolescent. This study targets learners in form two who are in middle adolescence according to their age bracket.

## **2.5 Interplay of Correlates of Loneliness**

In a school social system, the interplay of sense of belonging to school, teacher-learner relationships and learners' peer relationships was expected to be in a way that a change in one area affects the other area of the school social relationships.

Findings suggest that adolescents' sense of belonging involves four distinct school-experience factors: generalized connection to teachers; connection to a specific teacher; identification and participation in official schools sanctioned activities and perception of fitting in with peers (Wallace, Ye & Chuon, 2012). Research by St-Amand, Girard and Smith (2017) and Latsch (2018) emphasized that sense of belonging to school was directly affected by learners' peer relationships and teacher-learner relationships. These studies establish the connection between sense of belonging to school, learners' peer relationships and teacher relationships. Thus, it was expected that this study would bring out the interplay of the correlates of loneliness in different schools' context of gender, school type and quality of guidance and counselling programmes. How these factors interact and influence loneliness levels in learners will shed light on the factors that are most influential and therefore inform counselling programmes designs meant to mitigate against loneliness.

### **2.5.1 Learners' Peer Relationships and Loneliness**

The learners interacted at two levels: dyadic relationships and in peer groups. At both levels the learners enjoyed a sense of belonging to the group or the person in dyadic relationships. Peer groups could be formal or informal. Formal groups were structured and recognized by school administration and usually are under teachers' patronage. Formal peer groups in schools are like sports teams, clubs and societies, study groups

and peer counsellors. Informal groups in schools among learners are left free of guidance from teachers.

Ellis, Mahdy, Dumas and Wolfe (2012) while investigating learners' peer relationships found that group behaviour was different from dyadic interactions. Groups are cliques and form basic peer networks in schools. These groups come with rewards like recognition, social visibility, respect and power in the relationships. Group status determined the amount of influence the group commanded and prestige enjoyed by its members. High status groups had high conformity and were authoritative unlike low status groups which were democratic and sensitive to individual differences. Pro-social behaviour was found in high status person in high status group and low status persons in low status groups. Thus learners whose groups were congruent to their status led to better relationships.

Grljusic and Kolak (2018) asserted that peer group influences development in social, intellectual, moral, emotional dimensions of the learner and was single powerful force during adolescence. Friendship and acceptance are basis for peer relations.

Friendship was defined by level of confidentiality, intimacy, loyalty, trust and closeness. The need for intimacy served basic social needs of belonging during adolescent relationships. If there were unresolved conflicts in the friendship the learner may suffer rejection. Acceptance and rejection could occur at the level of dyadic relationships or at group level each having a different impact. Learners spend more time together and acceptance by peer group was needed for popularity and happiness. The training of peer counsellors in basic counselling skills would be a great investment as it would empower the counsellors to contribute and support other learners in resolving

social related issues. This would improve teacher-learner and learner relationships reducing loneliness and creating a conducive environment for healthy emotional growth.

Grljusic and Kolak (2018) observed that gender differences were found in the ways boys and girls behaved in dyadic relationships. Boys preferred relationships where they were in control and could let go relations when they lost control. Also boys liked many general friends and exercised competition. Boys would require training on empathy so that they do not become overly insensitive in their relationships leading to crisis. And in the selection of peer counsellors fewer boys can serve many learners. To the contrary, girls preferred few stable, close and sensitive friends who worked together. The needs for girls would be served if they learn how to manage relationships and learn red flags for bad relationships otherwise they could easily be exploited.

Perceptions on relationships are real and have the power to influence the behaviour of each of interacting parties significantly. Learners' peer relationships take centre stage as adolescents seek their identity and spend more with age mates than parents. The interactions are both in dyadic relationships and groups. Rejection of a peer can occur at the two levels. Peer rejection is painful because it appears to be as a result of a social "consensus" that the individual was "undesirable, uninteresting, unwanted, or unfit" (Oriol, Miranda, Amutio, Acosta, Mendoza & Torres-Vallejos, 2017). When such an unfavourable consensus was reached by a peer group, the rejected individual's opportunities for peer interactions and dyadic relationships are greatly reduced. Also the exposure to negative and hostile peer interactions increase, contributing to heightened loneliness, psychological distress, and low feelings about the self (Asher &

Paquette, 2003). This means that lonely learners could easily get other complications which are difficult to isolate at behavioural dimension only. These observations serve to emphasize the need to have an active, vibrant peer counselling programmes that reach to learners at the time and place of their needs. Teacher counsellor should design peer programmes that are anti-bullying, sensitive and accommodating to learners. Basic tenets of person centred therapy should be popularized with all learners.

Type of school can influence the sense of belonging. Public co-educational day secondary schools are essentially community based. They draw their learners from a small radius usually a walking distance from the school or about 4 kilometres. The parents and learners usually have brothers, sisters or neighbours who have schooled in the institution before. Thus, the school history, cultural trends and characteristics are familiar to learners prior to admission into the school. The learners would rarely feel proud of their schools if the community harbours negative attitudes towards the school.

During selection exercise for placement in secondary schools, day schools are classified in the as last category, receiving learners who miss vacancies in other schools that are better in infrastructure, good academic performance and highly esteemed by the stakeholders. Day schools are familiar to the learners as the schools are in the community. School past academic performance, successes in co-curricular activities, current and past administrators and their management /leadership styles and other basic characteristics are known and discussed in the community meetings. If the attitudes towards the school are positive there would be greater chances for learner to bond and thus attain supportive relationships with the school or otherwise it would be very difficult for the learner to experience positive influence.

A variety of co-curricular activities in a school can be used to boost the sense of belonging. First it gives learners and teachers moments of informal interactions where values and relationships can grow. In such times teachers provide the model of a non-familial adult which learners can emulate. Also, the learners can easily find a sport for self-expression, improve self-esteem and shape their identity. The games not only bring the learners together but also help them to release energy. School trips have been identified as times when sense of belonging grows as the learners participate joyfully.

Bowker and Etkin (2014) conducted a study examining influence of inter class relationships on psychological wellbeing. It was found that same-class rejection was associated significantly with loneliness for girls, but not with boys' loneliness. These facts mean that peer counsellors can be used to engage another class reducing pain and chances of rejection. Furthermore, regardless of form/class and gender, findings indicated that co-educational grade rejection was a unique risk factor of loneliness for anxious and withdrawn adolescents. Issues of rejection of peer counsellors are regularly addressed to maintain their self-esteem high. Debriefing of peer counsellors was a necessity for effective counselling programmes that make use of peer counsellors.

Learners use bullying to create social hierarchy with lower statuses being despised. Intergroup conflicts are more natural for peer groups. Peer victimization occurs when the learner was a target of negative activity by peers. It could involve relational, verbal or physical aggression targeted at a particular or a group of the learners. Victimization was a part of aggressive behaviour, characterized by repeated attacks and an imbalance of power where the victim cannot defend him or herself for one or more reasons (Fox, Elder, Gater & Johnson, 2010). Victims of bullying and those who perceive themselves

as victims develop loneliness, social anxiety and have low self-esteem. Estévez, E., Murgui, S., and Musitu (2009) research established that victims of bullying reported higher levels of loneliness compared to normal group of adolescents. Boys are more physically aggressive and approve bullying more than girls. Girls use relational bullying more than boys and are more likely to engage in verbal exchange before a fight (Velasquez et al., 2010). Thus, these gender variations are expected to translate learners' peer relationships score and loneliness through isolation subscale.

Negative act of bullying is likely to occur in boarding schools dormitory areas and fields. If bullying was tolerated or not addressed, it becomes a major concern for learners especially the victims who respond by rejecting the school (low sense of belonging to school) and failing to establish strong peer social bonds and this result to increase chances of loneliness development. Victims could be at risk of suicidal ideation. Thus, it can be very unsettling for a victimized learner to study in the same school with the bullies.

Most of the new learners have been forced to do some dehumanizing acts, or are hit, subjected to ridicule or some sort of bullying. Form ones joining secondary schools come from various backgrounds and schools have a duty to support their integration in the school through induction and may be peer mentorship/ counselling programmes. In a school, new learners are likely to be ridiculed, bullied and harassed by older learners. School counsellor should always be on watch especially for vulnerable learners.

Inability to understand other people's intentions (empathy) makes children respond in aggressive manner towards social advances. It was important for adolescents to learn necessary social skills for management of bullying. Peers respond to bullying through

avoidance or with more bullying. Aggressive boys become targets of bullying because of their behaviour. The series can lead to social isolation that feeds loneliness. Aggressive adolescents have negative social cognition about self. This makes them irritable and annoying at the relationship level. To make it worse, aggressive learners blame the victim and not themselves, thus failing to detect their shortcomings through self-reflection.

Bullies' attitude blocks them from emphasizing and end up hurting others without remorse, an action which keeps off friends. This alone makes it almost impossible to alleviate loneliness by cultivating close intimate relationships with others. Results of aggressive behaviour are higher levels of loneliness, anger, low satisfaction in life and high level of stress compared to other learners (Estévez et al., 2009). At early adolescence stage, the cognitive faculties are yet to develop to capacity to handle situations hence emotions may go overboard leading to further aggression or violence. However, with time the teenager was able to control energy and emotion directing it to socially Table way. Emotional regulation should be key ingredient for guidance and counselling programmes.

The peer groups serve as a primary source of social support, knowledge and feedback. This contributes in important ways to adolescents' development of self-concept and well-being. If something goes wrong in the peer group interactions, for example rejection by peers, it would cause considerable distress among adolescents. Learners' peer relationships are a major concern among the learners who are at the adolescent stage and the negative action of rejection can be devastating. The guidance and counselling teachers can make use of voting system in selection of peer counsellors in

order to capture informal group leaders who can be empowered in the training to solve conflicts in the groups.

Special vigilance for and empowerment to report victimization when it occurs would resolve potentially serious lonely cases in the school.

An act of rejection is a powerful communication to the rejected person that he or she does not belong. This causes distress that fuels several other aspects of mental health such as social anxiety and loneliness. Woodhouse et al., (2011) found that adolescent loneliness was significantly related to social acceptance by their peer.

Other studies that place rejection as an important cause for loneliness include Kalkan and Epli-Koc (2011) and Acquash et al., (2016).

### **2.5.2 Teacher-Learner Relationships and Loneliness**

Learners are highly dependent on significant others like teachers, parents and care givers to develop a sense of safety and trust in the environment. When learners come to school they bring with them capacity to relate to teachers as well as other people in the school. As form one class joins the rest of the school they will reach out to teachers as well as other learners in order to establish positive relationships, through which they will learn, explore and settle in the new environment. Interactions of teachers and learners play a central role in supporting learners' academic motivation and sense of belonging to school. The relationships promote learners' overall adjustment in school. Teachers also are in-charge of managing school environments in order to satisfy learners' basic needs of autonomy, efficacy and quality relationships. Kiefer, Alley and Ellerbrock (2015) pointed to the importance of teacher-learner relationships as a source of support by a non-familial adult. The researchers noted that teachers were not aware of the influence high quality teacher- learner relationships had on students' school

success and do not view it as their responsibility to foster such relationships. We are likely to find teacher-learner relationships that are not satisfying learners' needs for belonging.

The attachment style developed early in life and experiences in childhood greatly influence and determine adolescents' capacity to relate to teachers (Kasomo, 2013). Personal experiences that evolve from the parent-child relationships are the initial resource that sets in motion the how adolescents will self-evaluate and interact with other people. With this in mind one-on-one counselling and small group counselling can be used to attend to personal difficulties in social relationships.

Teachers interact with learners in and out of class activities. Thus teachers serve instructional as well as socialization roles. Raufelder et al., (2013) made a detailed description of teacher-learner interactions in their ethnographic study they concluded that interactions between teachers and learner were dynamic with cognitive emotional and socio-cultural components. They found that teacher-learner relationships were shaped by social group norms, gender stereotypes and role expectations of both the teachers and learners.

Teachers' behaviour was influenced by learners' conduct and each group's behaviour was largely shaped by a set of beliefs about the other. They also found that, learners responded with warmth and sincerity to warmth and care from teachers. The learners were enjoying more during reality of life moments they had with teachers. The learner could easily detect genuineness or lack of it in the teachers' behaviour. Their study identified six areas in which teachers interacted with learner namely; - power leverage,

dualism, productivity, sympathy and identity. An example of power struggle comes when teachers are free to express their negatives like anger and reprimand a learner but a learner will not respond in a direct manner. However, learners can use their numbers and solidarity to frustrate the teachers' efforts towards syllabus coverage.

Raufelder et al., (2013) stated that schools are living places for students as well as teachers and are important social contexts for learning and development. It was an environment in which both teachers serve their roles as teachers and students but also express themselves as humans. The behaviour of learners and teachers was predicted by role expectation, gender stereotypes, group norms and individuals' personality. Teachers served both as instructors as well as socializing agents. Teachers act as role models and as non-familial adult support and teachers' comments can influence greatly the students' self-identity and perceived competence.

Socially competent teachers were effective at nurturing and developing good relationships with learners. The good relationships enabled the teachers to control learners' behaviour and acting as role models. The learners were more respecting due to positive relationships with teachers rather than to threats and dictation from teachers. The study came up with six areas of teacher-student interactions that defined the teacher-learner relationships in a school. These were- power, solidarity, sympathy, identity, productivity and dualism.

Power was played in teacher directed activities, where teacher demanded and compelled learners to action. Student may differ in terms of when and how power should apply, hence become conflictual. Boys thrived well where they were allowed to

make a decision to some extent of what concerned them. Girls avoided conflicts and preferred compliance to the teachers' plan of action. The student could use their numbers to rebel completely or partially. Solidarity was observed when teacher or student acquired support of others just because he or she was one of them. Teachers' allegations over a boy's misconduct were likely to be taken as true by other teachers just because it was being made by a teacher, without further scrutiny of facts. Similarly, student will be against a teacher who perceived as unjust to one of the students without attending to details.

Sympathy moments were times when teacher and students removed their official façade and acted true to their human/emotional beings. These moments were behaviour transforming times for students as their hearts were touched by the warmth of the teacher. It was a moment where both teacher and student kept their dignity. Identity involves personal view of self. Teachers and students had their personal identity of who they really were. When this was accommodated or acknowledged it was easier to bond. Teachers had unique way of requiring things to be done and standards to be observed. Students had ways of responding and make their efforts to be appreciated.

Dualism was about the conflict in the person between social roles. Dualism involved a student being viewed as belonging to the other group by a teacher and vice versa. How each managed to apply appropriate response to a situation determined success or failure of relationships. Teachers were to actively define boundaries between them and students. Each group behaved as they perceived the other groups' expectation which was many times wrong!

Productivity involves the very reason a school exists. Learning and teaching was a core business for any school. The teachers are in the front imparting knowledge, motivating, stimulating learners' thoughts and the learners are actively responding. Productivity gives the school public image in terms of grades in academic performances as well as in co-curricular activities. Ethics like honesty in examinations; hard work, research, assignment completion etc. can make or destroy teacher-student relationships. The conflicts grow when teachers do not tolerate laziness while students want to pass exams with minimum efforts.

Learning takes place in relational context and teachers must nurture positive relationships to facilitate enjoyment in learning. Due to school hierarchy students occupy a lower level in schools' decision making system. The teachers take the mantle in programming, organizing formal groups and co-curricular activities. Therefore, its work of the teachers to make use of programmes and school rules that enhances relationships with learners. It was observed that teachers' group can also relate to learners' group in some moments of solidarity.

The groups can lead to generalized positive or negative attitudes that can work for or against good working relationships.

Teachers as well as learners are influenced by the relationships between them. Teachers and learners interact formally in classroom during instruction and also informally during school functions and co-curricular activities. The quality of interactions could result to closeness and warmth or distant cold and sometimes conflictual relationships. Teachers who have close relationships with learners are sensitive, know learners' interests, strengths and engage them in an open discussion of the way forward. Learners

respond to the teachers' warmth by being open, motivated and honest (Raufelder et al., 2013). The counselling department should also care for teachers' social and psychological needs to enable them be actively involved in positive productive relationships with learners. The other role of guidance and counselling teacher and school administration was to sensitize teachers on learners' needs and the importance of their involvement in the satisfaction of the needs as significant role models in the school. Socialization role of the teacher cannot be ignored if there are to healthy social relationships in the school.

Shaunessy and Mchatton (2008) found that learners defined a caring teacher as one that knows her subject matter, teaches for understanding, maintains high expectations, provides constructive feedback, and models a caring attitude. Shaunessy and Mchatton (2008) also reported a great difference between learners' perception of teachers' care and the teachers' perception of their involvement in caring for learners' needs. Teachers' views were that all was well while learners were categorical that the teachers did not care. Thus there was gap in teachers' assessment of learners' needs and their provision.

The teachers' lack of practice in empathy, in and out of class, was observed in their approach to and conduct of teaching and learning sessions. Teacher-learner relationships would easily be a teachers' function and reflect the discrepancy in expectations and understanding of needs between teachers and learners. It means that teachers will have to put on a human face even as they deliver the curriculum content. A teacher whose life was portrays care, respect and related values will attract the learners to bond and forge better working relations. Learners long for relationships

where they are accepted, respected and their opinions accommodated. This acceptance satisfies their belonging needs and learners are likely to display higher commitment and effort towards school work. It is the work of the guidance and counselling teacher to keep these facts alive and observed by teachers. Schools where guidance and counselling services were effective would show a higher level of teacher-learner relationships than those without.

It is not always when teacher-learner relationships will be positive and smooth. At times relationships will fail to fulfil the desire need to communication and belong. Conflictual relationships resulted to disengagement for learners, stress and burn out for teachers. Learners who had conflictual relationships with teachers had more behaviour problems and poor academic performance. Baroody, Kaufman, Larsen and Curby (2014) observed that conflictual teacher-learner relationships were more enduring than warm and positive relationships. When a teacher ignores a student it was rejection and it hurts when the learner has no alternative teacher to satisfy the relational need. Therefore, loneliness was likely to establish itself through feelings of rejection and conflicts between learners and teachers and take longer to resolve.

In a longitudinal study teacher-learner closeness was found to vary from class to class and was less stable than teacher-learner conflict. This meant that conflict relationships predicted more the outcomes of teacher-learner relationships for example academic achievement (Baroody et al., 2014; Mason, Hajavosky, Mccune & Turek 2017). The teachers in Kenya are still transiting from corporal punishment based discipline to negotiated discipline approach. Teachers sometimes use harsh language, exclusion from activities and demeaning activities to contain learners in their hierarchy of school

structure. Such a treatment to a learner will promote conflict, resentment from learners towards the teacher and loneliness for learners. Teachers in charge of discipline should learn and apply counselling skills to be able to educate the deviant learner at emotional and psychological levels in order to touch the mind and feelings. This would lead to more self-directing learners and less indiscipline cases.

Poulou (2015) in a study found that teachers' admonishing behaviour, dissatisfactions and unpredictable behaviour influenced the learners' level inappropriate assertiveness. The inappropriate behaviour further led to anxiety, emotional problems and peer relationships problems. It was also true that teachers will be attracted to learners whose conduct and academic performance was good. It was therefore apparent that other roles given to teachers in a school can influence the level of teacher-learner relationships.

If the teacher was in discipline department, the learners might avoid him or her in fear that there might be conflicts that may develop between the teacher and learner. And as observed, the conflict relationships would negatively affect their relationships.

Teachers are among the significant people who make an impression on the learners through their formal and informal functions in the schools. Teachers interact with learners in and out of class activities and each level has its unique and different expectations. The quality of instruction and valuing of teachers by the learners can influence the teacher-learner relationships as well as connectedness to the school as an entity. Positive teacher-learner relationships reduce behavioural problems and help create a psychologically safe environment in which supportive collaborations build on (Read, Aldridge, Ala, Fraser & Fozdar, 2015).

Teachers who portray a caring attitude towards the learners end up being admired and sometimes emulated by the learner. Such positive teacher-learner relationships act as protective factor against loneliness. Warm learner relationships were found to be more effective an intervention for boys at risk of academic failure and dropping school. The emotional distance between learners and teachers was sometimes wide and many learners rarely perceive teachers as warm and nurturing. The role of a teacher in child's social and emotional development has not been studied systematically and many aspects of teacher – child relationships remain greatly un-researched as only a few studies have linked teacher and child's loneliness. Galanaki and Vassilopoulou (2007) proposed a hypothesis that the quality of learner-teacher relationships may be a vehicle through which learners' loneliness was aggravated or alleviated. This hypothesis will be tested in this study to add to the few studies that exist to date.

A link exists between gender and teacher-learner relationships and its influence can easily translate to varying levels of loneliness in learners. Gender influences were found in the teacher–learner relationships. According to Koca (2016) girls preferred close and non-conflictual relationships while boys' relationships tended to be more conflictual and distant. Furthermore, girls preferred supportive relationships than boys. It was also therefore expected that conflictual relationships would result to more stress and loneliness among the girls than boys as this would contradict their innate desires in the relationships.

It was noted by Clark (2004) and Baig (2014) that teachers propagated gendered expectations of the larger society and that teachers gave more chances to boys than girls. Boys were competitive for teachers' attention and were encouraged by teachers while girls' passiveness was not challenged. The boys might have a wider choice of teachers due to favourable position given by teachers. These also mean that many girls

are likely to experience loneliness in the co-educational schools through the apparent teacher discrimination. This may lead to a difference in teacher-learner relationships levels in co-educational schools, with boys having better scores than girls. If co-education girl schools are compared to single gender schools, it is likely that co-education girls will be higher in loneliness.

Furthermore, study by Picho and Stephens (2012) found that teachers' attitudes and beliefs about the learners can shape learners' behavioural outcomes. Teachers were found to believe that girls and boys had different abilities and that their role was to guide students to their best gender appropriate careers and behaviours. This led teachers to encourage boys differently in the choice of study subjects as well as appropriate behaviour. The gendered conduct of teachers may have far reaching impact on students' sense of belonging to school and directly on teacher-learner relationships.

Teachers may reinforce stereotypes stress by treating genders according to their fixated gender role. Better performance of subjects like mathematics in single girls' schools was attributed to absence of boys who were the accepted gurus (Clark, 2004). Girls in single gender schools were found to pursue boys dominated careers for example engineering and mathematics based careers unlike those in co-educational schools who preferred care base careers like counselling, nursing and social work. Presence of boys would trigger sensitivity to stereotypes in girls. Similarly, boys marked their masculinity from girls in a co-education school.

Stereotype threat occurs when there was gender identification and stigma consciousness. Girls responded to stereotypes faster in co-educational schools than in

single girls' schools due to stereotype threat accessibility being high in co-educational schools.

These stereotypes play a role in shaping learners' relationships with peers as well as teachers.

Influence of gender should be considered when choosing teacher-counsellor as learners may need to identify themselves with a certain gender depending on the issue to be discussed and social training in the family. In single gender boarding schools, the majority of teachers are of the same gender as that of the learners. However, a teacher of opposite gender would be necessary to assist the counsellor in order to cater for needs of the learner more holistically.

### **2.5.3 Sense of Belonging to School and Loneliness**

Sense of belonging is a basic need and a requirement in definition of the self and in any relationship. We are, in relation to others and their feedback to us is valued. Feelings towards the schools would have to be positive as it is an important part of psychological wellness. Sense of belonging to school has been defined as psychological sense of membership to school. It involves the wholeness of the person; - physically, mentally and emotionally. Sense of belonging was feeling common to many close relationships where the person kind of give part of self. It has four attributes as highlighted by St-Amand et al., (2017). These are positive feelings towards others and willingness to accommodate them, enthusiasm to engage and ability to sustain the positive feeling toward the other.

Sense of belongingness was described in two dimensions. The first was about valued involvement where the individual experiences feelings of being valued, needed, and acknowledged by teachers and learners). The second was about fitting in, where perceptions of personal characteristics flow and are complementary to the school environment. Wallace et al., (2012) proposed three dimensions of sense of belonging to a school. These are sense of fitting in with learners/peer, fitting with teachers and participation in the school official activities. A learner with low sense of belonging would fail to draw joy in the learner for being in the school and lead to poor participation in co-curricular activities. This state of self can be addressed through effective guidance and counselling tailored for the specific need to belong.

According to Tumuti (1985) fear of failure in CPE was greatest among the teachers and pupils in final year in the primary level of education. The failure was related to rejection by family as well as friends. So newly admitted learners in secondary schools, need to be healed over this apparent feeling of failure in the primary level examination. Running close to the fear of failure was the fear to be pregnant (for girls entering teenage). This fear can be overwhelming when a girl has to spend school days with boys who may approach her for friendship.

The anxiety generated by thoughts and fears on how to avoid pregnancy and peer pressure to be with boys could be a major concern in co-educational boarding schools where no relief is likely during the term. The girls can respond to the situation by developing low attachment to the co-educational schools.

The other twist relating to sense of belonging to co-educational secondary schools comes when parents do not discuss with the learner in choosing the school. When learners feel that they were not considered in the choice of school, they can rebel and reject the school from onset. Cooperation between parents and learners was found to be important in establishment and sustenance of good sense of belonging to a particular school. If the learners were not supported by parents, their sense of belonging can be low (Vickers et al., 2014). In general, there was a great need to be democratic at the family level in deciding which school to seek admission. When learners are not involved or feel ignored in choice of schools to attend, they usually approach the school with discontent.

Further, lack of democratic space at school can lead to low sense of belonging to school as reported in Karakus (2017), who observed that democratic principles at school were significantly related to sense of belonging. So when the learners feel that they have no say in what goes on and about the school, they respond by keeping away psychologically. Even non-human aspects of the school can influence sense of belonging mainly through learners' peer relationships and teacher-learner relationships. For example, school trips and co-curricular activities would avail chances for social bonding of teachers and learners. In schools, sense of belonging to school was significantly and positively related to learner peer-relationships and teacher- learner relationships (Latsch, 2018).

Maintenance of positive feelings about others and school in general can be partly achieved through effective counselling programmes. It was expected that learner who perceive counselling programmes as effective would have better sense of belonging to

school than those who view guidance and counselling negatively. It has been observed that learners have a global relatedness to school as an entity. Sense of belonging to a school refers to feeling of connectedness to school community. It is the persons' psychological membership of being one of them in the school. Chiessi, Cicognani and Sonn (2010) reported that boys developed a higher sense of belonging than girls. A low sense of belonging would render the person inclined to reject support and positive influence from other learners and members of the school (Ng & Yuen, 2011). Sub county schools are the lowest in the hierarchy of secondary schools because they admit the lower cadre of student rated by their performance in Kenya certificate of primary education examination which is used to select learners for joining various schools. The best of the performers join national schools, followed by extra county schools when national slots are filled, then county schools and lastly sub-county secondary schools. From this view, learners in sub county schools will most likely have low liking for the schools as they could had targeted admission in other schools basing their aspirations on desired performance in the examinations. This public knowledge that sub county schools admit low KCPE performers may lower the global sense of belonging for the learners.

Disengagement reflects desire to have nothing to do with the institution and thus efforts to form positive relationships with school and other persons therein is curtailed leading to high chances of loneliness. Low sense of belonging to a school leads to dropping out eventually. However, before the physical departure of the learner, psychological distance develops between the learner and the school at varying degrees.

Dean (1961), in Shoho and Patrick (1996) defined alienation as an affective construct consisting of isolation (loneliness), normlessness (value system inconsistent with school norms), and powerlessness to influence one's choices. This was echoed Mcgaha and Fitzpatrick (2005) who reported that sense of belonging as opposed to alienation brings good motivation to support school programmes and adherence to rules and regulations on learners' conduct. Alienation leads to disengagement, stress loneliness and dropping out. The overall school experiences can be positive and bonding to particular learner or negative leading outright rejection. Learners respond to total school experience emotionally and can feel connected or disconnected. This psychological membership can direct learners' energy towards improving or destroying the school as an entity. It was expected that sense of belonging will vary among the learners due to differences in valuing of school processes and outcomes, by school type and gender.

Sense of belonging to a school can increase or was diminished during conceptual instances which are critical to the sense of belongingness. These instances include: joining a new school in form one, when organizing a school trip, choosing a school team, giving prizes and other emotionally loaded moments. Such moments can allow positive bonding for those who get a chance. The teachers have a great say in such moments and handling of the moments may make or break teacher-learner relationships and a big blow to the sense of belonging for the individual learner. Thus it was important to identify specific instances that are valued, esteemed and critical to bonding with the school for strengthening the bond.

Empowerment of the learners to the extent that they felt in powerful enough to effect changes in their environment was found to be a strong factor in determining sense of

belonging to school. Thus schools that give learners room for discussion and democracy will foster more sense of belonging than those who are not. Chiessi et al., (2010) while developing a sense of community scale for adolescence observed that satisfaction of physical needs, emotional connection, opportunity to influence decisions and social support were important components of sense of belonging to school. Further, Chiessi et al., (2010) found that girls lagged behind boys in sense of belonging which they attributed to different socialization and opportunities availed for the gender to act on. Lastly they observed that sense of belonging was very specific due to different environmental opportunities that interact to give a wholesome sense of belonging. Among the significant moderate influences on sense of belonging to school were identified as attachment to peers (learners' peer relationships) and personal wellbeing.

Vickers et al., (2014) see sense of belonging to a school as the emotional dimension of school engagement. They further observe that sense of belonging was strongly influenced by peer relationships and the values held by the learners. Young people will adopt behaviour that make them feel significant, accepted by their peers and be popular in their social circles. It is expected that peer pressure would play a role in the overall sense of belonging to a school. Vickers et al., (2014) further reported that sense of belonging includes positive ties with teachers and peers, active participation in co-curricular activities, and a network of appreciative friends. The connections with right friends promotes sense of belonging thus quality of friends will determine the direction of sense of belonging to school. Achievers in schools will be found going with those of similar values/traits enhancing their sense of belonging. Sense of belonging stimulates strong sense of purpose and commitment in a learner that easily translates to academic achievement.

Vickers et al., (2014) concludes with an observation that, it was only through relational dimension that sense of belonging to school can be influenced remarkably and therefore ensure retention of learners. Thus, parents, teachers and learners have to be sensitive as to what they say and do in their relationships in order to cultivate higher levels of sense of belonging. This underpins the importance of learner relationships as they act together and jointly bring differing effects at individual level of the learners.

Frostad et al., (2015) studied the dropping out of school by high school learners in Norway. The study had over 2000 learners aged about 16 years. The researchers noted that decision to leave school (low sense of school belongingness) was motivated by a host of factors like gender, age, family social economic status, level of education of parents, low academic achievement and other institutional factors like communication, leadership, teachers and peer acceptance. They further asserted that popular learners stayed on to enjoy peer acceptance though they could have low connectedness to school. Isolation by peers was found to precede early school leaving.

The study looked at leaving school as terminal event of a process of a growing intention, culminating into the decision to leave school. The way each learner interacts with social and physical environment inhibit or fuels development of an urge to drop out. It was noted that a learner needs to feel integrated with the school in the academic and social dimensions. Frostad et al., (2015) study focused on teacher support, academic achievement, gender and parents' level of education. The peer acceptance/rejection/loneliness were considered as secondary factors determining the intention to leave school. The intention to leave can be considered the lowest level of sense of

belongingness which a learner can tolerate feeling as a stranger in a school. Their study utilized a self administered online questionnaire. Loneliness was measured using norwegian version of the loneliness and social dissatisfaction questionnaire and peer acceptance was measured by sociometric techniques using peer nominations. Intention to leave was measured using a Likert scale that required respondents to choose from six alternative levels of intention to leave statements. The results indicated that loneliness was a major predictor of intention to leave school.

This study investigated sense of belonging to school influence on loneliness. A strong relationships was expected. However, it might reveal interesting results based on Perth-Aloneness loneliness scale was used as opposed to UCLA. The study investigates school as an entity and its relationships with learners and how the relationships influences learners' level of loneliness

## **2.6 Effective Guidance and Counselling in Management of Learners Loneliness**

The participants in this study were in form two classes in the secondary school tier of education. Their ages range between 13 and 20 years with a mean age of 17 years. According to stages of developmental in life they were all in the adolescence stage. Adolescence is a transitional stage loaded with a lot of changes that transverse all aspects of life. Being an on-transit stage, the adolescents are malleable and receptive to change. This should be exploited fully by schools in order to bring out the best out the learners. Their needs can be viewed in various dimensions, with special interest to needs that can be addressed in schools' guidance and counselling programmes

Physical changes in adolescences are easily spotted in a spurt growth occasioned by sudden increase in size and physical abilities. There is breaking of voice, appearing and growth of beard and pubic hair, broadening of shoulders, long legs and hands, growth of muscles, wet dreams and maturation of body organs among others in boys. For girls the voice becomes melodious, breasts enlarge, pubic hair appear, broadening of hips, smoothening of muscles, menstrual flow start, reproductive organs mature and many others. Arising from the changes, there need for information and knowledge on what to expect and on personal hygiene measures to take. Beyond the physical lies the search for ideal body shape, size and comparison of one's body with that of peers. There is worry for those who mature early as well as late bloomers. Learners want to hear that it they are normal in what they are going through. The teacher counsellors need to address the issues to dispense the anxiety that might otherwise affect other quarters.

Emotionally, the learners start experiencing feelings that just appear and may disappear without their control. Feelings of joy, happiness, shyness, fear, anger, sadness and other feelings both negative and positive start manifesting. He or she can feel sad or happy and cannot attribute to anything she or he has done. The feelings do not follow any pattern and just called mood swings. This is frustrating because some want to make good feelings last but they do not know how. The other challenge was when the learner cannot adequately describe and name his or her feelings.

Further concern comes with moments when the learner gets strong feelings that go out of their control and threatens other relationships with peers or teachers.

Learners struggle to gain control over negative emotions of anger, hatred, jealousy, fear, sadness, loneliness and must be supported to learn ways safely expressing the emotions and internal disposal of the energy. Learner's aggression has been found to be main

course of failed relationships. Some adolescents will ignore some emotions and push them to the unconscious mind. This in turn may bring challenges in relationships.

Cognitive growth results to learners' ability to argue logically, be creative and deal with hypothetical cases. This ability manifests in desire to know why it has done, decided or why things are the way they are. Many label it rebelliousness but it just a positive enquiry that leads to avoidance of what does not make sense to the adolescent. Learner challenges the school rules and wants to try them and expose injustices if suspected. The styles of leadership are challenged and adherence to order becomes a big behavioural challenge. Creative writing, drama, music, poems and growth in vocabulary was witnessed. Problems that may arise from this end would be negative thoughts about self, suicidal ideation, self-harm, depression, low self-esteem, role confusion, indiscipline, early sex indulgence and loneliness.

Behavioural challenges experienced during adolescence can be traced back in the early life of the learner and current cognitions and emotional balances. Behaviour was the observable output of the body inner conditions. Blossom and Apsche (2013) claim that an adolescent without peer support will self-preserve in one of 5 ways, over-eating, join clubs, become actively solitary, and seek help from teachers or parents and finally aggressive behaviour. The teacher counsellor was invited to discover other ways hurtful learners will protect their egos.

Behaviour can also be inward like loneliness, depression, self-hate and others. Social behaviour will be a product of physical wellbeing, emotional and cognitive health. The unfortunate thing was that many times the teacher and learners alike do not question

the inner state of the person eliciting the behaviour especially when then behaviour was negative.

The overall energy produced or availed by a healthy adolescent is high and must be channelled into productive activities. This calls for programmes that allow spending enormous muscle and mental energy for example in sports, athletics, games and other interesting activities. The teacher counsellor must design ways to balance and find time to nurture personal as well as group growth needs for the learners. The counselling needs of an individual are work, relationships and being alone. The learners' work was to learn and excel in academics for this was what the society has put them in schools for. At work, the learner was faced with a challenge of subject choice that aligns well with future career. Time management, study methods, communications in English (as a second language) and physical alertness required.

Due to heightened demand on schools and individual learners to post good academic grades, under performance raise a lot of anxiety and stress that may impair the wellness of learners. The academic performance of a learner remains an important indicator of a learner in need of counselling. These major tasks demanded from the learner imply the need for social support in order to negotiate easily the secondary cycle of education.

Learners come to school with a variety of family relationships backgrounds and experiences and this loading can powerfully influence their sense of belonging to school and their capacity to relate to peers as well as teachers. Kalkan and Epli-koc (2011) studied children in pre-adolescence and found that peer support was a determinant for loneliness, confirming that learner entering adolescence stage could well be lonely.

There are learners who will come from dysfunctional families, abused, neglected, rejected, orphans and other backgrounds that may present unique challenges when it comes to relationships at school. These learners can be identified and given relevant support individually or in small groups.

The transition from primary school to secondary school comes with loss of friends and family social support network and demand to connect befriend new persons previously not known to the learner.

A newly admitted learner in form one faces new ways of learning and self-direction required at secondary level. The difficulties experienced on arrival at new school can be handled by an effective induction programmes and working closely with peer counsellors who are available at the spur of the moment.

The problems of intrapersonal relationships can be a challenge where a learner cannot understand what was happening in her or himself. Individuation process which calls for self-definition becomes a challenge commonly referred to identity crisis. Handling the issue of self-image, self-worth, self-efficacy, developmental changes in physiology, emotions, cognitions, and social expectations can all be overwhelming at personal level, especially when addressed in solitude. This can be very unsettling and drain a lot of energy for the adolescent. Loneliness strikes at such times when the individual settles down to inner-self.

The aim of peer counsellor programmes would succeed if learners given the tasks are carefully selected, trained in basic skills and supported by teachers. The following personal characteristics of learners are considered desirable for the peer counsellors; -

confidential, approachable, respectable, assertive, friendly, intelligent, caring, and creative among others. The learners are asked to nominate members of their class whom they consider as having the characteristics. The nominated list was further checked and confirmed by the teachers' panel in the counselling department before being given an appointment. Carkhuff (2000) recommends training of more people in counselling skills to enable growth in numbers of people who can support one another in challenges of life. A kind of therapeutic milieu that would result from increased number of peer counsellors trained in a school.

Through guidance and counselling, peer counsellors can be trained in leadership skills to enable them be influential in the informal groups. Peer counsellors could easily provide directions informally through presence and active participation in their cliques or informal groups. By nature of being together with other learners in the groups, peer counsellors would easily take charge or give valid suggestions in the groups and resolve many issues before they become a mountain of concern for the school. Peer counsellors can use the skills given during training to better themselves in relationships and others. Social learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978) stress the importance of more knowledgeable other (MKOs) in passing necessary knowledge and social values to the learner. Peer learning occurs through the influence of more experienced or knowledgeable peer.

The experienced peer could be in the same class or in the neighbourhood community. Having a trained peer counsellor armed with necessary skills would make them more influential in the peer groups' interactions. This makes continuous peer counsellor training necessary for keep the counsellors ahead of others with new knowledge.

The training takes form of a workshop to help the peer counsellors grow in self-awareness, identify, engage and accompany learners in need of emotional support.

Social skills, appropriate communication, attending skills, active listening and responding skills are among the most essential. Social interventions for example through mentorship programmes have been shown to alleviate loneliness. Counsellors in schools has been tasked to run programmes that give psychological support to learner, assist in life skills acquisition and ensure smooth integration of new learners

Peer relationships are held highly and help the adolescents to connect positively with others reducing chances of loneliness and this can be positively used in schools to reduce incidences of loneliness using peer helpers. A mentor maintains positive relationships with the learner in a deliberate effort to influence positively his/her behaviour. The mentors' support during difficult times develops trust through unconditional warmth and respect given to the teenager, who responds by accepting influences based on the relationships. The compliance of learner depends greatly on the quality of relationships the person has with the teenager. It's the relationships that legitimizes the instructions given, may it be from a teacher or mentor.

Positive relationships with people outside the family have been found to influence the identity formation of the teenagers. These could be coaches, teachers, guidance and counselling person, mentors among others.

In a school where counselling programmes are established and effective, a low level of loneliness would be expected as opposed to schools where counselling was absent and/or its uptake was low. In this study, a comparison of loneliness levels of learners who utilized counselling programmes and those who don't was be made. It was expected that peer counsellors could be different from other learners in terms of relationships in the school like learners' peer relationships and teacher-learner

relationships due to training and their position that encourages interaction. However, the number of peer counsellors despite being in a ratio 1:3 for peer counsellors against the learner population which was good, may not have time allocated to their activities thus there was a possibility of low performance.

Peer counsellors work under one teacher who meets them to get feedback from the counsellors which was needed in planning to meet day today needs of the peer counsellors as well as other learners. The teacher organizes for training of peer counsellors and formation through information giving, supervision and debriefing as the need arises. She takes care of their anxieties, worries, motivation and works to sustain their helping edge. Where effective counselling was found peer counsellors are likely to be trained in basic communication and socializing skills and are familiar with basic attitudes of a counsellor.

In this study peer counsellors are expected to be low on loneliness as they are taken care of by the teacher counsellor.

Ngeno (2014) stresses that guidance and counselling programmes should be holistic to embrace all areas of personal needs. It should make students achieve quality of intra personal and interpersonal relationships which were part of important social needs during adolescence. Counselling must aim at helping learners to develop high level of self-awareness and understanding which will enable them cope easily. Guidance and counselling programmes in schools must target to satisfy learners' social needs leading to having fun, joy and have rewarding relationships with others. Effective counselling also reduces indiscipline and enhances harmony in the school. The study was done in rift region of Kenya in selected schools where it was observed that guidance and counselling was not functional in many schools unlike the schools in this study. Further

it was observed that the counselling programmes were limited to referrals of undisciplined learners making it unpopular.

However, recommendation that guidance and counselling should be school wide and holistic covering all students was in order. It was rather sad case that respondents were not satisfied with guidance and counselling programmes in helping them solve social and personal problems. A chance of failure in guidance and counselling programmes was high if continuous recruitment and training and supervision of peer counsellors were not done.

Wheeler (1995) says that competent counselling was not only through academic study but was also a function of the counsellor's personality. The way counselling attitudes flow with the counsellor personality the easier it becomes to engage genuinely and almost effortlessly progress with client through the counselling process. From the foregoing, it was clear that an effective guidance department would take personal attributes and personal efforts of teacher as well as peer counsellors to achieve an effective counselling programmes. It would also take physical and financial resources which are well coordinated and organized to bear results. However, the bottom line was whether the client (learner) was satisfied and perceives the department as working and helpful. This in itself gives hope and confidence to learners that their needs are appreciated and addressed. In this study the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling department was investigated on how it influences the relationships in schools and consequently loneliness. It was expected that where counselling services are perceived as effective the learners use the services to address their issues leading to a better social environment which would be reduce chances of loneliness.

An effective guidance and counselling programmes is a necessity for every school to provide holistic growth and developmental needs of learners but also for all other persons in the school community and parents. It is a nerve centre for a school. To enable have a functional guidance and counselling programmes physical and human resources must be availed together with moral support from teachers and administration. For the smooth running of the guidance and counselling programmes, physical facilities and finances are required. Rooms that provide privacy and are silent would be need for counselling while halls and open space can be used for guidance talks.

Most schools in the study area had peer counsellors who were charged with responsibility of helping other learners. Egbochuku and Aihie (2018) defines peer counselling as a relationship between two or three learners of relatively of the same age and class, but one was slightly better experienced or knowledgeable in some area. Irungu and Ndegwa (2017) outlined the goals of mentorship as to: develop life skills, promote personal awareness and growth, unblock minds creating purpose in life and inducing hope. Peer counsellors need to be selected, trained and formed in skills and knowledge for effectiveness in their tasks. Thus continuous training of the peer counsellors makes them sustain their affront position. For better and smooth running of the guidance and counselling programmes, the personnel in charge including peer counsellors must have at least basic skills in counselling to enable them attain a positive productive relationship. This is crucial because relationships are the counsellors' medium of operation.

### **2.6.2 Use of Peer Counsellors in Management of Loneliness**

Peers are persons of the same social status, similar experiences and having a lot of things in common. Learners can solve many of their life challenges if guided or supported with human as well as non-human resources. The peer helpers' programmes are based on the belief that the learners have in them capacities to understand themselves and use the available resource and work positively towards self-actualization. Such beliefs are in line with person centred therapy. Peer counsellors are specifically trained to give psychological help to the learners and they work under teacher counsellor.

Older students can be helpful to the young entrants. Cassidy and Asher (1992) found that non-exploitative relationships between a senior adolescence and minor could easily correct impact of loneliness in the minor, hence support for mentorship programmes in schools, where older learners are taught to accompany and support the younger learners. Mentorship was usually organized and structured into programmes in schools. The aim of the peer programmes was to select, empower some of the learners to accompany others through challenges during their normal life in school. Empowered learners are able to overcome challenges leading to healthier life and lowered loneliness. Mattanah, Brooks, Brand, Quimby and Ayers (2012) found that mentorship programmes for learners resulted to lowered level of loneliness. It was also argued that, those learners who are less lonely are better placed to utilize social support resources and benefit in various ways including improved academic performance.

The peer programmes can be different for different schools but the outcomes are very similar. The learners are met at the point of their emotional and relational needs by the

helpers leading to satisfactions and restfulness that enables them to focus on the desired goals.

Leidenfrost, Strassnig, Schutz, Carbon, and Schabmann (2014) experimented impact of three mentorship programmes in the University of Vienna and found that none of the programmes appeared superior to the other in delivery of academic results. This implies that though diverse programmes are there in different schools, the impact of peer counselling could be very similar. Positive results of peer counselling include better communication skills, increased confidence, better problem solving skills and enhanced positive self-image, increased self-awareness, self-esteem was high and increased empathy. Peer counselling was a powerful way of managing change during adolescence because peers have a great influence on their own age mates. Peer counsellors are better than teachers because they are present always and are in near proximity, and their cognition was close and experiences and language very similar.

The number of peer counsellors' ratio to non-peer counsellors should be high. Carkhuff (2000) recommends training of more people in counselling skills to enable growth in numbers of people who can support one another in challenges of life. A kind of therapeutic milieu that would result from increased number of peer counsellors trained in a school.

Ngeno (2014) stresses that guidance and counselling programmes should be holistic to embrace all areas of personal needs. It should make students achieve quality of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships which were part of important social needs during adolescence. Counselling must aim at helping learners to develop high level of self-awareness and understanding which will enable them cope easily. A guidance and

counselling programmes in schools must target to satisfy learners' social needs leading to having fun, joy and have rewarding relationships with others. Effective counselling also reduces indiscipline and enhances harmony in the school. The study was done in rift region of Kenya in selected schools where it was observed that guidance and counselling was not functional in many schools unlike the schools in this study.

Further it was observed that the counselling programmes were limited to referrals of undisciplined learners making it unpopular. However, recommendation that guidance and counselling should be school wide and holistic covering all students was in order. It was rather sad case that respondents were not satisfied with guidance and counselling programmes in helping them solve social and personal problems. Chances of failure in guidance and counselling programmes are high if continuous recruitment, training and supervision of peer counsellors were not done.

Wheeler (1995) observes that competent counselling was not only through academic study but was also a function of the counsellor's personality. The way counselling attitudes flow with the counsellor personality the easier it becomes to engage genuinely and almost effortlessly progress with client through the counselling process. From the foregoing, it was clear that an effective guidance department would take personal attributes and personal efforts of teacher as well as peer counsellors to achieve an effective counselling programmes. It would also take physical and financial resources which are well coordinated and organized to bear results. However, the bottom line was whether the client (learner) was satisfied and perceives the department as working and helpful. This in itself gives hope and confidence to learners that their needs are appreciated and addressed. In this study the effectiveness of the guidance and

counselling department was investigated on how it influences the relationships in schools and consequently loneliness. It was expected that where counselling services are perceived as effective the learners use the services to address their issues leading to a better social environment which would be reduce chances of loneliness.

### **2.6.3 Challenges in use of Counselling Services in Management of Loneliness**

Counselling relationships was client driven. The client exercises choice in the person and gender of the counsellor to engage. In a school situation the teacher counsellors are known by the learners through other assignments or duties like subject teacher, games teacher, debates, club patron and other teacher-learner relationships that may determine the preference of a certain teacher counsellor to another.

Thus the multiple roles that teachers play in the school can enhance counselling services uptake or hinder it. If the teacher was not perceived positively by learner in other roles like being a class teacher, the learner will avoid engaging her in counselling. The problem of multiple relationships does not only affect the learners but also the teachers who to make an effort to leave issues not presented in the counselling session out of the discussion and avoid prejudice.

The teachers decry lack of time allocated for counselling in schools where the bulk of time was taken up by academics. This denies teachers time to be available for consultation as well as follow up sessions. The teaching work load for the teacher counsellor was just like that of other teachers disregarding the duties in the counselling department. The result was exhaustion and frequent burnout for teacher counsellors.

Most teachers are not trained in counselling and often are ill prepared to diagnose and deal with specific cases like grief, loneliness, depression among others. The support

from the administration and provision of required resources was at times very poor resulting low morale. It was important to mind the wellness of teacher counsellor through frequent training and supervision to debrief them off the experiences of emotional work done in counselling.

Lack of psychological support of teacher counsellors leads to stress and lowered energy for the counselling work. In situations having effective counselling for learners was almost impossible. However, this study focuses on learners' view which was important to the sense of care and security the learner experiences in the school.

Effective guidance and counselling programmes are meant to meet learners' needs. These needs include emotional and social relationships which have a direct connection with loneliness. The vulnerability to loneliness is high during transition to high school as learners leave their established peer and parental support network. It would be very difficult for a learner who joins a new school environment having had experience of loneliness in the former school to integrate socially and stop chances of getting lonely. Peer counselling and mentorship mainly concerns psychosocial support for learners who are joining form one as well as continuing learners. The peer counsellors are learners identified to work with teacher counsellor on basis of their personal characteristics and social standing.

The peer counsellors are usually trained in basic counselling attitudes of confidentiality, genuineness, unconditional respect for others and empathy. The learners may be trained in skills to facilitate their work, for example listening, befriending, assertiveness, self-awareness and thus enabling to be ahead of other learners in capacities to relate and

sustain relationships. It can be predicted that learner who are working as mentors or peer counsellors would be less prone to loneliness than those who do not serve as mentors.

Schools with effective induction programmes for new learners would be better off than those schools who do not take induction programmes in terms learners' level of loneliness. Learners with low social support from peers find it difficult to be integrated into the school system leading to low academic performance, loneliness and risk of dropping out. Loneliness makes them less connected which can further lead to inability to use available social support, hence spoiling chances of academic performance (Mattanah et al., 2012).

The lonely person can be viewed as trying to reach out to someone in order to address the feeling but something goes wrong so that the intended outcome of bonding and relationships do not result. The perceived cause assigned to this failure to bond influences the adolescence future efforts. If the failure was attributed to some inadequacies pertinent to self, the adolescent feel as a failure and efforts to make new connections would be diminished settling for loneliness. Due to low self-image, lonely learners are more prone to be victims of bullying which further crashes self-esteem reduces chance of engaging in quality relationships with other learners. Counselling programmes should target achievement of healthy self-image and develop defences mechanism to attain an inner peace. It was expected that loneliness will be minimal where peer counsellors and teacher counsellors are actively playing their helping role.

Teachers act as instructors as well as agents of socialization. Instructors' role defines formal relationships while socialization role can be compared to and easily flows from family level expectations. In Kenya schools can be boarding; where learners are accommodated in the school or day school.

In day schools all learner commute to school and back home on daily basis. Furthermore, a school can be of single gender or co-educational in gender.

These categories of school; boarding and day schools provide different opportunities to learners to interact with peers and teachers in and out of class. In boarding schools, the peers take the greatest share of time. In boarding schools, teachers provide more parental care as they supervise activities related to learners' accommodation and welfare. These roles may manifest in different levels of teacher-learner relationships.

Teachers are important determinants of the warmth and productivity of their relationships with learners, as learners will constantly look for cues to engage teachers appropriately. New learners have challenges to bond with teachers, adapt to teaching methods and create new peer relationships, learn and adapt to norms of the school and this can be overwhelming. The form ones come with a set of ideas how to relate to teachers based on experiences at the primary school level. The learners need to be warmly welcomed by teachers as well as other members of support staff to enable them settle down quickly and establish working relationships. The teacher has a leading hand in the relationships due to his status and power to influence the relationships.

The past and current experience of teacher-learner interactions would easily influence the perception and outcomes of present situation. It's the host (teacher) who extends an inviting hand to the guest (learner) seem to be the premise, as an extension of family

level norms. The bond and type of relationships with teachers daily affect learners' wellbeing.

Specifically, learner-teacher relationships are micro systems that consist of the multiple interrelated perceptions, attitudes and emotions that both parties have about their interactions.

Counselling programmes in schools provide a chance for teacher and learner to develop trusting relationships in which care, understanding and respect for learners' opinion are demonstrated. Counselling rides on core conditions of unconditional respect for learner, confidentiality, genuineness and empathy provided by the teacher counsellor. If teacher-counsellors are many, available and approachable, their effect would transform the teacher-learner relationships with emotional warmth.

Where counselling programmes are established and effective, a supportive environment thrives in which loneliness can easily be addressed. In the current study effective counselling services will be studied to find out how it influences teacher-learner relationships. Further, the study offers a chance observe how teacher-learner relationships vary and their impact in different schools' environment: - single gender and co-educational boarding schools and co-educational day schools.

It has been observed that learners have a global relatedness to school as an entity. Sense of belonging to a school is the feeling of connectedness to school community. It is the persons' psychological membership of being one of them in the school. Sense of belongingness was described in two dimensions. The first was about valued involvement where the individual experiences feelings of being valued, needed, and

acknowledged by others (teachers and learners). The second was about fitting in, where perceptions of personal characteristics flow and are complementary to the school environment. Wallace et al., (2012) proposed three dimensions of sense of belonging to a school. These are sense of fitting in with learners/peer, fitting with teachers and participation in the school official activities. A learner with low sense of belonging would fail to draw joy in being in the school and lead to poor participation in co-curricular activities.

Where learners experience disconnection with school many other areas of life may not go well. We visualize sense of belonging to school decreasing to a level where the learner wants nothing to do with the school. Therefore, other supportive relationships with teachers and other learners will not impact positively. The learner may remain in school due to difficult procedures for leaving school but will be psychologically disconnected. The learner may eventually leave school physically at some point and drop out. Sense of belonging to school has been significantly and negatively correlated to loneliness. It means that increased sense of belonging would reduce significantly the levels of loneliness.

A low sense of belonging would lender the person inclined to reject support and positive influence from other learners and members of the school (Ng & Yuen, 2011). We can conclude that sense of belonging to school was a personal perception build on social relationships and feeling of worth due to other factors following with the person's needs. Purkey and Novak (2008) identified other factors as physical environments of climate, buildings and school infrastructure, school programmes, rules and regulations.

Mouratidis and Sideridis (2009) observed that perceived belongingness was associated with learner's academic and emotional adjustment and that loneliness predicted higher absenteeism, lower academic achievement, and problems in social relationships among middle school learners. The overall school experiences can be positive and bonding to particular learner or negative leading outright rejection. Learners respond to total school experience emotionally and can feel connected or disconnected. This psychological membership can direct learners' energy towards improving or destroying the school as an entity.

Dean (1961), in Shoho and Patrick (1996) defined alienation as an affective construct consisting of isolation (loneliness), normlessness (value system inconsistent with school norms), and powerlessness to influence one's choices. A sense of belonging as opposed to alienation brings good motivation to support school programmes and adherence to rules and regulations on learners' conduct. Alienation leads to disengagement, stress loneliness and dropping out (Mcgaha & Fitzpatrick, 2005). Disengagement reflect desire to have nothing to do with the institution and thus if efforts to form positive relationships with school and other persons therein was curtailed it leads to high chances of loneliness.

Low sense of belonging to a school leads to dropping out eventually. However, before the physical departure of the learner, psychological distance develops between the learner and the school at varying degrees. The role of guidance and counselling department would be to build sense of belonging and sustain at suitable level for learners' motivation to participate in school activities.

This may be done through democratic practices where learners take responsibility of making choices about their schooling. It was expected that sense of belonging will vary among the learners due to differences in valuing of school processes and outcomes.

Sense of belonging to a school can increase or was diminished during conceptual instances which are critical to the sense of belongingness. These instances include; joining a new school in form one, when organizing a school trip, choosing a school team, giving prizes and other emotionally loaded moments. Such moments can allow positive bonding for those who gets a chance. Thus it was important to identify specific instances that are valued by learners and critical to bonding with the school as they are moments of growth in the bond.

Chiessi et al., (2010) while developing a sense of community scale for adolescence observed that satisfaction of needs; emotional connection, opportunity to influence and social support were also important components of sense of belonging to school.

Empowerment of the learners to the extent that they felt in powerful enough to effect changes in their environment was found to be a strong factor in determining sense of belonging to school. Thus schools that give learners room for discussion and democracy will foster more sense of belonging than those who are not. Further, Chiessi et al., (2010) found that girls lagged behind boys in sense of belonging which they attributed to different socialization and opportunities availed for the gender to act on. Lastly they observed that sense of belonging was very specific due to different environmental opportunities that interact to give a wholesome sense of belonging.

Among the significant but moderate influences on sense of belonging to school were identified as attachment to peers (peer relationships) and personal wellbeing.

Vickers et al., (2014) sees sense of belonging to a school as the emotional dimension of school engagement. They further observe that sense of belonging was strongly influenced by learners' peer relationships and the values held by the learners. Young people will adopt behaviour that make them feel significant, accepted by their peers and their social circles. It is expected that peer pressure would play a role in the overall sense of belonging to a school. They further stated that sense of belonging includes positive ties with teachers and peers, active participation in co-curricular activities, and a network of appreciative friends. The connections with right friends promotes sense of belonging thus quality of friends will determine the direction of sense of belonging to school.

Achievers in schools will be found closely relating to those of similar values/traits enhancing their sense of belonging. Sense of belonging stimulates strong sense of purpose and commitment in a learner that easily translates to academic achievement. Vickers et al., (2014) concludes with an observation that, it was only through relational dimension that sense of belonging to school can be influenced remarkably and therefore ensure retention of learners. Thus parents, teachers and learners have to be sensitive as to what they say and do in their relationships in order to cultivate higher levels of sense of belonging.

Frostad et al., (2015) studied the dropping out of school by high school learners in Norway. The study had over 2000 learners aged about 16 years. The researchers noted that decision to leave school (low sense of school belongingness) was motivated by a host of factors;- gender, age, family social economic status, level of education of parents, low academic achievement and other institutional factors like communication,

leadership, teachers and peer acceptance. They further asserted that popular learners stayed on to enjoy peer acceptance though they could have low connectedness to school. Isolation by peers was found to precede early school leaving.

The study looked at leaving school as terminal event of a process of a growing intention, culminating into the decision to leave school. The way each learner interacts with social and physical environment inhibit or fuels development of an urge to drop out. It was noted that a learner needs to feel integrated with the school in the academic and social dimensions. Frostad et al., (2015) study focused on teacher support, academic achievement, gender and parents' level of education. The peer acceptance/rejection/loneliness were considered as secondary factors determining the intention to leave school.

The intention to leave can be considered as lowest level of sense of belongingness which a learner can tolerate feeling a stranger in his school. The study utilized a self-administered online questionnaire. Loneliness was measured using Norwegian version of the loneliness and social dissatisfaction questionnaire and peer acceptance was measured by sociometric techniques using peer nominations. Intention to leave was measured using a Likert scale that required respondents to choose from six alternative levels of intention to leave statements. The results indicated that loneliness was a major predictor of intention to leave school. This study will investigate sense of belonging to school influence on loneliness. A strong relationship was expected though the scales used for measuring loneliness are different. Thus learners establish an overall concept of school and experience the entity of the school separately from other component

relationships. This study investigates school as an entity and its relationships with learners and how the relationships influences learners' level of loneliness.

Type of school can influence the sense of belonging. Public day secondary schools are essentially community based. They draw their learners from a small radius usually a walking distance from the school or about 4 kilometres. The parents and learners usually have brothers, sisters or neighbours who have schooled in the institution before. Thus the school history, cultural trends and characteristics are familiar to learners prior to admission into the school. The learners would rarely feel proud of their schools if the community harbours negative attitudes towards the school.

During selection exercise for placement in secondary schools, day schools are classified in the as last category, receiving learners who miss vacancies in other schools that are better in infrastructure, staffing and academic performance. Day learners rarely have positive bond with their school and this may lead to low sense of belonging, poor engagement, stress and loneliness at school. Day schools are familiar to the learners as the schools are in the neighbourhood community.

School past academic performance, successes in co-curricular activities, current and past administrators and their management / leadership styles and other basic characteristics are known and discussed in the community meetings. If the attitudes towards the school in the community are positive, there would be greater chances for learner to bond and thus attain supportive relationships with the school or otherwise it would be very difficult for the learner to experience positive influence.

A variety of co-curricular activities in a school can be used to boost the sense of belonging. First it gives learners and teachers moments of informal interactions where values and relationships can grow. In such times teachers provide the model of a non-familial adult which learners can emulate. Also, the learners can easily find a sport for self-expression, improve self-esteem and shape their identity. The games not only bring the learners together but also help them to release excess energy. School trips have been identified as times when sense of belonging grows as the learners participate joyfully. From the foregoing, effective counselling programmes would include a debriefing session to allow learners settle down in the school on admission.

## **2.7 Chapter Summary**

There are factors that influence inception, growth and manifestation of loneliness. Some are innate while others are environmental. Nature and nurture influence each other to tip the balance towards wellness or loneliness and other maladies. It was observed that social support was mainly through positive relationships and was important avenues through which learners influence and get influenced by others.

Social support and quality of relationships can be conceptualized as lying on a continuum, running from positive to negative end. On the lower end loneliness and isolation replaces social integration and psychological wellness produced by strong social support.

Prevalence of loneliness was found to vary with age and gender. The debate as to which gender is lonelier has not been concluded. This study contributes to the debate and widens it to examine loneliness of the genders in different types of schools.

Correlates of loneliness have been studied widely. However, their interplay in different school types and how guidance and counselling impacts on them has not been documented. This study will address this gap.

Guidance and counselling programmes in schools were giving psycho sociological support mainly through peer counsellors. Peers influenced others through structured mentorship/ peer counselling programmes under guidance of a teacher counsellor and informally in the peer groups.

This research focused on learners' perception of effectiveness of the counselling programmes.

It was expected that effective guidance and counselling programmes will have an effect in improving learners' peer relationships and teacher-learner relationships resulting to high sense of belonging to school and lowered levels of loneliness.

Cultural differences play a key role in experience and expression of loneliness. The gendered nature of upbringing defines the level of loneliness in a particular environment. Boys are more in favour of relationships they are in control of while girls would like to be in stable relationships. In this research gender was one of the variables that are under investigation under different schools' types. It was expected that the culture influences will be mainly from the kikuyu ethnic group as they were majority.

Teachers' impact on learners' psychological wellness was through instructional and co-curricular activities. The view that teachers have the upper hand in their relations with learners was derived from hierarchical organization of schools. In addition, teachers

were found to relate to learners in a way that encouraged social stereotypes. Teacher-learner relationships have been found to correlate negatively with loneliness.

The sense of belonging was influenced by learners' peer relationships as well as teacher-learner relationships. Sense of belonging to school, teacher-learner relationships and learners' peer relationships have been negative correlated to loneliness. This study will seek to confirm or object to these findings.

The inter relationships of peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school in varying contexts of gender and school type. How these factors interact to influence level of loneliness was of importance in designing effective counselling for better management of loneliness.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, research design, description of study area, target population, sample size and sampling design are presented. Data collection methods, analysis and presentation are discussed, followed by instrumentation and validation of data collection tools.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design refers to the overall strategy that is chosen to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari & Garg, 2014). The purpose of the study is to investigate contextual factors influencing loneliness among public secondary schools' learners in Murang'a County.

To carry out the study and satisfy its objectives, data on learners' peer relationships, teacher- learner relationships, sense of belonging to a school, levels of learners' loneliness and demographic data on age, gender, school type and effectiveness of counselling was required. Therefore, a quantitative research approach, using a cross sectional survey design is chosen for this study. A cross sectional survey design is used because it enabled collection data from many participants at a particular point in time. A cross section survey would give a onetime view of the learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to schools' influence on level of loneliness (Bryman, 2012).

By collection of data on level of loneliness, demographic variables, values of teacher-learner relationships, learners' peer relationships and sense of belonging to school, it was possible to test the hypotheses that guided the study.

### **3.3 Research Philosophy**

Positivist position about knowledge is taken in this study. It is believed that knowledge is objective and quantifiable. The reality of knowledge is that it real and verifiable through reliable and valid ways of measuring. Thus the variables in this study were measured using scales that had Table in levels of reliability and validity. Methods of objective data collection where anonymity was observed were appropriate. The data collected was objective and used to test hypotheses thus exposing the rules or patterns of the variables under observation.

### **3.4 Location of the Study**

This study was done in Murang'a county secondary schools. Murang'a County is in central region Kenya. It has a population of about 1.056 million people (2019 census) on an area of 2325.8 square kilometres with a population density of 450 people per square kilometre. It hosts the historic site of origin of the Kikuyu people. The population practice subsistence farming with a few cash crops like coffee, tea, avocado and bananas. Ethnic group is mainly Agikuyu and this suited the study in that uniformity in cultural practice would result to a socialization that is similar and hence behaviour outputs in social relationships would be similar over the region.

The county has a large number of sub county schools which are in three categories under investigation; single gender boarding, co-education day and co-education boarding. The county education board instituted peer counselling efforts in all its

schools making suitable to study the impact of perceived effective counselling programmes.

### 3.5 Target Population

Public secondary schools are categorized into National schools, Extra County, County and Sub County schools according to form one catchment area. There were two national schools, 22 extra-county, 37 county and 242 sub county secondary schools. Murang'a County has a total population of 100,684 learners comprising of 48,718 girls and 51,966 boys, in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding secondary schools. Table 3.1 shows type of schools and learners' distribution in the county.

**Table 3. 1 Target Population by School Type and Gender**

<b>School type</b>	<b>Schools in the County</b>	<b>Number of Learners</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
Single gender boarding	61	43,544	20484	23060
Co-education day	219	50,820	24998	25822
Co-education boarding	23	6320	3236	3084
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>100,684</b>	<b>48,718</b>	<b>51,966</b>

The study focused on the 242 sub-county level secondary schools because the category comprised of all the three types of schools under investigation. Another reason is that sub-county schools had catchment within the county and this reduced cultural diversity that could interfere with variables through cultural diversity. There were nine (9) single gender boarding schools, 14 co-educational boarding school and 219 co-educational day schools. Day scholars travel to school every morning and go home in the evening; experiencing family and community influences on daily basis and more so during the week end when time is spent with families in the community. Boarding school learners

spend most of the school term in school with restricted contact with families and neighbouring communities. Co-education schools have boys and girls in the same school compound sharing most of the facilities. Cross gender interactions are mainly scheduled and supervised by teachers especially in boarding schools.

### **3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

This study targeted three sub county level school types; namely single gender boarding, co-education day and co-educational boarding schools. Bryman (2012) observes that sample size will be determined largely by time available, cost and other resources, and further notes that a large sample beyond 1000 cases does not increase accuracy or representativeness of the sample. Other considerations for sample size include the number of analysis to be done and response rate. However, Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) recommend that study should take largest sample resources would allow to reduce sampling error. Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table a sample of 384 learners would be sufficient for the whole population of 1,000,000 learners.

The units of analysis were also a consideration in sample size determination. This study had three categories; - boys and girls in single gender boarding schools, boys and girls in co-education day schools and boys and girls in co-education boarding schools. The purpose of the study was to compare correlates of loneliness by gender, school type and perceived effectiveness of counselling programmes. An equal numbers of participants was allocated to boys and girls in each of the schools. According to Sekaran (2003) 100 participants per gender and school type were considered adequate for the purpose of comparison. This consideration gave rise to 600 participants. An additional 10% participants per gender and school type were added to cater for incomplete responses.

The county comprised of nine single gender public sub county boarding secondary schools, 219 co-education day schools and 14 co-education public sub county boarding secondary schools. Between 10% and 30% of the schools were randomly selected to participate in the study. Table 3.1 shows the distribution of participants by gender and school type

**Table 3. 2 Sample by School Type and Gender**

<b>School Type</b>	<b>Schools in the County</b>	<b>Schools Sampled</b>	<b>Sampled Boys</b>	<b>Sampled Girls</b>
Single gender boarding	9	4	110	110
Co-education day	219	22	110	110
Co-education boarding	14	4	110	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>330</b>

Sub-county schools were categorized as single gender girls' boarding schools, single gender boys' boarding, co-educational day schools and co-educational boarding schools.

Separate lists of single gender girls' boarding schools, single gender boys' boarding, co-educational day schools and co-educational boarding schools were prepared. Simple random technique was used to select 8, 22 and 6 schools from each strand resulting to 36 schools.

Numbers were written on marbles and placed in a bag; numbers were drawn from the bag at random to identify the school corresponding to the number in the lists. After drawing for each stratum, marbles were replaced in the bag in readiness for drawing for next category of schools. Form two learners in the selected schools were purposefully sampled to participate in the research as they were in the adolescence stage and would

have well established relationships with teachers, peers and the sense of belonging to school.

### **3.7 Data Collection Instruments**

Data for this study was collected using different instruments. These instruments comprised of standardised scales for loneliness, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school which were all standardized instruments. Researcher developed the questionnaire and learners' peer relationship scale.

#### **3.7.1 Learners' Peer Relationships Scale**

Peer relationships scale utilized six statements with graded response on a Likert scale. The statements included learners' perception of their relationships with others. For example, "I feel supported by learners in my school". Relationships in the school were not limited to the classmates. The scoring is done in such a way that a high score corresponded to good relationships (strongly agree= 5 agree= 4 not sure= 3 disagree = 2 and strongly disagree= 1) for positively worded statements. A representative score for each participant is calculated by dividing the total scores by six (the number of items). Therefore, each respondent mean score for peer relationships is placed somewhere between 1 and 5. The totals for one respondent were divided by six to give average representative score for the individual. The scale was examined by experts in the department of social sciences. It was piloted in a neighbouring county to avoid participants' sensitization. Alpha reliability index was calculated for this scale and found to be  $\alpha = 0.73$

### **3.7.2 Teacher-learner Relationships Scale**

Teacher-learner relationships scale was adapted from Vickers et al., (2014). It comprised of six statements articulating aspects of the relationships between teachers and learners. The responses were in a Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The statements were scored from 5 to 1 (strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, not sure = 3, disagree 2 and strongly disagree = 1) for positively worded statements. The negatively worded statements were scored in a reverse manner so that higher score reflected better relationships with teachers. For example, “I have no teacher whom I can tell my problem” is scored as follows: strongly agree = 1 agrees = 2 not sure = 3 disagree 4 and strongly disagree = 5. An average score for teacher- learner relationships is calculated by dividing raw score for the six items by six. Thus the final score ranged from 1 and 5. The scale is discussed by faculty members for construct validity. Reliability index is calculated for the scale and found to be Table ( $\alpha=0.82$ ).

### **3.7.3 Sense of Belonging to School Scale**

The scale for sense of belongingness used six statements relating to sense of belonging to a school. The scale is adapted from a school sense of belongingness scale developed by Akar-vural, Yılmaz-Özelçi, Çengel and Gömleksiz (2013). It consisted of 6 items relating to feeling about the school. For example, “I am happy in this school” and each statement had five responses’ levels forming a Likert scale. The responses ranged from strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree and strongly disagree. The respondents were requested to indicate the word or words that closely described their feeling towards the school at the time of this research. The scoring is done in such a way that a high score corresponded to good relationships (strongly agree= 5 agree=4 not sure= 3 disagree 2 and strongly disagree=1) for positively worded statement. An average score is

calculated by dividing each respondent's scores for six statements by six. The resulting score range is between 1 and 5.

### **3.7.4 Perth A-loneness (PAL) Scale**

PAL scale is a multidimensional scale that measures loneliness using 24 Likert scale items covering four areas, namely friendship, isolation, positive attitude towards solitude and negative attitude toward solitude. The scale is developed by Houghton et al., (2014) in Perth, Australia. The scale uses six point descriptors; *never, rarely, sometimes, often, very often, always*. These items are worded such that there is a balance of negative and positive items. Scoring is on a 1–6 giving a maximum score of  $6 \times 6 = 36$  for each sub scale. Total for each subscale is divided by six to get a representative score for the participant.

Total loneliness score is then determined by adding the average scores for each of the four subscales, higher score corresponded to increased feelings of loneliness. An overall representative loneliness score is calculated by dividing the total score for the four subscales by four. Thus the score range is from 1 to 6.

### **3.7.5 The Questionnaire**

Demographic factors were compiled into form a self-administered questionnaire. Section 'A' of the questionnaire carried an introductory statement by the researcher. Second part of the questionnaire was about demographic data of age, gender, school type, being counselled for loneliness, serving as a peer counsellor and perception on effectiveness of counselling services in the school.

### **3.7.6 Validation and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments**

Apart from learners' peer relationships scale and the questionnaire, other data collection tools were standardized instruments. However, all the instruments were piloted in

Kiambu County in selected sub-county public secondary schools. A school for each category; - single gender boarding boys, single gender boarding girls, co-educational day school and a co-educational boarding school were identified for the pilot study. The school administrators were requested for permission to allow the researcher to pilot the instruments.

Twenty learners were randomly chosen to participate in the pilot study from each school type. Pilot study was carried out to bring out experiences of the research instruments at a smaller scale. The Pilot study exposed the strengths and weakness of instruments. Questionnaire death was found through in adequate or partial filling of the questionnaires. It was found that 8 (10%) of the participants did not respond fully to items in the instruments. When data analysis was done, it confirmed the adequacy of data and operations in addressing research objectives. Reliability index of the learners' peer relationships scale was calculated and less useful items were deleted to improve the reliability of the scale. The pilot study confirmed the adequacy and accuracy of data (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The instruments were discussed and improved on by experts in the faculty of psychology in Karatina University. The questionnaire was piloted and its Cronbach reliability index was 0.87 and this was Table. A value of  $\alpha = 0.70$  or more is considered adequate (Bryman, 2012).

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher applied and obtained research proposal approval from the Karatina University senate and applied for research permit from National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (Appendix VIII). Further authorization was sought from the Ministry of Education, State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education and the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government and

was granted (Appendices X and XI). The County Director of Education (CDE), gave permission to access learners' data available for secondary schools. A list was created for each type of schools. There were nine single gender public sub county boarding secondary schools, 219 co-education day schools and 14 co-education public sub county boarding secondary schools. Simple random method was used to select four single gender boarding schools, 22 co-educational day schools and 4 co-educational boarding schools to participate in the research. After selection, the participating schools' Principals were contacted through their sub county director of education to facilitate administration of questionnaires. The administrators of the schools selected for the study were contacted to decide on the time appropriate for questionnaire administration. Administration of pen and paper questionnaires was done by research assistants during school days as advised by the school administration. The questionnaires took about 30 minutes to fill and were collected immediately. The researcher sought services of research assistants in readiness for data collection and analysis. Data was collected in February 2019.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

Data was collected and coded. Data analysis was done using both descriptive and referential statistics. First demographic characteristics of the sample; data on gender, type of school, age, having sought loneliness counselling, being a peer counsellor, perception on effectiveness of guidance and counselling services were used to describe the participants. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20 was used.

Group means and standard deviations and cross tabulations were generated for this purpose. Analysis was done as per Table 3.3

**Table 3. 3 Data Analysis Matrix**

<b>Objective/question</b>	<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>Measurement level</b>	<b>Instrumentation</b>	<b>Analysis to be done</b>
Calculate Prevalence of loneliness Examine prevalence of loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County.	Loneliness-counselling	Nominal	Questionnaire	Cross tabulations and Percentages
Determine the uptake of loneliness-counselling among learner in secondary schools in Murang'a county.	Loneliness-counselling	Nominal	Questionnaire	Cross tabulations and Percentages
Compare learners' peer relationships influence levels of loneliness among learners in public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County.	Learners' peer relationships	Scale	Learners' peer relationships scale	Pearson moments correlations coefficients
Compare teacher-learner relationships influence levels of loneliness among learners in public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County	Teacher-learner relationships	Scale	Teacher-learner relationships scale	Pearson moments correlations coefficients
Compare sense of belonging to school influence levels of loneliness among learners in public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County	Sense of belonging to school	Scale	Sense of belonging to school scale	Pearson moments correlations coefficients

Evaluate the effectiveness of counselling in managing loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County.	Perceived effective counselling	Nominal	Questionnaire	Independent samples t-test
HO <sub>1</sub> : there is no statistically significant difference in levels of loneliness between boys and girls in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding secondary schools in Murang'a County.	Gender	Nominal	Questionnaire	Independent samples t-tests between genders
HO <sub>2</sub> : significant difference in learners' peer relationships between boys and girls in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding secondary schools in Murang'a County.	Learners' Peer relationships	Scale	Learners' Peer relationships scale	Independent samples t-tests by school type and gender.
HO <sub>3</sub> : there is no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationships between boys and girls in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding secondary schools in Murang'a County.	Teacher-learner relationships	Scale	Teacher-learner relationships scale	Independent samples t-tests by school type and gender.
HO <sub>4</sub> : there is no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school between boys and girls in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding	Sense of belonging to school	Scale	Sense of belonging scale	Independent samples t-test

secondary schools in Murang'a County.				
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### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

The study complied with ethical guidelines. Caution was taken to disclose about research objectives and seek respondents' consent to participate in the study. Further, participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and there was no need of knowing the participants at personal level. It was emphasized that all questions were important and that the respondents were not under any obligation to answer them in a certain way. The participating schools and learners were assured that data was for research purpose only. Sources of information cited in this study have been fully acknowledged in the text as well as in the references.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter consists of sections that presents questionnaires return rate, demographic characteristics of respondents, prevalence of loneliness, correlates of loneliness and effectiveness of guidance and counselling on management of loneliness. Each subsection starts with a brief statement of the objective and description of analysis done, then findings are presented and interpreted.

##### **4.1.1 Questionnaires Return Rate**

The study utilized 660 questionnaires and all of them were returned. On scrutiny 16 (7.7%) questionnaires from single gender boarding schools were incomplete. Also 22 questionnaires (10%) from co-education day and 20 (9.1%) from co-educational boarding schools were incomplete and lacked vital information. They were discarded. The overall useful questionnaires were 592 (89.7%). This high return rate was attributed to administration of questionnaires at a scheduled time and collection immediately after the session.

#### **4.2. Demographics Analysis of Respondents.**

Demographic data on gender, age, type of school, serving as a peer counsellor, having sought loneliness-counselling service and perception on effectiveness of guidance and counselling services were collected. Table 4.1 shows gender type of school and age of the participants.

**Table 4. 1 Participants’ School, Gender and Age**

<b>School type</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Mean age</b>
Single gender boarding	Boy	108	17.11
	Girls	96	15.81
Co-education day	Boys	95	16.86
	Girls	93	16.18
Co-education boarding	Boys	102	16.73
	Girls	98	16.58

#### **4.2.1 Learners by Gender**

There were 108 boys and 96 girls in the single gender public sub county boarding secondary schools. Co-education day public sub county secondary schools had 95 boys and 93 girls. While co-educational boarding public sub county secondary schools had 102 boys and 98 girls. Thus a total of 592 participants comprising of 305 (51.5%) boys and 287 (48.5%) girls were taken for analysis. Both boys and girls were well represented. Gender is a common factor used in data analysis as many a time genders portray differing characteristics, for example, in loneliness levels as reported by Latsch (2018) and in sense of belonging to school (Ilhan, 2012) and have demonstrated differences in gender.

#### **4.2.2 Learners Age**

Age was one of the demographic data that was collected. The boy’s participants in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools had a mean age of 17.11 years while girls had a mean age of 15.81 years in the same category. The boys’ participants in co-education day schools had a mean age of 16.86 years while girls had with a mean age of 16.18 years. The boys in co-education gender boarding schools had a mean age of 16.73 years, while girls’ in the same category had a mean age of 16.58

years. The mean ages ranged from 15.81 to 17.11 years indicating that the participants were in middle adolescence stage.

In this study, age was considered as an important element because research has shown that loneliness was at its peak during adolescence but decreased with age. This was reported by Le Roux (2009) and Lyyra et al., (2018). The average age described the stage of adolescence that the participants were in. Adolescence can be divided into early, middle and late stages. In terms of ages, 12-14 years for early, 15-17 years for middle and 18-20 years for late adolescence can be a general chronological guide. The average age indicated respondents had gone through early stage of adolescence and therefore are expected to have peak levels of loneliness. The group also had well established learners' peer relationships, sense of belonging to school and teacher relationships which are other variables of interest in this study.

#### **4.2.3 Peer Counsellors by School and Gender**

Counselling in schools was carried out mainly through peer counsellors. The ratio of peer counsellors to that of non-counsellors reflects the burden each counsellor would bear if effective counselling would take place. The higher the ratio the better, as the peer counsellors would be in the proximity of other learners requiring their services. Table 4.2 shows the distribution of peer counsellors by gender and school type.

**Table 4. 2Participants Serving as Peer Counsellors**

<b>Counsellor?</b>	<b>School type</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Yes	single gender boarding	23	44	<b>67</b>
	co-educational day	25	36	<b>61</b>
	co-educational boarding	24	36	<b>60</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>188</b>
No	single gender boarding	85	52	<b>137</b>
	co-educational day	70	57	<b>127</b>
	co-educational boarding	78	62	<b>140</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>404</b>

There were 72 out of 305 boys and 116 girls out of 287 girls who were peer counsellors. Girls had a ratio of peer counsellors: non-peer counsellors of 1:1.5 which was better than the boys' 1:3. The overall ratio of peer counsellors to non-peer counsellors was 188:404 or 1:2. The ratio means that for every three learners, one of them was a peer counsellor. The ratio implies that at any moment, learners would have among them a person who can give psychological support. Hearne et al., (2017) recommended one counsellor to 250 learners on the minimum for a school. Thus there were adequate peer counsellors and nearing Carkhuff (2000) suggestion for a therapeutic community. The situation in the schools as far as counselling is concerned would be impacted by other factors like uptake of counselling to ensure popularity and wide use of the services.

### **4.3 Prevalence of Loneliness among Learners**

First objective of this study was to examine prevalence of loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County. Three categories of secondary schools were considered, namely single gender boarding schools, co-educational day and co-educational boarding schools. Studies have conflicted as to which gender is lonelier, this study intend to contribute to the debate from this side of the world. It is not also

known which gender is more prone to loneliness than the other. Thus, one of the aims was to determine which gender was lonelier and determine prevalence of loneliness among learners. Further analysis was done using independent samples t-tests at 95% confidence limit to determine statistical significance of the observed levels of loneliness of the genders. This was to test sub null hypothesis  $H_{O1}$ : There is no statistically significant difference in loneliness levels among learners by gender and school type in secondary schools in Murang'a County in Kenya.

Loneliness was measured using Perth A-loneness scale that has four sub scales; - friendship, isolation, positive attitude toward solitude and negative attitude toward solitude subscales. Each of the sub scale had six statements with six point descriptors in a Likert scale; *-never, rarely, sometimes, often, very often, always*. These items are worded such that there was a balance of negative and positive items. Scoring was on a 1–6 giving a maximum score of  $6 \times 6 = 36$  for each sub scale. Total for each subscale was divided by six to get a representative score for the participant. Total loneliness score was then determined by adding the average scores for each of the four subscales, higher score corresponded to increased feelings of loneliness. An overall representative loneliness score was calculated by dividing the total score for the four subscales by four. Thus the scores ranged from 1 to 6. Loneliness scores were analysed by school and gender.

Loneliness scores were calculated by school type and gender. The mean scores were used to establish which gender was lonely as well as show the intensity of loneliness among the learners. Independent samples T-tests were conducted between genders' loneliness mean score for each school type to determine the significance of the observed

gender differences in levels of loneliness. Table 4.3 shows loneliness scores by gender and school type and the t-test results indicating how the scores differed between the genders. For girls, loneliness levels were lowest in co-education day schools (2.87) followed by single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools (2.93) and highest in the co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools (3.03).

**Table 4. 3 Gender Differences in Levels of Loneliness.**

School type	Gender	Loneliness			t-test results		
		N	Mean	Std deviation	t	df	p
Single gender boarding	Boys	108	2.77	0.66	-1.472	202	0.143
	Girls	96	2.93	0.83			
Co-educational day	Boys	95	2.87	0.78	0.025	186	0.980
	Girls	93	2.87	0.75			
Co-educational boarding	Boys	102	2.81	0.64	-2.029	198	0.044
	Girls	98	3.02	0.81			

Boys on the other hand, had the lowest levels of loneliness in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools (2.77) followed by co-educational boarding public sub county secondary schools at 2.81 and highest in the co-education day public sub county secondary schools (2.87). It was observed that gender experience of loneliness varied according to school type.

In single gender boarding public sub county secondary school boys had loneliness mean score of 2.77 against 2.93 of girls in the same category. The girls had higher than boys' loneliness mean score. Hypothesis HO1<sub>a</sub> that states that there is no statistically significant difference in loneliness levels between boys and girls in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test, at 95% significant level was conducted. It was observed that the boys' loneliness score of 2.77 was not statistically significantly

different from girls' 2.93 as the t-test yielded  $p=0.143$ ,  $>0.05$ . Therefore, the data supported the hypothesis  $HO1_a$  and led to a conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in loneliness among boys and girls in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. It was thus observed that the girls were not lonelier than boys.

Boys in co-education day public sub county secondary schools had loneliness mean score of 2.87 while girls in the same category of schools had the same mean of 2.87. It was observed that boys had same scores in loneliness than girls in the same category of schools. In co-education day public sub county secondary schools, hypothesis  $HO1_b$  that stated that there was no statistically significant difference in loneliness levels between boys and girls in co-education day schools in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test, at 95% significant level was conducted. It was observed that the boys' loneliness score of 2.87 was not statistically significantly different from girls' 2.87 as the t-test yielded  $p=0.911$ ,  $>0.05$ . Therefore, data supported the hypothesis,  $HO1_b$  and led to a conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference between loneliness in boys and girls in co-education day schools in Murang'a County. It is observed that the girls were not lonelier than boys.

In co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools, boys had a loneliness mean score of 2.81 while girls had 3.02. The girls had higher loneliness than the boys. Hypothesis,  $HO1_c$  that stated that there was no statistically significant difference in loneliness among boys and girls in co-education day schools in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test, at 95% significant level was conducted. It was observed that the boys' loneliness score of 2.79 was statistically significantly

different from girls' 3.03 as the t-test yielded  $p=0.044$ ,  $<0.05$ . Therefore, data did not support the hypothesis  $H_{01c}$  this led to a conclusion that there is statistically significant difference in loneliness among boys and girls in co-education day schools in Murang'a County. It is observed that the girls were significantly lonelier than boys.

Single gender boarding public sub county and co-education day public sub county secondary schools' findings on genders' loneliness agrees with Ilhan (2012) study among university learners in Turkey that found that there were no significant differences between boys and girls in their level of loneliness. Also Lau et al., (1999) while studying loneliness among the Chinese adolescents found no significant difference in loneliness between genders in secondary schools. However, in the co-education boarding public sub county the girls were found to be significantly lonelier than boys. The finding contradicts Liu et al., (2010) report that boys were found to be lonelier than girls. This research contributes to the debate as to which gender is lonelier but goes further to suggest that results as to which gender is lonelier depends on the school context. The context in which girls were found to be lonelier than boys was that of co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in patriarchal community.

Brutsaert (2006) observed that co-education situation would make gender stereotypes more adhered to by the genders. In this case, the boys take the upper position due to high social status allocated to man in the patriarchal societies similar to the community where the study was done. On the same note, Picho and Stephens (2012) observed that teachers would reinforce social stereotype in efforts to make each gender conform to

the societal norms. These observations are in agreement with Clark (2004) who reported that girls' self-esteem was adversely affected by boys' presence. Though Clark was referring to areas of self-esteem, it seems the influence of the gender could be widely spread over other psychological concepts and loneliness could also be added as one of the psychological states of girls that are influenced negatively by presence of boys.

For girls, loneliness levels were lowest in co-education day schools (2.89) followed by co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools (2.91) and highest in the single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools (3.05). Thus the learners in boarding public sub county secondary schools (single gender or co-education) had higher level of loneliness than those in day schools. These results support Brutsaert (2006) observation that in a co-education school each gender marked their behaviour from the opposite gender. Boys in co-education school were found to be less aggressive and were more sensitive to others' feelings than boys in single gender. The increased sensitivity of boys could lead to increased concerns over loneliness.

#### **4.4 Loneliness-counselling uptake Among Learners in Schools by Gender**

Second objective of this study was to determine the uptake of loneliness-counselling among learner in secondary schools in Murang'a County. Participants were requested to indicate whether they had sought counselling for loneliness. The number that had had counselling for loneliness was used to estimate the lonely participants. Loneliness mean score for participants who sought counselling services gave approximate experiential threshold level for loneliness in the sample that was unsettling and drove learners to seek help. The mean score for learners who had sought loneliness counselling was applied across the whole sample.

The mean score for loneliness among the participants who sought counselling was found to be 2.88 and this mean score was applied to the whole sample by gender and school type. Participants scoring equal to or higher mean score levels of loneliness were treated as lonely. The number of lonely learner was used further to calculate the counselling services uptake for loneliness by school type and gender. Results were as in Table 4.4.

**Table 4. 4 Prevalence of Loneliness and Counselling Services Uptake**

School type	Gender	Overall N	Counselled?	N	Mean Score	% lonely	% uptake
Single gender boarding	Boys	108	Yes	8	3.47	39.8	18.6
			No	35	3.39		
	Girls	Yes	10	3.69	46.9	22.2	
		No	35	3.65			
Co-educational day	Boys	95	Yes	8	3.41	43.2	19.5
			No	33	3.56		
	Girls	Yes	16	3.65	49.5	34.8	
		No	30	3.36			
Co-educational boarding	Boys	102	Yes	12	3.50	42.2	27.9
			No	31	3.38		
	Girls	Yes	17	3.41	55.1	31.5	
		No	37	3.68			

There were 43 boys out of 108 (39.8%) in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools that were lonely, of these eight (18.6%) went for counselling services. In single gender girls' schools, there were 45 out of 96 (46.9 %) girls were lonely but only ten (22.2 %) of the girls sought counselling services. Both genders uptake of counselling services for loneliness was below 25% in the single gender boarding public sub county schools in Murang'a County.

In co-education day schools, there were 41 out of 95 (43.2 %) boys who were lonely and only 8 (19.5 %) went for loneliness counselling. For 93 girls in co-education day schools, 46 (49.5%) of them were lonely but only 16 of the 46 (34.8 %) sought for loneliness counselling services. Thus girls in co-education day schools had higher uptake of counselling services compared to boys in the same category.

It was observed that there were 102 boys in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools and 43 of them were lonely making 42.2%. Of these, 12 participants sought loneliness counselling service giving an uptake of 27.9 %. Out of 98 girls in co-educational boarding public sub county secondary schools, 54 were lonely making 55.1% of the girls. Seventeen girls out of fifty-four who were lonely in the co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools went for loneliness counselling. This reflected that 31.5% sought counselling services. It is observed that boys had highest uptake of counselling services in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools.

In the schools, guidance and counselling services were offered by teachers and peer counsellors. The use of peer counsellors brought help to the needy learners in real time as the peer counsellors were present among learners. In addition to the availability, peer counsellors were closer in psychological status to the learners and these reduced barriers in communication and improved empathy (Egbochuku & Aihie, 2018). However, it was observed that lack of time for teacher counsellors, led to failure to get counselled for loneliness of some participants who would otherwise benefitted.

Each school type was treated separately as loneliness levels were determined by school type and gender (Latsch, 2018, Egbochuku & Aihie, 2018). The desire to receive loneliness counselling is driven by desire to achieve quality as well as quantity of social relationships. One of the highest uptakes of counselling was among the girls in co-education day public sub county secondary schools at 34.8 %. Boys can tolerate higher levels of loneliness in single gender schools than in co-education schools, with lowest tolerance observed in co-education day schools. When in single gender schools, boys adopted exaggerated masculine behaviour in approach to problems solving and pretended to be in full control, leaving counselling to the 'weak' as observed by Clark (2004) while presence of girls brought lower the boys' desire to display masculinity, thus allowing the boys to seek counselling earlier before intensive feelings of loneliness manifest.

Counselling services in schools offered social psychological support to learners. The uptake of counselling services will determine the level to which learners utilized the services to alleviate level of loneliness. One of the factors that may determine uptake of counselling services is the learners' perception of effectiveness of the service.

Boys' uptake of counselling services increased from 18.6% in single gender boarding schools to 19.5% in co-educational day public sub county secondary schools to the highest level in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools of 27.9 %.

Girls had lowest intake of counselling services of 22.2% in single gender boarding public sub county school, followed by co-education boarding school at 31.5% and highest uptake of 34.8% in co-education day public sub county secondary schools. It was observed that co-education day public sub county secondary schools recorded

highest level of counselling services uptake for girls while boys' highest uptake was in co-educational boarding school. Boys in co-education day schools had largest percentage of lonely learners. It was also observed that though loneliness was more prevalent in day schools' boys, it was least in intensity compared to other types of school. However, the situation was worsened by the low uptake of counselling services on loneliness of only 41.86%. The counselling services uptake was very different from Ngeno and Shikuku (2014) who conducted their study in the rift valley region and gave intake a meagre 6%. Similarly, Wamugunda et al., (2019) reported that counselling was not effective. This variation could be due to the fact that counselling in schools is left to individual schools' initiative despite being hailed nationally as a necessity for better running of schools. Furthermore, Murang'a county education office had put a lot of emphasis on guidance and counselling programmes in schools and had initiated peer counselling programmes in the schools.

The percentage of lonely learners ranged from 39.8 % in boys in single gender boarding to 55.1 % for girls in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools. More girls than boys were lonely in all types of schools. The percentages of lonely learners reflect the large number of learners requiring loneliness counselling but may not seek counselling. The estimate of the number of learners that were lonely is an underestimation due to the number of participants that could have been lonely but never sought counselling services due to various reasons, for example learners who perceived their schools' counsellors as in-effective. Other reasons could be that loneliness concern occurred when the learners were in recess.

However, the number that went for counselling includes episodic loneliness and may not be an indicator of chronic condition of loneliness. Despite these limitations, the percentages of lonely participants in this study were found to be lower than estimates in some other studies. For example, Houghton et al., (2016) stated that 67-79% of adolescents had lonely episodes while Le Roux (2009) found that 79% of adolescents younger than 18 had had feelings of loneliness, while 60.2% of the participants had experienced loneliness according to Ozdemir and Tuncay (2008).

The percentage of lonely participants in this study represents adolescents who had experienced intense loneliness that were hurting to the extent that they had to look for help hence lower than other studies. Thus, it represents those who had had at least an episode of loneliness warranting seeking of counselling services. However, the findings were far above those of Cassidy and Asher (1992) and Asher et al., (1984) who reported that 10% of children were lonely. The prevalence of loneliness was given at 10-15% among learners' population by Galanaki and Vassilopoulou (2007). The prevalence of loneliness is observed to vary widely due to geographical location and cultures involved. Furthermore, in this study variation was observed between types of schools.

#### **4.4.1 Difference in Loneliness among Learners by School Type and Gender.**

Varying school contexts were thought to influence the experience of loneliness among the genders. To investigate this further, analysis of loneliness mean scores was done to compare same gender in different type schools. Genders in schools were compared to establish which of the schools' context favoured genders by reducing loneliness levels. An independent sample t-test was conducted between the loneliness score from the

different schools was conducted to establish whether the differences were significant at 95% confidence limits.

Table 4.5 shows comparison of loneliness in single gender boarding schools and co-educational day schools. Boys in single gender boarding schools had loneliness mean score of 2.77 compared to 2.87 of boys in the co-educational day schools. Independent t-test showed that the differences in loneliness between the two types of schools was not significant as  $p=0.325 > 0.05$ . On the other hand, girls in the single gender boarding schools had a loneliness mean score of 2.93 against 2.87 for girls in the co-educational day schools. When the differences were tested it was found that it was not statistically significant as  $p=0.623, > 0.05$ .

It was observed that the level of loneliness among the genders in co-educational day and single gender boarding schools were not significantly different. There was no school type that supported establishment of loneliness more than the other.

**Table 4.5 Loneliness in Boarding and Day Schools Compared**

Gender	School type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Boys	Single gender boarding	108	2.77	0.66	-0.987	201	0.325
	Co-educational day	95	2.87	0.78			
Girls	Single gender boarding	96	2.93	0.83	0.492	187	0.623
	Co-educational day	93	2.87	0.75			

Through comparison of boarding schools, the impact of mixed gender and single gender on learners' loneliness was revealed. Boarding school learners were compared in levels of loneliness by gender. Table 4.6 shows the results.

**Table 4.6 Loneliness Boarding Schools: a Comparison**

Gender	School type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Boys	Single gender boarding	108	2.77	0.66	-0.415	208	0.679
	Co-educational boarding	102	2.81	0.64			
Girls	Single gender boarding	96	2.93	0.83	-0.794	192	0.428
	Co-educational boarding	98	3.02	0.81			

Boys in single gender boarding schools had loneliness mean scores of 2.77 compared to 2.81 of boys in co-educational boarding schools. This difference was not significant as t-test yielded  $p=0.679 > 0.05$ . Similarly, girls in single gender boarding schools had loneliness mean of 2.93 while those in co-educational boarding schools had a mean of 3.02. When the scores were tested for differences, it was found that girls in single boarding and in co-educational boarding public sub county secondary schools were not statistically different ( $p=0.428, > 0.05$ ). It is therefore concluded that none of the schools made the learners lonelier.

Loneliness levels in co-educational schools were compared by gender. The difference in loneliness could be attributed to the boarding or day school conditions. Table 4.7 display the results.

**Table 4.7 Comparison of Learners' Loneliness in Co-educational Schools**

Gender	School type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	p
Boys	Co-educational day	95	2.87	0.78	0.612	195	0.541
	Co-educational boarding	102	2.81	0.64			
Girls	Co-educational day	93	2.87	0.75	-1.325	189	0.187
	Co-educational boarding	98	3.02	0.81			

Boys in co-educational day schools had a loneliness mean score of 2.87 compared to 2.81 of boys in co-educational boarding schools. Independent sample t-test was done and yielded  $p=0.541, >0.05$ . The scores were not significantly different. Girls in co-educational day schools had a loneliness mean score of 2.87 compared to 3.02 for girls in co-educational boarding schools. When these scores were tested for differences, the t-test yielded  $p=0.187, >0.05$ . Thus levels of loneliness among genders in co-education boarding and co-educational day public sub county secondary schools were not statistically significantly different. Despite the context being different, there was no school type that disadvantaged learners in terms of loneliness.

#### **4.5 Influence of Gender on Loneliness**

Gender was thought to influence the level of loneliness among learners through its correlates. Spearman moments correlations coefficients were calculated between gender and learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships, sense of belonging to school and loneliness. Table 4.8 shows the results. Gender was coded as boys=1 and girls=2, the rise in gender would reflect that gender is tending towards 2 (for girls). In single gender boarding schools, the correlation coefficients between gender and learners' peer relationships were positive. This indicated that where there were more girls, learners' peer relationships tended to better than when girls are fewer. But in sense of belonging to school, the coefficient was negative for the same category indicating that when girls increase there is a decrease in sense of belonging to school. The magnitudes of the coefficients were negligibly small.

**Table 4.8 Relationship Between Gender and Loneliness**

<b>School type</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>LPR</b>	<b>TLR</b>	<b>SBS</b>	<b>Loneliness</b>
Single gender boarding	204	0.049	0.066	-0.048	0.103
Co-educational day	188	0.112	0.107	0.023	-0.002

Co-educational boarding	200	-0.092	-0.215**	-0.213**	0.143*
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Key on significance: \* p<0.05 \*\* p<0.01 **LPR**=learners' peer relationships **TLR**= teacher-learner relationships **SBS**= sense of belonging to school.

For co-educational day schools, the influence of gender on loneliness revealed that the relationships were negative and negligible. The negative direction implies that as the number of boys increased loneliness would decrease. The relationship between gender and correlates of loneliness was all positive. This meant that as population tended to be of girls, there was an increase in learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school. In coeducational boarding schools, it was observed that gender influence was significant. The direction of relationships was negative for learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging. This indicates that as gender tended to increase (had more girls than boys) learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school decreased. Loneliness was observed to increase as the number of girls in the school population increased. Thus, coeducational boarding schools' dynamics of relationships was different from other two types of schools. These observations points to challenges that genders were facing in co-educational boarding schools in the management of loneliness.

#### **4.6. Peer Counsellors and Loneliness**

Guidance and counselling services in schools relied heavily on peer counsellors who are selected and trained in basic social and counselling skills. Some studies have reported that peer counsellors benefitted from the role they played; helping other learners. Based on this premise, this study was set to find out how loneliness of peer counsellors varied with school type gender. A comparison between peer and non-peer

counsellors in their levels of loneliness was done. Loneliness scores were compared and tested for significance at 95% using t-tests. Table 4.9 show the results. Boys in single gender boarding schools, who were peer counsellors, had 2.72 against 2.79 for non-counsellors. Though the peer counsellors had lower level of loneliness, it was not significant as  $p=0.666, >0.05$ . However, boys in co-educational day schools who were counsellors had higher loneliness score of 2.93 against 2.85 for non-counsellors. Thus counsellors were lonelier than non-counsellors in coeducational day schools. The test for significance of the difference yielded  $p=0.659, >0.05$ , showing that it was not significant at 95% confidence level.

**Table 4.9 Comparison of Peer and Non-Peer Counsellors' Loneliness levels**

School type	Gender	Peer counsellor?	N	Mean	Std deviation	t	df	p
Single gender boarding	Boys	Yes	23	2.72	0.72	-0.433	106	0.666
		No	85	2.79	0.64			
	Girls	Yes	44	3.05	0.94	1.376	94	0.172
		No	52	2.82	0.71			
Co-educational day	Boys	Yes	25	2.93	0.71	0.442	93	0.659
		No	70	2.85	0.80			
	Girls	Yes	36	2.91	0.67	0.418	91	0.677
		No	57	2.84	0.81			
	Boys	Yes	24	2.78	0.55	-0.238	100	0.812

Co-educational boarding	Girls	No	78	2.82	0.67			
		Yes	36	2.94	0.84	-0.754	96	0.453
		No	62	3.07	0.80			

Boys in co-educational boarding schools who were counsellors had lower loneliness score of 2.78 against 2.82 for non-counsellors. T-test showed that the differences in the loneliness mean score was not significant as  $p=0.812, >0.05$ . It was observed that serving as peer counsellor did not result to advantage of lowered levels of loneliness.

Single gender girls who served as peer counsellors had a loneliness mean scores of 3.05 against 2.82 for non-peer counsellors. While in co-educational day, peer counsellors had loneliness mean score of 2.91 against 2.84 for those who were not counsellors. Co-educational boarding girls who served as peer counsellors had a loneliness mean scores of 2.94 against 3.07 for non-peer counsellors. Girls' peer counsellors were lonelier in single gender boarding schools and also in co-educational day. It is only in co-educational boarding schools that girls who were counsellors scored lower than non-peer counsellors in loneliness mean scores. However, all the differences in loneliness scores between peer and non-peer counsellors were not significant at 95% significance level as  $p > 0.05$  for all the school types and gender.

For boys, serving as peer counsellors had higher loneliness mean score than non-peer counsellors only in co-educational day schools. But the mean scores were lower for co-educational and single gender boarding schools. Boys were found to look at counselling services as meant for the weaker boys who could not handle their issues. That is they were not man enough. Thus there was stigmatization of counselling services among the boys. This observation agreed with Sew, Jin and Mah (2013) but is

contrary to report by Egbochuku and Aihie (2018). The interplay of the correlates of loneliness resulted to gains in one and loss in another, resulting to almost similar levels of loneliness. For example, peer counsellors would be better in teacher-learner relationships but lose in the peer relationships as they may stand for values not shared by other learners.

#### **4.7 Comparison of Correlates of Loneliness**

Third objective of this study was to compare Correlates of Loneliness. Correlates of loneliness under this study were learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school. Influence of learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school on levels of loneliness among learners in public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County was also assessed. Each of the following sections will address one of the correlates and testing of related sub null hypothesis.

##### **4.7.1 Comparison of Learners Peer Relationships Influence on Loneliness**

It was predicted that learners' peer relationships would vary significantly due to differing contexts of gender, guidance and counselling programmes and school type. Learners' peer relationships were measured using learners' peer relationship scale developed for this study. The learners' peer relationships scale utilized six statements with graded response on a Likert scale. The statements included learners' perception of their relationship with others. For example, "I feel supported by learners in my school". Relationships in the school were not limited to the classmates. The scoring was done in such a way that a high score corresponded to a good relationship (strongly agree= 5 agree=4 not sure= 3 disagree 2 and strongly disagree=1) for positively worded

statements. A single representative score for peer relationships of a participant was calculated by dividing the total score by six (the number of items). Therefore, each respondent mean score for peer relationship was somewhere between 1 and 5. Cronbach alpha test for reliability yielded  $\alpha=0.73$ .

Mean scores were calculated by school type and gender. This helped in comparison as well as isolating trends in learners' peer relationships among the schools and gender. Learners' peer relationships scores were also subjected to a two tailed independent sample t-test at 95% confidence limit to test sub null hypothesis HO2: there is no statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationships between boys and girls in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding secondary schools in Murang'a County. Results were as in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10 Learner's Peer Relationships and T- Test between Gender**

<b>School type</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
Single boarding	Boys	108	3.53	0.57	-0.700	202	0.485
	Girls	96	3.58	0.54			
Co-educational day	Boys	95	3.60	0.55	-1.537	186	0.126
	Girls	93	3.72	0.54			
Co-educational boarding	Boys	102	3.63	0.51	1.300	198	0.195
	Girls	98	3.54	0.47			

There were 108 boys and 96 girl participants in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools. There were also 95 boys and 93 girls in co-education day public sub county secondary while 102 boys and 98 girls in co-education boarding

public sub county secondary schools participated in the study. Boys had peer relationships scores increased from 3.53 in single gender boarding public sub county followed by co-education day public sub county secondary at 3.60 and was highest at 3.63 in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools. For girls the lowest score in peer relationships was in co-education boarding (3.54), then single gender boarding (3.8) and best in co-education day public sub county secondary schools at 3.72.

In single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools the boys had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.53 while girls had a mean of 3.58. In co-education day public sub county secondary, boys' had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.60 which was lower than girls' 3.72 in the same category. In co-education boarding, boys had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.63 which was higher than girls' 3.54 in the same category.

Learners' peer relationships in single gender public sub county secondary schools were analysed. In single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools, there was 108 boys and 96 girls' participants. In single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools the boys had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.53 while girls had a mean of 3.58. It is observed that girls had slightly higher than boys' level of teacher-learner relationships. Hypothesis HO<sub>2a</sub> stated that there was no statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationship between boys and girls in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County, was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test, at 95% significant level was conducted. It was observed that there were no statistically significant differences in the peer relationships

scores for boys and girls as the test yielded  $p=0.485,>0.05$  (Table 4.9). Therefore, the data supports the hypothesis  $HO_{2a}$  and a conclusion was made that there was no statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationships among boys and girls in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County.

There were 95 boys and 93 girl respondents in co-education day schools. Their mean scores in learners' peer relationships were 3.60 and 3.72 for boys and girls respectively. Boys had lower scores than girls'. Hypothesis  $HO_{2b}$  stated that there were no statistically significant differences in learners' peer relationship between boys and girls in co-education day schools in Murang'a County, was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test, at 95% significant level was conducted. As in Table 4.4, it is observed that there were no statistically significant differences in the learners' peer relations mean scores for boys and girls, as the test yielded  $p=0.126,>0.05$ . Therefore, the data supported the hypothesis  $HO_{2b}$  and therefore a conclusion was reached that there was no statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationships among boys and girls in co-education day, public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County.

In co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools there were 102 boys and 98 girls who participated in the study. Their mean scores in learners' peer relationships were 3.63 and 3.54 for boys and girls respectively. Boys had a higher score than girls. Hypothesis  $HO_{2c}$  stated that there were no statistically significant differences in learners' peer relationship between boys and girls in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County, was tested. It was observed that there were no statistically significant differences in the learners' peer relations between boys and girls as the test yielded  $p=0.195,>0.05$ . Therefore, this finding supported the

hypothesis HO2<sub>c</sub> and therefore, a conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationships among boys and girls in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County was made.

Test of sub null hypotheses HO2 that stated that there was no statistically significance difference in learners' peer relationships between girls and boys in single gender, co-education day public sub county secondary and co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County were tested. A two tailed independent samples test was conducted at 95% significance level. The t-test yielded p- values of 0.485 in single gender boarding, 0.126 in co-education day public sub county secondary and 0.195 in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools. It is observed that all the probability values were all greater than 0.05, indicating that the differences could be just due to chance. Therefore, the data supports the hypothesis and conclusion that there was no statistically significance difference in learners' peer relationships between girls and boys in single gender, co-education day public sub county secondary and co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. We observe that the scores were not significantly different from each other for boys and girls.

Peer relationships were established at group as well as dyadic levels. The experiences of both types of relationships were important and contributed to the wholeness of peer experiences (Ellis et al., 2012). Grljusic and Kolak (2018) highlighted some differences in the ways boys differ from girls in relationships and remarked that boys preferred many general friends while girls went for few quality relationships. Clark (2004) also pointed out those boys in single gender schools picked on weaker boys to satisfy their

ego needs. It was further observed that girls in single gender developed a higher self-esteem than those in co-education schools. Despite these differences in the way gender preferred to interact in relationships, findings in this study point out to the fact that both boys and girls alike had equal capacity to form strong peer relationships.

Learners who perceived counselling services as effective were expected to experience healthy socio- emotional relationships. This would be reflected in better scores in their relationships with other learners.

Learners' peer relationships were compared in the context of perception learners' on guidance and counselling programmes as effective or ineffective. The differences in learners' peer relationships were subjected to independent sample's t-test to find out whether the differences were significant or not. Results were as in Table 4.11.

**Table 4. 11 Effective Counselling and Learners' Peer Relationships**

School type	Gender	Gnc	N	Mean	Std deviation	T	Df	p
Single gender boarding	Boys	Yes	106	62	3.56	0.652	106	0.516
		No		46	3.49			
	Girls	Yes	94	56	3.70	2.503	94	0.014
		No		40	3.43			
Co-educational day	Boys	Yes	93	69	3.63	0.898	93	0.372
		No		26	3.52			
	Girls	Yes	91	73	3.72	-0.188	91	0.851
		No		20	3.75			
Co-educational boarding	Boys	Yes	100	63	3.62	-0.209	100	0.835
		No		39	3.64			
	Girls	Yes	96	77	3.53	-0.327	96	0.745
		No		21	3.57			

Key: GnC = response to perception on guidance and counselling as effective?

Boys in single gender boarding schools, perceived guidance and counselling services as effective, had learners' peer relationships at 3.56 against 3.49 for those who did not perceive counselling services as effective. Those who perceived counselling as effective had better scores than those who perceived counselling as ineffective. T-test revealed that this difference was significant at 95% confidence level as  $p=0.516 > 0.05$ . We conclude that boys in single gender boarding schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective had no different experiences in peer relationships compared to those who perceived counselling as ineffective.

Girls in single gender boarding schools, who perceived counselling as effective had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.70 against 3.43 for those who perceived counselling services as ineffective.

T-test revealed that this difference was significant at 95% confidence level as  $p=0.014 < 0.05$ . We conclude that girls in single gender boarding schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective had, significantly higher mean scores in their relationships compared to those who perceived counselling as ineffective. Girls in single gender boarding schools, who had had effective counselling services benefited by having better peer relationships than those who did not perceive counselling in their schools as effective, Girls more than boys, benefitted may be due to compliance to guidance and counselling knowledge and skills unlike the boys. Baig (2014) observed this phenomenon whereby girls preferred compliance rather than defiance. The opposite of girls was observed in boys who preferred autonomy and independence. It was possible that in single gender boarding schools, guidance and counselling services were more easily tailored to address relationships according to the gender of the learners, thus more beneficial.

Boarding schools had learners' being confined to school compounds during school time. In co-educational schools both gender interacted during learning. Day scholars had ample time to meet and socialize with their age mates in the families and home neighbourhood. Learners' peer relationships were thought to vary depending on school type. To explore the variation, t-tests were carried out between schools. Results are in Table 4.12.

**Table 4.12 Comparison of Learners' Peer Relationships in Single Gender**

**Boarding Co-education Day School**

Gender	School type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	p
Boys	Single gender boarding	108	3.53	0.57	-0.928	201	0.355
	Co-educational day	95	3.60	0.55			
Girls	Single gender boarding	96	3.58	0.54	-1.800	187	0.074
	Co-educational day	93	3.72	0.54			

In single gender boarding schools, learners had lower learners' peer relationships mean score compared to those in co-educational day schools. This was true for both boys and girls. However, t-test did not reveal any statistically significant differences between the two type of school regarding learners peer relationships. May be, the freedom to extend relate beyond school time in the community and ability to plan joint activities over the weekends contributed to better and intense learners' peer relationships for day scholars.

To explore the impact of mixed gender in learners' peer relationships, a comparison between single gender and co-educational boarding school were made. The mixed gender schools were expected to have a complex structure of relationships as each gender followed stereotypes that were enhanced by presence of the opposite gender. Differences of peer relationships were further test for significance. An independent sample t-test at 95% confidence limit was conducted for each gender Table 4.13 has the results.

**Table 4.13 Comparison of Learners' Peer Relationships in Boarding Schools**

Gender	School type	N	Mean	Std deviation	D	df	p
Boys	Single gender boarding	108	3.53	0.57	-1.314	208	0.190
	Co-educational boarding	102	3.63	0.51			
Girls	Single gender boarding	96	3.58	0.54	0.642	192	0.522
	Co-educational boarding	98	3.54	0.47			

Co-educational boarding schools' boys had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.63 which was better than the single gender boarding schools' score of 3.53. However, this difference was not statistically significant as t-test yielded  $p=0.190, > 0.05$ . Girls in the co-educational boarding had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.58 which was better than 3.54 for single gender boarding schools' girls. However, this difference was not statistically significant as t-test yielded  $p= 0.522 > 0.05$ . It is observed that co-educational boarding learners had better learners' peer relationships than single gender boarders. Though the differences were not significant, this may point to benefits of co-educational school over single gender schools.

Comparison of co-educational schools was intended to highlight impact of boarding school environment against the day schools'. Learners' peer relationships mean scores were compared by gender and the differences observed tested for significance using t-tests. Table 4.14 displays the results of the analysis.

Boys in co-educational day schools had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.60 compared to 3.63 for boys in co-educational boarding schools. T-test on boys' score yielded  $p=0.739, >0.05$ . Thus the difference in learners' peer relationships for boys in day schools was not significantly different from those of boys in co-educational boarding schools.

**Table 4.14 Comparison of Learners' Peer Relationships in Co-Educational Schools**

Gender	School type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	P
Boys	Co-educational day	95	3.60	0.55	-0.334	195	0.739
	Co-educational boarding	102	3.63	0.51			
Girls	Co-educational day	93	3.72	0.54	2.562	189	0.011
	Co-educational boarding	98	3.54	0.47			

Girls in co-educational day schools had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.72 compared to 3.54 for girls in co-educational boarding schools. T-test on girls' score yielded  $p=0.011, <0.05$ . This showed that girls in co-educational day schools had significantly higher learners' peer relationships compared to girls in co-educational boarding schools. The control of movement and restrictions on cross gender interactions in co-educational boarding schools could be a major cause of the differences observed.

Correlations between learners' peer relationships and loneliness in the various school types were studied. This was to bring out the ways in which learners' peer relationships influenced loneliness levels of learners in various schools' environments. Such information would be important in laying mapping of loneliness. Influence of learners' peer relationships on loneliness was calculated using Pearson moments correlations. Results were as shown in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.15 Relationship between Learners' Peer Relationships and Loneliness**

<b>Gender/school</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
Single gender boarding	-0.384**	-0.346**
Co-educational day	-0.160	-0.400**
Co-educational boarding	-0.296**	-0.116

Key: two-tailed significance levels \*\* p<0.01 \* p<0.05

Boys in single gender schools had  $r = -0.384$  which was highly significant. Girls in the same category had  $r = -0.346$  which was also highly significant. It means that both boys and girls valued peer relationships and were a consistent determinant of loneliness. This is advantageous because peer counsellors would be more useful through influencing others towards alleviating loneliness. All correlations were negative.

As learners' peer relationships improved, loneliness level was lowered. It also means that peer relationships were important in determining loneliness experiences of the learners any effort to improve peer relationships would lower levels of loneliness.

In co-educational day schools, boys  $r = -0.160$  which is very weak reflecting that learners' peer relationships were not powerful in determining loneliness of boys in the co-educational day schools. However, girls in the co-educational day school, learners' peer relationships had highly significant and moderate influence on loneliness or  $r = -0.400$ . This showed that girls highly valued peer relationships more than boys and peer relationships could easily be a source of loneliness.

In co-educational boarding schools, male learners' peer relationships had a correlations of  $r = -0.296$  which was highly significant. On the contrary, girls in the same category had a correlations coefficient of  $r = -0.116$  which is very weak and non-significant. This may be due to the fact that girls were able to bond and this reduced peer relationships to be a significant determinant of loneliness for girls.

We can conclude that different school type presented environmental combination that strengthened or weakened learners' peer relationships power to determine loneliness. Boys in co-educational day and girls in co-educational boarding schools were almost free from loneliness emanating from peer relationships.

#### **4.7.2 Teacher-Learner Relationships between Boys and Girls.**

In this section, teacher-learner relationships which was the second of the correlates of loneliness, is compared in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding schools. Testing of sub null hypothesis;  $H_{03}$ : there is no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationships, between boys and girls in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding, secondary schools in Murang'a County was tested. It was predicted that teacher – learner relationships would vary significantly due to differing school contexts in gender, guidance and counselling programmes and school type. Comparison of teacher-learner relationships between boys and girls in single gender boarding; co-education day and co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools was done. Independent samples t-test at 95% confidence limits were done between boys and girls for each of the school types.

Teacher-learner relationships were measured using teacher-learner relationships scale adapted from Vickers et al., (2014) and developed for this study. Teacher-learner relationships scale comprised of six statements articulating the relationships between teachers and learners. The responses were arranged in a Likert scale from ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The statements were scored from 5 to 1 (strongly agree= 5 agree=4 not sure= 3 disagree 2 and strongly disagree=1) for positively worded statements. The negatively worded statements were scored in a reverse manner so that higher score reflected better teacher-learner relationships. For example, “I have no teacher whom I can tell my problem” was scored as follows: strongly agree= 1 agrees=2 not sure= 3 disagree 4 and strongly disagree=5. An average score for teacher- learner relationship was calculated by dividing raw score for the six items by six. Thus the final score ranged from 1 and 5. Cronbach alpha reliability index was calculated for the scale and found to be  $\alpha=0.82$ .

A hypothesis HO3, that stated that there is no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationship between boys and girls in public sub county single gender boarding, co-education day public sub county secondary and co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang’a County was tested. Teacher-learner relationships scores were subjected to a two tailed independent sample t-test at 95% confidence limit to test the hypothesis HO3. The results were as in Table 4.16.

**Table 4. 16 Teacher-learner Relationships Compared by Gender.**

<b>School type</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std deviation</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
Single Gender Boarding	Boys	108	3.83	0.88	-0.943	202	0.347
	Girls	96	3.95	1.00			
Co-Educational Day	Boys	95	3.94	0.69	-1.465	186	0.145

	Girls	93	4.09	0.71			
Co-Educational Boarding	Boys	102	3.94	0.75	3.091	198	0.002
	Girls	98	3.61	0.79			

There were 108 boys and 96 girl participants in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools. Boys' in single gender public sub county secondary schools had teacher-learner relationships mean score of 3.83 against girls' 3.95 in the same category. It was observed that girls had higher mean scores in their relationships with teachers than the boys.

Hypothesis HO3<sub>a</sub> that states that there was no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationship between boys and girls in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test, at 95% significant level was conducted. The results in Table 4.5 indicate that  $p=0.347, >0.05$ . Thus the differences between boys' and girls' teacher relationships scores were not statistically significant. The data therefore supported the hypothesis and a conclusion was made that there was no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationships between boys and girls in public sub county single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County.

In co-education day public sub county secondary schools, boys' teacher-learner relationships had a mean score of 3.94 against girls' 4.09. It is observed that girls had higher teacher-learner relationships' score than the boys. Hypothesis HO3<sub>b</sub> states that there was no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationship between boys and girls in co-education day sub county public secondary schools in Murang'a County, was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test, at 95% significant level was conducted. The results in Table 4.5 indicate that the test yielded  $p=0.145, >0.05$ .

Thus the differences between boys' and girls' teacher relationships scores were not statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis HO3<sub>b</sub> was accepted and conclusion made that there was no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationships among boys and girls in co-education day sub county public secondary schools in Murang'a County.

In co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools, boys' teacher-learner relationships mean score was 3.94 against girls' 3.61. We observe that boys had higher score in teacher-learner relationships than the girls. Hypothesis HO3<sub>c</sub> that stated that there was no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationship between boys and girls in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test, at 95% significant level was conducted. The test results indicated that  $p=0.002$ ,  $<0.01$ . Thus the differences between boys' and girls' teacher relationships scores were highly statistically significant. The data did not support the hypothesis. Therefore, the hypothesis HO3<sub>c</sub> was rejected and a conclusion that there is highly statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationships between boys and girls in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County was made.

It was observed that teacher-learner relationships between genders were significantly different in the co-educational boarding schools. This is due to extended time in schools with teachers who constantly acted in favour of boys. Ellis et al., (2012) stated that learners were involved at two levels in their relationships namely dyadic and group level. Dyadic level the learners were at their best as individuals while in groups the person's status and that of the peer group determined the behaviour. With teachers the

interaction would be mainly dyadic but group influence can be played out by individual learners in an act of solidarity as reported by Raufelder et al., (2013).

Picho and Stephens (2012) asserted that teachers' attitudes and beliefs about the learners can shape their behaviour. Also teachers were found to believe that girls and boys had different abilities and that their role was to guide students to their best gender appropriate careers and behaviours. Teachers and learners alike behaved in a manner guided by social cultural norms and expectations in the social context. Baig (2014) also pointed out that, teachers reinforced social stereotypes for example, passiveness for girls and aggression for boys. The teachers' behaviour was in favour of boys who were aggressive and active in classrooms. Clark (2004) also reported that in attempt to control boys' behaviour, teachers denied the girls attention. The girls may interpret teachers' loss of attention as rejection thereby curtailing efforts to connect with their teachers. These behaviours from teachers could have started and sustained a gap in the gendered relationships of teachers with the learners.

On the other hand, 'Good' girl stereotype, of agreeing to be second to boys, was commonly adopted by girls in co-education schools in line with wider social expectations. This resulted to boys being dominant in interactions with teachers. From this point of view, it would be expected that boys would have higher teacher-learner relationships than girls. However, this observation is made only in the co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools where boys (4.06) was found to highly and significantly differ with girls' 3.61. Gender differential treatment may be more pronounced in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools due to presence of teachers in supervision of learners' activities in and out of class time. This

prolonged surveillance could lead to divergent attitudes and behaviour causing lowered satisfaction of girl learners. Further investigations were done, to find out whether a certain school type favoured teacher- learner relationships any each gender. School contexts were compared to identify the school type that favoured teacher-learner relationships by gender.

Independent samples t-tests were carried between same gender in different schools. The tests were two tailed with significance level of 95%. Table 4.17 shows the results. Boys in single gender boarding schools had teacher-learner relationships mean score of 3.83 against 3.93 for day school boys. When an independent t-test for the difference was done, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the schools as  $p=0.347, >0.05$ .

**Table 4.17 Comparison of Teacher-Learner Relationships in Boarding and Day Schools**

Gender	School type	N	Mean	Std deviation	t	df	p
Boys	Single gender boarding	108	3.83	0.88	-0.942	201	0.347
	Co-educational day	95	3.93	0.69			
Girls	Single gender boarding	96	3.95	1.00	-1.032	187	0.303
	Co-educational day	93	4.08	0.71			

For girls in co-educational day schools their teacher-learner relationships mean score of 4.08 was greater than 3.95 for girls in single gender boarding schools. However, this difference was not significant as  $p=0.303, >0.05$ . It is observed that the learners in single gender boarding and co-educational day schools did not experience differences in teacher-learner relationships.

Learners in boarding schools were compared in teacher-learner relationships. Single gender and co-educational boarding schools were compared. The differences in teacher-learner relationships would reflect the impact of mixed factor under the environment of boarding schools. Teacher-learner relationships mean scores for boys and girls in the boarding schools were calculated. The scores were further subjected to an independent samples t-test to establish statistical significance of the differences observed. Table 4.18 has the results. Boys in single gender boarding school had teacher-learner relationships mean score of 3.83 against 3.94 of co-educational boarding school boys. When the difference was tested for significance it was found that the difference was statistically insignificant as  $p=0.316, >0.05$ . Girls in single gender boarding school had teacher-learner relationships mean score of 3.95 against 3.61 of co-educational boarding school girls. T-test revealed that the difference was statistically significant as  $p=0.008<0.05$ .

**Table 4.18 Comparison of Teacher-Learner Relationships in Boarding Schools**

Gender School type		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	P
Boys	Single gender boarding	108	3.83	0.88	-1.006	208	0.316
	Co-educational boarding	102	3.94	0.75			
Girls	Single gender boarding	96	3.95	10.01	2.675	192	0.008
	Co-educational boarding	98	3.61	0.79			

Thus, we observe that girls in co-educational boarding schools had significantly lower scores in teacher-learner relationships than girls in single gender boarding schools.

It is observed that the girls in single gender boarding and co-educational boarding schools had significant differences in teacher-learner relationships. This was unlike the boys. Clark (2004) had observed that girls are affected by presence of boys than boys

were affected by presence of girls. If we add the observation made by Baig (2014) that teachers will discriminate against girls and that girls were not competing with boys, then these observations are of no surprise.

Teacher-learner relationships in co-educational schools were compared. These were co-educational day schools and co-educational boarding schools. The difference would point to the boarding facilities influence on teacher-learner relationships. The boarders had overly long time under teacher supervision unlike day scholars. Table 4.19 has results.

**Table 4.19 Comparison of Teacher-Learner Relationships in Co-educational Schools**

Gender School type		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Boys	Co-educational day	95	3.93	0.69	-.078	195	0.938
	Co-educational boarding	102	3.94	0.75			
Girls	Co-educational day	93	4.09	0.71	4.393	189	0.000
	Co-educational boarding	98	3.61	0.79			

Boys in co-educational day schools had teacher-learner relationships mean score of 3.93 against 3.94 for boys in boarding schools. T-test yielded  $p=0.938 > 0.05$ .

We observe that they were more similar than different. For girls' co-educational day school learners had a mean of 4.09 against 3.61 for co-educational boarding school girls. Independent T-test for difference of means revealed that the difference was highly significant as  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ . It is observed that the girls in co-educational day and co-educational boarding schools had significant differences in teacher-learner relationships. This was unlike the boys. Extended stay at school seemed to lower

teachers' relationships with girls. This could be due to expectations that girls would easily rise to compete equally with boys to no avail.

Teacher-learner relationships were thought to influence loneliness for each gender differently and for each school type. The understanding of the relative importance of teacher-learner relationships in determining loneliness would of help in the planning of the control of the loneliness menace. Pearson moments correlations coefficients between teacher-learner relationships and loneliness were calculated. Table 4.20 display the results.

**Table 4.20 Correlations between Teacher- Learner Relationships and Loneliness**

<b>School type</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
Single gender boarding	-0.232*	-0.333**
Co-educational day	-0.155	-0.318**
Co-educational boarding	-0.296**	-0.243*

Key on significance levels \*\* p<0.01 \*p<0.05

It was observed that boys in single gender boarding schools had  $r = -0.232$  which was significant. In co-educational day schools, boys' teacher-learner relationship was  $r = -0.155$ . This was a very weak negative relationship which was not significant. However, boys in co-educational boarding schools had loneliness correlated to teacher-learner relationships with a coefficient  $r = -0.296$  which was weak but highly significant. Girls' loneliness was correlated to teacher-learner relationships at  $r = -0.333$ ,  $r = -0.318$  and  $r = -0.243$  in single gender boarding schools, co-educational day and co-educational boarding schools respectively. All the coefficients were highly significant except for co-educational boarding schools. Negative sign of the correlations coefficients means that as teacher-learner relationships improved, loneliness was lowered. Good teacher-

learner relationships were protective against loneliness. These findings are in agreement with Latsch (2018) and Vickers et al., (2014) who reported teacher relationships to be important in determining loneliness among learners. However, it is observed that the strength of teacher-learner relationships to determine loneliness depended on school type.

#### **4.7.3 Sense of Belonging to School and Loneliness**

This section compares sense of belonging to school influence levels of loneliness among learners in single gender; co-educational day and co-educational boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. It was predicted that sense of belonging to school would vary significantly due to differing school contexts of gender, guidance and counselling programmes and school type. Comparison of sense of belonging to school between boys and girls in single gender boarding; co-education day and co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools was done. Further, sub null hypothesis; HO4: there is no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school between boys and girls in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding secondary schools in Murang'a County was tested.

Sense of belonging to school scale was adapted from a school sense of belongingness scale developed by Akar-vural et al., (2013). It consisted of 6 items relating to feeling about the school. For example, "I am happy in this school" and each statement had five responses' levels forming in a Likert scale form. The responses ranged from strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree and strongly disagree. The respondents were requested to indicate the word or words that closely described their feeling towards the school at the time of this research. The scoring was done in such a way that a high score

corresponded to a good relationship (strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, not sure = 3, disagree 2 and strongly disagree =1) for positively worded statements. An average score was calculated by dividing each respondent's scores for six statements by six. The resulting score range was between 1 and 5.

To test the hypothesis, HO4 : there is no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school between boys and girls in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding secondary schools in Murang'a County, T-tests were performed on sense of belonging to school scores boys and girls to determine whether the observed differences were significant by gender. Results were as in Table 4.21.

**Table 4.21 Participants Sense of Belonging to School Scores Compared by Gender**

<b>School type</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
Single gender boarding	Boys	108	3.71	1.00	0.687	202	0.493
	Girls	96	3.62	1.04			
Co-educational day	Boys	95	4.05	0.89	-0.319	186	0.750
	Girls	93	4.09	0.74			
Co-educational boarding	Boys	102	3.68	0.98	3.064	198	0.002
	Girls	98	3.25	0.97			

In single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools' boys' sense of belonging to school was at a mean score of 3.71 against girls' 3.62 in the same category. It is observed that boys had better sense of belonging to school than the girls. Hypothesis HO4<sub>a</sub> that stated that there was no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school between boys and girls in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test, at 95% significant level was conducted on boys and girls sense of

belonging to school scores. The t-test results were as in Table 4.21 and showed that  $p=0.493, >0.05$ . Thus the differences between boys' and girls' sense of belonging to school scores were not statistically significant. The data supports the hypothesis HO4<sub>a</sub> that state that there was no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school scores between boys and girls in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. Thus the hypothesis is upheld.

In co-education day public sub county secondary schools' boys', sense of belonging to school was at a mean score of 4.05 against girls' 4.09 in the same category. It is observed that boys had lower sense of belonging to school than the girls. Hypothesis HO4<sub>b</sub> that states that there was no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school scores between boys and girls in co-education day public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test, at 95% significant level was conducted. The results in Table 4.21 indicate that  $p=0.750, >0.05$ . Thus the differences between boys' and girls' sense of belonging to school scores were not statistically significant. Therefore, hypothesis HO4<sub>b</sub> was accepted and conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school between boys and girls in co-education day sub county public secondary schools in Murang'a County was made.

In co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools' boys' sense of belonging to school was at a mean score of 3.68 against girls' 3.25 in the same category. It was observed that boys had better relationships with teachers than the girls. Hypothesis HO4<sub>c</sub> that stated that there was no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school scores between boys and girls in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed

independent samples t-test, at 95% significant level was conducted. The results, in Table 4.21 indicate that  $p=0.002, <0.05$ . Thus the differences between boys' and girls' sense of belonging to school scores were highly statistically significant. The data did not support the hypothesis and therefore it was rejected. A conclusion that there was statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school scores between boys and girls in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County was made.

Kraus and Cleveland (2016) stated that at interpersonal level sense of belonging to school can be seen as the extent to which learners reach out to establish and sustain social relationships with peers, teachers and other staff in the school. This points out at the active search for social connections by learners. This study revealed that there were gender differences in the sense of belonging to school. Generally, boys had higher than girls' sense of belonging to school in all the three types of public sub county secondary schools. The findings of this research did not find any significance differences in sense of belonging to school among learners in single gender and co-education day public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. However, it was found that sense of belonging to school was significantly higher for boys than girls only in co-education boarding sub county secondary schools.

These findings are in agreement with Chiessi et al., (2010) report that boys developed a higher sense of belonging than girls. However, the findings are contrary to Ellis et al., (2012) who found that girls had a higher sense of belonging to school. The observation that co-educational boarding schools' girls have significantly lower sense of belonging could emanate from teacher-learner relationships as well as learners' peer relationships.

Schools were compared in the levels of sense of belonging to school for each gender. Comparison of boarding schools was expected to highlight the effects mixed gender and single gender in a boarding school environment, while comparison of coeducation schools was expected to show how boarding environment impacts learners sense of belonging to school. The information would reflect the needs in terms of sense of belonging to school. T-tests were performed between schools' mean score for each gender. Results are in Table 4.22, shows comparison of sense of belonging to school among learners in single gender boarding and co-educational day schools.

**Table 4.22 Sense of Belonging to School in Boarding and Day Schools Compared.**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>School type</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std deviation</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>P</b>
Boys	single gender boarding	108	3.71	1.00	-2.551	201	0.011
	co-educational day	95	4.05	0.89			
Girls	single gender boarding	96	3.62	1.04	-3.604	187	0.000
	co-educational day	93	4.09	0.74			

Boys in single gender boarding schools had a sense of belonging to school mean of 3.71 compared to 4.05 for boys in co-educational day schools. T-test yielded  $p=0.011 < 0.05$ . This showed that day scholar boys had significantly higher sense of belonging to school than the boarders. Girls in single gender boarding schools had a sense of belonging to school mean of 3.62 compared to 4.09 for girls in co-educational day schools. An independent samples test on the difference yield  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ . Thus, the scores for day scholar girls were highly and significantly higher from the single gender boarding school girls. It was observed that sense of belonging to school was significantly different with co-educational day school learners having higher sense of belonging to school for boys and girls. We observe that day schools were liked more than boarding schools by both boys and girls.

Comparison of sense of belonging to school among learners in co-educational schools was done. Independent samples test was done at 95% confidence limits to determine the significance of the differences in sense of belonging to school scores. The differences in sense of belonging to school was attributed to the day and boarding environments of the schools. Table 4.23 show the results. Boys in co-educational day schools had a sense of belonging to school mean score of 4.05 compared to 3.68 for boys in co-educational boarding schools. When the difference of the scores were tested for significance, t-test yielded  $p=0.005$ ,  $<0.05$ .

**Table 4.23 Sense of Belonging to School in Co-Educational Schools Compared**

<b>Gender School type</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>P</b>
Boys	Co-educational day	95	4.05	0.89	2.841	195	0.005
	Co-educational boarding	102	3.68	0.98			
Girls	Co-educational day	93	4.09	0.74	6.692	189	0.000
	Co-educational boarding	98	3.25	0.97			

Girls in co-educational day schools had a sense of belonging to school mean score of 4.09 compared to 3.25 for girls in co-educational boarding schools. When the difference of the scores were tested for significance, t-test yielded  $p=0.000$ ,  $<0.05$ . It was observed that day scholars had highly significant higher sense of belonging to school scores than the boarders.

It was observed that sense of belonging to school was significantly different with co-education day schools having higher sense of belonging than the boarding counterparts. Senses of belonging to school among learners in boarding schools were compared. The differences were expected to arise from the fact that one set of the boarding schools was co-educational while the other was single gender. Senses of belonging to school mean

scores were compared between the two schools by gender. T-tests at 95% confidence limits were done to test for significance in the differences observed. Table 4.24 show the results.

**Table 4.24 Sense of Belonging in Boarding Schools Compared**

Gender	School type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	p
Boys	Single gender boarding	108	3.71	1.00	0.287	208	0.774
	Co-educational boarding	102	3.68	0.98			
Girls	Single gender boarding	96	3.62	1.04	2.515	192	0.013
	Co-educational boarding	98	3.25	0.97			

Boys in single gender boarding schools had a sense of belonging to school mean score of 3.71 compared to 3.68 for boys in co-educational boarding schools. When the difference of the scores were tested for significance, t-test yielded  $p=0.774 > 0.05$ . Girls in single gender boarding schools had a sense of belonging to school mean score of 3.62 compared to 3.25 for girls in co-educational boarding schools. When the difference of the scores were tested for significance, t-test yielded  $p=0.013, < 0.05$ . It was observed that sense of belonging to school was significantly higher for girls in single gender boarding than girls in co-educational boarding schools. Girls preferred to single gender school rather than co-educational boarding.

Influence of sense of belonging to school on levels of loneliness was determined. The way sense of belonging to school influenced loneliness was thought to vary with the type of school and gender. Pearson correlation coefficients between sense of belonging to school and loneliness were calculated for each gender. The results were as in Table 4.25.

**Table 4.25 Pearson correlation coefficients between sense of belonging to school and loneliness**

<b>School type</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
Single gender boarding	-0.317**	-0.337**
Co-educational day	-0.283**	-0.401**
Co-educational boarding	-0.216*	-0.235*

Boys correlations of sense of belonging to school to loneliness was  $r = -0.317$ ,  $r = -0.283$  and  $r = -0.216$  for single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding schools respectively. All the coefficients were highly significant except for co-educational boarding school boys. However, the strength of the relationships was weak. The negative sign indicates that an increase in sense of belonging to school resulted to a corresponding decrease in loneliness. Therefore, good sense of belonging is protective of loneliness.

For girls, the relationship between sense of belonging to school and loneliness had coefficients  $r = -0.337$ ,  $r = -0.401$  and  $r = -0.235$  for single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding schools respectively. Though the strength of the relationship is weak they are significant at 95% confidence levels. The direction of the relationship shows that increase of sense of belonging to school led to a proportionate decrease in loneliness. Thus good sense of belonging is protective against learners' loneliness. These findings are in agreement to those of Latsch (2018) and Vickers et al., 2014 who found that loneliness was significantly correlated to sense of belonging to school.

#### **4.8 Effectiveness Counselling Programmes and Correlates of Loneliness**

Fourth objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in management of loneliness among learners in secondary schools in Murang'a County. Schools in the study were single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding schools. One questions required the participants to indicate their perception on effectiveness of guidance and counselling services offered in their school. The responses expected were either effective or ineffective. The response to this question was applied to the whole sample and those who perceived guidance and counselling services as effective were compared to those who perceived the services as ineffective.

Guidance and counselling programmes targeted learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school in order to control loneliness. How effective counselling programmes improved levels of learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school would be reflected in corresponding change in loneliness levels. Learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships, sense of belonging to school and loneliness in boys and girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in public sub county single gender boarding, co-education day and co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County were compared.

##### **4.8.1 Effectiveness of Counselling Programmes and Learners' Peer Relationships in Schools.**

Learners' peer relationships were thought to vary according to gender and school type. Therefore, analysis was done by gender, school type and the participant's perception on effectiveness of guidance and counselling services. Learners' peer relationships

mean scores between learners who perceived counselling as effective and those who did not in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding secondary schools in Murang'a County were compared. Independent samples t-tests at 95% confidence limits, were conducted between learners who perceived guidance and counselling as effective scores in correlates of loneliness, against those who perceived the services as ineffective. Results were as displayed in Table 4.26.

**Table 4.26 Pearson correlation coefficients between sense of belonging to school and loneliness**

School type	Gender	GnCE	N	Mean	Std deviation	t	df	p
Single gender boarding	Boys	Yes	81	3.55	0.51	0.613	142	0.541
		No	63	3.49	0.62			
	Girls	Yes	59	3.69	0.41	2.515	97	0.014
		No	40	3.43	0.65			
Co-education day	Boys	Yes	55	3.65	0.55	0.685	72	0.495
		No	19	3.55	0.60			
	Girls	Yes	63	3.75	0.55	0.030	81	0.976
		No	20	3.75	0.58			
Co-education boarding	Boys	Yes	58	3.64	0.46	-0.295	85	0.769
		No	29	3.67	0.61			
	Girls	Yes	84	3.52	0.44	-0.377	103	0.707
		No	21	3.57	0.56			

Key: GnCE = response to question 'was guidance and counselling effective?'

Learners' peer relationships mean score was best for girls who perceived guidance and counselling services as effective in co-education day schools at 3.75, followed by single gender boarding at 3.69 and lowest in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools at 3.52. For girls who perceived guidance and counselling services

as ineffective, learners' peer relationships were best in co-education day 3.75 followed by co-education boarding at 3.57 and lowest in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools at 3.49.

Boys in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools, who perceived guidance and counselling as effective, had a learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.55 compared to 3.49 for boys who perceived counselling services as ineffective in the same category of schools. It was observed that those who viewed counselling as effective had slightly higher mean score than those who perceived counselling as ineffective. Differences in learners' peer relationships, between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in single gender boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was tested. T-test results yielded  $p=0.541 >0.05$ . A conclusion was made that there was no statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationships between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools' boys in Murang'a County.

Learners' peer relationships in girls in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools who perceived counselling services as effective was 3.69 against 3.43 for those who viewed counselling services as ineffective. It is observed that those who viewed counselling as effective had a higher mean score than those who perceived counselling as ineffective. Differences in learners' peer relationships between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not; in single gender boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test at 95% level of significance was conducted and

yielded  $p=0.014 < 0.05$ . Thus the data did not support the hypothesis. Therefore, a conclusion that there was a statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationships between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in single gender boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County is made.

In co-education day public sub county secondary schools' learners' peer relationships mean score for boys who perceived counselling services as effective was 3.65 against 3.55 for those who viewed counselling services as ineffective. It was observed that those who viewed counselling as effective had slightly higher mean score than those who perceived counselling as ineffective. Differences in learners' peer relationships between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education day public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was tested for significance. Independent samples t-test results between means cores 3.65 and 3.55 yielded  $p=0.495 > 0.05$ . The data supports the hypothesis. Thus a conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationships between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education day public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was made.

Learners' peer relationships mean scores for girls; in co-education day sub county secondary schools who perceived counselling services as effective were 3.75 against 3.75 for those who viewed counselling services as ineffective. It was observed that those who viewed counselling as effective had same mean score as those who perceived counselling as ineffective. A two tailed independent samples t-test at 95% level of

significance was done and yielded  $p=0.976 > 0.05$ . Thus, a conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationships between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education day public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was made.

In co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools, learners' peer relationships mean scores in boys who perceived counselling services as effective was 3.64 against 3.67 for those who viewed counselling services as ineffective. It was observed that those who viewed counselling as effective had slightly lower mean score than those who perceived counselling as ineffective. Differences in learners' peer relationships between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not; in co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was tested for significance. An independent samples t-test between the scores of those who perceived counselling as effective and those who did not was conducted. The test yielded  $p=0.789 > 0.05$ . Thus, a conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationships between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was made.

Peer relationships in co-education boarding public sub county secondary school girls who perceived counselling services as effective was 3.52 against 3.57 for those who viewed counselling services as ineffective. It was observed that those who viewed counselling as effective had slightly lower mean score than those who perceived counselling as ineffective. Differences in learners' peer relationships between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education

boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County were tested for significance. A two tailed independent samples t-test at 95% level of significance was done and yielded  $p=0.745 > 0.05$ .

A conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationships between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was made.

Counselling services that are holistic and effective would benefit the learners in satisfying their social needs which are intrapersonal as well as interpersonal observed by Ngeno (2014). In presence of effective counselling learners increased their self-awareness and were more likely to establish harmonious relationships with others. It is therefore reasonable to expect that learners who perceived counselling services as effective would have higher learners' peer relationships score compared to those who perceived counselling services as ineffective. These expectations were observed in the boys and girls for all the schools except those in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools. Co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools provided a unique environment where both genders share most of the school facilities and are confined in the schools for most of the time. Guidance and counselling in such schools may have aims of maintaining gender separation and thus discourage cross gender informal interactions.

Thus the observation that effective counselling results to lower learners' peer relationships scores, may be due to a bias in the counselling programmes that

discouraged peer relationships. Interference of boys on girl's behaviour was observed by Clark (2004) and Baig (2014). The studies found that boys' presence made girls to be low in self-esteem and less competitive. This view is supported by observations made in the co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools but it is not observed in the co-education day public sub county secondary schools. Grljusic and Kolak (2018) reported that learners from same neighbourhood may develop friendship due to their interactions extended beyond school times and for a long time. These facts could be responsible for observation in co-education day sub county secondary schools' learners' peer relationships. This factor could lead to co-education day public sub county secondary schools' learners having higher scores than other two school types.

Maes et al., (2017) found that intimate relationships led to intimacy loneliness as opposed to general relationship loneliness. Prosocial behaviour especially towards the opposite gender is masked by the social stereotyping that could generate a different scenario from the single gender schools, where cross gender romance cannot be socially possible. De Minzi and Sacchi (2004) observed that hetero-sexual relationships are valued among youth for prestige and not necessarily intimacy. In schools where both boys and girls study together, the aspect of cross gender relationships can influence teacher – learner relationship as well as learners' peer relationships. Cross gender informal interactions were not allowed in co-education schools especially the boarding public sub county where the two genders spent time in cross proximity.

#### **4.8.2 Effective Counselling and Teacher-Learner Relationships**

This section evaluates how perception of guidance and counselling programmes impacts on teacher-learner relationships in boys and girls in single gender boarding, co-

education day and co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. Secondly, difference in teacher-learner relationships in boys and girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in single gender boarding, co-education day and co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County were tested for significance.

Teacher-learner relationships mean scores were calculated for school types and gender and analysed separately for learners who perceived guidance and counselling as effective and those who did not. The mean scores between those who perceived guidance and counselling as effective and those who did not were further analysed using independent samples t-test to determine whether the scores differed significantly. Results were as in Table 4.27.

From Table 4.27 it is observed that boys in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools, who perceived counselling services as effective had a teacher-learner relationships' score of 3.94 against 3.53 for those who viewed counselling service as ineffective in the same category. Differences in teacher-learner relationships between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not; in single gender boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County were tested for significance. A two tailed test at 95% level of significance yielded  $p=0.005 < 0.05$ . A conclusion that there was statistically highly significant difference in teacher-learner relationships between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in single gender boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was reached.

**Table 4.27 Effectiveness of Counselling and Teacher-Learner Relationships**

School type	Gender	GnCE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	p
Single gender	Boys	Yes	81	3.94	0.76	2.838	142	0.005
		No	63	3.53	1.00			
Boarding	Girls	Yes	59	4.22	0.67	3.373	97	0.001
		No	40	3.57	1.26			
Co-education day	Boys	Yes	55	3.99	0.63	-0.029	72	0.977
		No	19	3.99	0.57			
co-education boarding	Girls	Yes	63	4.18	0.61	1.346	81	0.182
		No	20	3.95	0.79			
co-education boarding	Boys	Yes	58	4.08	0.68	0.420	85	0.676
		No	29	4.01	0.68			
co-education boarding	Girls	Yes	84	3.66	0.80	1.367	103	0.175
		No	21	3.39	0.84			

Key: GnCE = response to question ‘was guidance and counselling effective?’

Girls in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools, who perceived counselling services as effective had a teacher-learner relationships’ mean score of 4.22 against 3.57 for girls who viewed counselling service as ineffective. Differences in teacher-learner relationships between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not; in single gender boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang’a County were tested for significance. A two tailed independent samples t-test at 95% level of significance was conducted and yielded  $p=0.001 < 0.05$ . Thus the data led to conclusion that, there was statistically highly significant difference in teacher-learner relationships between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not; in single gender boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang’a County was made.

In Table 4.27 it is observed that boys in co-education day public sub county secondary schools, who perceived counselling services as effective had a teacher-learner relationships' mean score of 3.99 which was the same as for those who viewed counselling service as ineffective. There were no differences in teacher-learner relationships scores between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education day school learners in Murang'a County. Conclusion made, that there was no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationships between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education public day sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County.

Girls, in co-education day public sub county secondary schools, who perceived counselling services as effective, had a teacher-learner relationships' score of 4.18 against 3.95 for those who viewed counselling service as ineffective. Differences in teacher-learner relationships between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education day public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County were tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test at 95% level of significance was conducted between teacher-learner relationships scores for girls who perceived counselling as effective and those who did not. The test yielded  $p=0.182, > 0.05$ . Thus a conclusion that, that there was no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationships between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education day public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was made.

From Table 4.27 it was observed that boys, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools, who perceived counselling services as effective had a teacher-learner relationships mean score of 4.08 against 4.01 for those who viewed counselling service as ineffective. It was observed that those who viewed counselling services as effective had better scores than those who did not. Differences in teacher-learner relationships mean scores, between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test between boys who perceived counselling services as effective and those who did not, was conducted at 95% level of significance. The test yielded  $p=0.677 > 0.05$ . Thus the data supported the hypothesis. Therefore, a conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationships between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County.

Girls in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools, who perceived counselling services as effective had a teacher-learner relationships' score of 3.66 against 3.39 for those who viewed counselling service as ineffective. It was observed that those who viewed counselling services as effective had better scores than those who did not.

Differences in teacher-learner relationships mean scores, between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test at 95% level of significance was conducted between girls' who perceived counselling as effective teacher-learner relationships scores and

those who did not. The test yielded  $p=0.193 > 0.05$ . Thus, a conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in teacher-learner relationships between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County made.

Palmonari, Pombeni and Kirchler (1989) proposed a list of developmental tasks that a learner may have to negotiate. Among the list was the importance to be independent and autonomous involving relationships with family and other adults including teachers. Raufelder et al., (2013) underlined that schools are living places for students as well as teachers and are important social contexts for learning and development and that teachers acted as role models and offered non-familial adult support. Spilt, Pol, Leflot, Onghena and Colpin (2014) recognized that children's social classroom experiences were impacting on learners as well as teachers. However, only socially competent teachers can effectively nurture and develop relationships that are admirable and acting as role models. While much expectation can be heaped on teachers, learners too exercise caution and warmth towards teachers through obedience. Effective counselling would benefit the learners by increasing their self-knowledge and improve their capacity to cope with relationships' challenges (Ngeno, 2014). This is resounded by Salgong et al., (2016) while outlining the main goal of guidance and counselling as meant to help people understand themselves in order to deal with life experiences in a healthy manner, by being able to recognize the factors that cause problems and look for appropriate methods of resolving or avoiding the situations that may lead to unhealthy lifestyles. It is therefore expected that effective counselling programmes would result to better teacher-learner relationships. This position is supported by the data in

Table 4.27 where it is observed that learners who perceived counselling as effective had teacher-learner relationships scores than those learners who perceived counselling services as ineffective. The single gender boarding schools stands out as unique case as the differences in teacher-learner relationships scores were significant. It implies that in this category of school teachers' impacted highly on the learners. May be the guidance counselling programmes were better planned around single gender needs than would be otherwise in co-education schools.

#### **4.8.3 Effective Counselling and Sense of Belonging to School**

In this section, learners' school sense of belonging to school was assessed how it is influenced by learners' perception on effectiveness of counselling services offered in the schools. It was predicted that sense of belonging to school would vary by school type and gender. Thus, the analysis was done by gender and school type. Differences in sense of belonging to school scores between learners who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, single gender boarding, co-education day public sub county secondary and co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County were tested. Results were as in Table 4.28. Sense of belonging to school in boys, in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools, who perceived counselling services as effective was 3.82 against 3.57 for those who viewed counselling services as ineffective (Table 4.28). It was observed that those who viewed counselling as effective had slightly higher mean score than those who perceived counselling as ineffective.

**Table 4. 28 Sense of Belonging to Schools and Perception on Counselling.**

School type	Gender	GnCE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	P
Single gender boarding	Boys	Yes	62	3.82	0.95	1.285	106	0.201
		No	46	3.57	1.04			
	Girls	Yes	56	3.95	0.76	4.047	94	0.000
		No	40	3.14	1.20			
Co-educational day	Boys	Yes	69	4.12	0.82	1.222	93	0.225
		No	26	3.87	1.04			
	Girls	Yes	73	4.00	0.69	-2.135	91	0.035
		No	20	4.40	0.85			
Co-educational boarding	Boys	Yes	63	3.69	0.98	.245	100	0.807
		No	39	3.64	0.99			
	Girls	Yes	77	3.35	0.91	1.912	96	0.059
		No	21	2.90	1.11			

Key: GnCE = response to question ‘was guidance and counselling effective?’

Difference in sense of belonging to school mean scores, between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in single gender boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang’a County was tested. Independent samples t-test at 95% confidence level, was conducted between boys’ sense of belonging to school for those who perceived counselling as effective and those who did not. The test yielded  $p=0.201 >0.05$ . The data supported the conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in single gender boarding public sub county public sub county secondary schools’ learners in Murang’a County.

Girls in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools, who perceived counselling services as effective had a sense of belonging to school mean score of 3.95

against 3.14 for those who viewed counselling service as ineffective. Differences in sense of belonging to school mean scores between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not; in single gender boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was tested. A two tailed independent samples t-test at 95% level of significance was conducted between sense of belonging to school scores for girls who perceived counselling as effective and those who did not. The test yielded  $p=0.000 < 0.05$ . A conclusion that there was a statistically highly significant difference in sense of belonging to school between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in single gender boarding public sub county secondary school girls in Murang'a County made.

Sense of belonging to school mean score for boys in co-education day public sub county secondary schools, who perceived counselling services as effective was 4.12 against 3.87 for those who viewed counselling services as ineffective. It was observed that those who viewed counselling as effective had slightly higher mean score than those who perceived counselling as ineffective.

Differences in sense of belonging to school scores, between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education day secondary school learners in Murang'a County was tested for significance. Independent samples t-test was conducted at 95% confidence limits between girls who perceived counselling as effective sense of belonging to school scores and those who perceived counselling as ineffective. The t-test results yielded  $p=0.225 > 0.05$ . Therefore, a conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those

who did not, in co-education day public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was made.

Girls who perceived counselling services as effective in co-education day public sub county secondary schools, had a sense of belonging to school mean score of 4.00 against 4.40 for those who viewed counselling service as ineffective. It was observed that girls who viewed counselling services as effective had lower scores than those who did not. Difference in sense of belonging to school scores between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education day school learners in Murang'a County was tested for significance. A two tailed independent samples t-test test at 95% level of significance was conducted between girls who perceived counselling services as effective sense of belonging to school and those who did not. The test yielded  $p=0.035 < 0.05$ . Thus the data shows that the difference is significant at 95% confidence limit. Therefore, a conclusion that there was a statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education day school learners in Murang'a County was made.

Sense of belonging to school in boys, who perceived counselling services as effective in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools, was 3.69 against 3.64 for those who viewed counselling services as ineffective. It was observed that those who viewed counselling as effective had slightly higher mean score than those who perceived counselling as ineffective. Differences in sense of belonging to school between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not; in co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County were tested for significance.

Independent samples t-test was conducted at 95% confidence limits between boys who perceived counselling as effective sense of belonging to school scores and those who perceived counselling as ineffective. The t-test results yielded  $p=0.807 >0.05$ . A conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school between boys who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in

Co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was made. Girls, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools who perceived counselling services as effective, had a sense of belonging to school mean score of 3.35 against 2.90 for those who viewed counselling service as ineffective. It was observed that girls who perceived counselling services as effective had higher scores than those who perceived counselling services as ineffective. Differences in sense of belonging to school between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County was tested for significance. Independent samples t-test was conducted at 95% confidence limits between girls who perceived counselling as effective sense of belonging to school scores and those who perceived counselling as ineffective. The t-test results yielded  $p=0.059 >0.05$ . Thus it was concluded that there was no statistically significant difference in sense of belonging to school between girls who perceived counselling programmes as effective and those who did not, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary school learners in Murang'a County.

#### 4.8.4 Loneliness among Counsellors

Peer counsellors are special in school guidance and counselling programmes because they are the agents of change. They are more advantaged than teachers to impact on other learners as they are mentally and physically close to the learners than teachers. The peer counsellors are the first beneficiaries of the training and assignment to the role. To investigate these benefits, learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships, sense of belonging to school and loneliness were calculated for peer counsellors and compared to non-peer counsellor in single gender boarding, co-education day and co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools. Independent sample t-tests were conducted at 95% level of significance between peer counsellors and non-peer counsellors' learners peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships, sense of belonging to school and loneliness scores.

Learners' peer relationships mean score for learners in single gender boarding, co-education day and co-education boarding schools were calculated and t-test carried out to determine whether observed differences in learners' peer relationships between Peer and non-Peer counsellor was significant. Results were as in Table 4.29. In single gender boarding schools' boys, there were 30 peer counsellors out of 144 learners, while girls' in the same category there were 44 counsellors serving 99 learners. This translates to 20.8% of learners being peer counsellors for boys and 44.4% girls being peer counsellors.

**Table 4. 29 Peer and non-Peer counsellors' learners' Peer relationships scores compared**

School type	Gender Pc	N	Mean	Std deviation	t	Df	p
	Boys Yes	23	3.66	0.38	1.211	106	0.229

Single gender boarding	Girls	No	85	3.49	0.61			
		Yes	44	3.48	0.58	-1.717	94	0.089
Co-educational day	Boys	No	52	3.67	0.49			
		Yes	25	3.59	0.61	-0.106	93	0.916
Co-educational day	Girls	No	70	3.61	0.53			
		Yes	36	3.68	0.50	-0.623	91	0.535
Co-educational boarding	Boys	No	57	3.75	0.57			
		Yes	24	3.62	0.53	-0.114	36	0.910
Co-educational boarding	Girls	No	78	3.63	0.51			
		Yes	36	3.53	0.50	-0.187	96	0.852
		No	62	3.54	0.46			

In co-education day schools there were 19 out of 74 boys (25.7%) who were peer counsellors, compared to 33 out of 83 girls (39.8%) in the same category. For co-education boarding schools 23 boys out of 87 (26.4%) were peer counsellors compared to 39 out 105(37.1%) girls in the same category. It was observed that girls regardless of school type were provided with a high percentage of peer counsellors than boys in the corresponding school category.

In single gender boarding schools, boys who were peer counsellors had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.57 compared to 3.51 of the non-peer counsellors. Boys, who were peer counsellors in co-education day schools, had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.68 against 3.61 for non-peer counsellors. Boys, who were peer counsellors in co-education boarding schools, had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.64 against 3.65 for non-peer counsellors. It was observed that boys who were peer counsellors had higher learners' peer relationships than non-peer counsellors. However, t-tests on the differences did not reveal any statistically significant difference between peer and non-Peer learners in any of the school types as  $p > 0.05$  in all the cases.

Girls who were peer counsellors in single gender boarding schools had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.48 compared to 3.67 for non-peer counsellors.

Similarly, girls who were peer counsellors in co-education day schools had learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.68 compared to 3.79 for non-peer counsellors. Girls who were peer and non-peer counsellors in co-education boarding schools had same learners' peer relationships mean score of 3.53. It is observed that serving peer counsellors generally had higher learners' peer relationships score than non-counsellors. On testing for significance of the differences, there were no statistically significant differences in the learners' peer relationships between peer counsellors and non-Peer counsellors for girls as  $p > 0.05$  in all the schools

Teacher-learner relationships mean scores for learners in single gender boarding, co-education day and co-education boarding schools were calculated and t-test carried out to determine whether observed differences in teacher-learner relationships between Peer and non-Peer counsellor was significant. Table 4.30 shows the results.

**Table 4. 30 Teacher-Learner Relationships among Counsellors**

School type	Gender	Pc	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	p
Single gender boarding	Boys	Yes	23	4.11	0.71	1.767	106	0.080
		No	85	3.75	0.91			
	Girls	Yes	44	3.69	1.20			
		No	52	4.18	0.75			
Co-educational day	Boys	Yes	25	4.07	0.52	1.129	93	0.262
		No	70	3.89	0.74			
	Girls	Yes	36	4.21	0.54			

Co-educational boarding	Boys	No	57	4.00	0.80	1.397	100	0.165
		Yes	24	4.13	0.60			
	Girls	No	78	3.89	0.79	1.752	96	0.083
		Yes	36	3.79	0.77			
		No	62	3.50	0.78			

It was observed that it was only in single gender boarding school boys that peer counsellors benefited from serving by gaining in teacher –learner relationships. However, girls lost favour with teachers when they served as peer counsellors.

Sense of belonging to school mean scores for learners in single gender boarding, co-education day and co-education boarding schools were calculated and t-test carried out to determine whether observed differences in sense of belonging to school between Peer and non-Peer counsellor was significant. Table 4.31 shows the results.

**Table 4.31 Sense of belonging to school among counsellors**

School type	Gender	Pc	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	p
Single gender boarding	Boys	Yes	23	3.93	0.89	1.146	106	0.254
		No	85	3.66	1.02			
	Girls	Yes	44	3.30	1.17	-2.809	94	0.006
		No	52	3.88	0.85			
Co-educational day	Boys	Yes	25	4.35	0.76	1.965	93	0.052
		No	70	3.95	0.91			
	Girls	Yes	36	4.10	0.58	0.032	91	0.975
		No	57	4.09	0.83			

Co-educational boarding	Boys	Yes	24	3.57	0.97	-0.590	100	0.556
		No	78	3.71	0.99			
	Girls	Yes	36	3.29	1.04	0.321	96	0.749
		No	62	3.23	0.94			

Boys, who were peer counsellors, in single gender boarding schools had sense of belonging to school score of 3.93 against 3.66 for non-peer counsellors. In co-education day schools, boys who were peer counsellors had sense of belonging to school mean score of 4.35 against 3.95 for non-peer counsellors.

In co-education boarding schools, boys who were peer counsellors had sense of belonging to school mean score of 3.57 against 3.71 for non-peer counsellors. It is observed that peer counsellors had better scores than non-peer counsellors in single gender boarding and in coeducation day schools. However, counsellors had lower scores than non-counsellors in coeducation boarding schools.

Girls, who were peer counsellors, in single gender boarding schools had sense of belonging to school score of 3.30 against 3.88 for non-peer counsellors. In coeducation day schools, girls who were peer counsellors had sense of belonging to school mean score of 4.10 against 4.09 for non-peer counsellors.

In coeducation boarding schools, boys who were peer counsellors had sense of belonging to school mean score of 3.29 against 3.23 for non-peer counsellors. It is observed that girls who were peer counsellors had better sense of belonging to school than non-counsellors, in single gender boarding and in coeducation days but not in coeducation boarding schools. However, it was only in single gender boarding schools' girls where the difference was statistically highly significant ( $p=0.006<0.01$ ).

Loneliness mean scores for learners in single gender boarding, co-education day and co-education boarding schools were calculated and t-test carried out to determine whether observed differences in loneliness between Peer and non-Peer counsellor was significant.

Table 4.32 shows the results.

**Table 4.32 Loneliness among counsellors by gender and school type**

School type	Gender	Peer counsellor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	p
Single gender boarding	Boys Loneliness	Yes	23	2.72	0.72	-0.433	106	0.666
		No	85	2.79	0.64			
	Girls Loneliness	Yes	44	3.05	0.94	1.376	94	0.172
		No	52	2.82	0.71			
Co-educational day	Boys Loneliness	Yes	25	2.93	0.71	0.442	93	0.659
		No	70	2.85	0.80			
	Girls Loneliness	Yes	36	2.91	0.67	0.418	91	0.677
		No	57	2.84	0.81			
Co-educational boarding	Boys Loneliness	Yes	24	2.78	0.55	-0.238	100	0.812
		No	78	2.82	0.67			
	Girls Loneliness	Yes	36	2.94	0.84	-0.754	96	0.453
		No	62	3.07	0.80			

Boys in single gender boarding schools who were peer counsellors had loneliness mean score of 2.72 compared to 2.79 for non-Peer counsellors. In coeducation day school boys who were peer counsellors had loneliness mean score of 2.93 compared to 2.85 for non-Peer counsellors. In coeducation boarding schools peer counsellors had 2.78 and non-Peer counsellor had loneliness mean score of 2.82. When difference between peer counsellors and non-peer counsellors' loneliness scores, were tested for significance.

It was observed that there was no difference in loneliness levels between boys who served as peer counsellors and those who did not. Girls in single gender boarding

schools who were peer counsellors had loneliness mean score of 3.05 compared to 2.82 for non-Peer counsellors. In coeducation day school boys who were peer counsellors had loneliness mean score of 2.91 compared to 2.84 for non-Peer counsellors. In co-education boarding schools peer counsellors had a loneliness mean score of 2.94 compared to 3.07 for non-peer counsellors. For girls' peer and non-peer counsellors had no significant differences in loneliness levels.

There was no lowering of loneliness in serving as peer counsellor. This is contrary to Mattanah et al., (2012) who found that mentorship programmes for learners resulted to low level of loneliness. It is also argued that, those learners who are less lonely are better placed to utilize social support resources and benefit in various ways including improved academic performance. Also similar expectations were indicated by Egbochuku and Aihie (2018) study that positive results of peer counselling include better communication skills, increased confidence, and better problem solving skills. Further, trained peer counsellors benefit from increased self-awareness, self-esteem is high, confidence and increased empathy. Kraus and Cleveland (2016) also pointed to the benefits of peer counsellors as increased leadership skills, confidence, collaboration skills, connectedness to peers, and academic achievement. Despite benefits being many, serving as peer counsellor doesn't alleviate learners' level of loneliness.

#### **4.8.5 Learners' Peer Relationships, Determine Level of Loneliness**

This section investigates the power of learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships, sense of belonging to school to determine levels of loneliness in boys and girls in public sub county single gender boarding, co-education day and co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. Learners' peer relationships', teacher-learner relationships' and sense of belonging to schools' scores

were regressed against loneliness scores for learners who perceived counselling services and those who did not. The change statistics for learners perceiving counselling programmes as effective and those who viewed counselling services as ineffective were calculated. R<sup>2</sup> change (expressed as a percentage) was used in estimating the power of the variable to determine loneliness in the school and by gender.

Participants' learners' peer relationships scores were regressed against their loneliness scores. The participants were separated into two groups; those who perceived counselling services as effective and those who did not. R<sup>2</sup> values for the two groups were compared to estimate the impact of effective counselling. Results for learners' peer relationships power to determine loneliness in the schools by gender are in Table 4.33.

**Table 4.33 Counselling and Learners' Peer Relationships' Power to Determine Loneliness.**

School type	Gender	Learners who perceived counselling as effective			Learners who perceived counselling as ineffective		
		R	R Square	R <sup>2</sup> as a %	R	R Square	R <sup>2</sup> as a %
Single boarding	Boys	0.311	0.097	9.7	0.420	0.176	17.6
	Girls	0.255	0.065	6.5	0.481	0.232	23.2
Co-education day	Boys	0.209	0.043	4.3	0.062	0.004	0.4
	Girls	0.403	0.162	16.2	0.365	0.133	13.3
Co-education boarding	Boys	0.293	0.086	8.6	0.324	0.105	10.5
	Girls	0.112	0.013	1.3	0.234	0.055	5.5

It is observed that coefficient of determination of learners' peer relationships on loneliness for boys in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a county, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.097$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.176$ . This means that among the boys who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, learners' peer relationships would determine 9.7 % of loneliness compared to 17.6 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective. It was observed that factor of determination of learners' peer relationships on loneliness for girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.065$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.232$ . This means that among the girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, learners' peer relationships would determine 6.5 % of loneliness compared to 23.2 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective.

It is observed that coefficient of determination of learners' peer relationships on loneliness for boys who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.043$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.004$ . This means that among the boys who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, learners' peer relationships would determine 4.3 % of loneliness compared to 0.4 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective. It is observed that factor of determination of learners' peer relationships on loneliness for girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.162$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.133$ . This means that among the boys who

perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, learners' peer relationships would determine 16.2 % of loneliness compared to 13.3 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective.

It is observed that factor of determination of learners' peer relationships on loneliness for boys in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a county, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.086$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.105$ . This means that among the boys who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, learners' peer relationships would determine 8.6 % of loneliness compared to 10.5 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective. For girls, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a county, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, factor of determination of learners' peer relationships on loneliness was  $R^2=0.013$ , against  $R^2=0.055$  for those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective. This means that among the girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, learners' peer relationships would determine 4.3 % of loneliness compared to 5.5 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective.

Boys in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools got less of peer relationships determining loneliness levels through counselling by a shift from 17.6% of ineffective counselling to 9.7% in an effective counselling environment. This decline reflects positive impact of effective counselling on peer relationships in the single gender schools for boys. In the same category of schools, girls would gain by a shift of

significance of peer relationships power to determine loneliness from ineffective counselling 23.2% to 6.5% for effective counselling environment.

These observations show that peer relationships are important determinants of loneliness in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools and counselling can reduce loneliness by a margin of 7.9% for boys and 16.7% for girls.

Boys in co-education day schools got more of peer relationships determining loneliness level through counselling by a shift from 0.4% of ineffective counselling to 4.3% in an effective counselling environment. This change reflects negative impact of effective counselling on peer relationships on boys in co-education day schools. In the same category of schools, girls lost by a shift of significance of peer relationships power to determine loneliness from ineffective counselling 13.3% to 16.2% for effective counselling environment. These observations show that peer relationships are important determinants of loneliness in co-education day schools and counselling can influence loneliness. Boys in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools got more of peer relationships determining loneliness level through counselling by a shift from 10.5% of ineffective counselling to 8.6% in an effective counselling environment. This change reflects negative impact of effective counselling on peer relationships on boys in co-education day schools. In the same category of schools, girls gained by a shift of significance of peer relationships power to determine loneliness from ineffective counselling 5.5% to 1.3% for effective counselling environment.

These observations show that peer relationships are important determinants of loneliness in co-education day schools and counselling can influence loneliness. The apparent increase in peer relationships to determine loneliness in co-education schools for effective counselling environment is surprising.

We would expect counselling to reduce impact of peer relationships which is not the case. This may be due to guidance and counselling programmes and inputs that discourage cross gender interaction, may be based on fear of cross gender interferences on the core functions of the school. Fear of students coupling and ensuing distraction from academic endeavours is real in co-education institutions. Alternatively, guidance would be heavily used to enforce discipline instead of helping the learners to cope. The negative gain achieved by counselling point to the non-holistic nature of counselling programmes (Ngeno, 2014; Hearne et al., 2017). The girls would were responding may be to the guidance and counselling programmes that discouraged their desire to extend caring services to boys at school (a practice Table at home) as noted by Clark (2004).

#### 4.8.6 Teacher-learner relationships' coefficient of determination

Participants' teacher-relationships scores were regressed against their loneliness scores. The participants were separated into two groups; those who perceived counselling services as effective and those who did not. R<sup>2</sup> values for the two groups were compared to estimate the impact of effective counselling. Results for teacher-learner relationships power to determine loneliness in the schools by gender are in Table 4.34.

**Table 4.34 Teacher-Learners Relationships' Coefficient of Determination on Loneliness**

School type	Gender	Learners perceiving counselling as effective			Learners perceiving counselling as ineffective		
		r	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> as a %	r	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> as a %
Single gender boarding	Boys	0.125	0.016	1.6	0.453	0.206	20.6
	Girls	0.271	0.073	7.3	0.499	0.249	24.9
Co-education day	Boys	0.054	0.003	0.3	0.300	0.090	9.0
	Girls	0.277	0.077	7.7	0.211	0.044	4.4

Co-education	Boys	0.157	0.025	2.5	0.189	0.036	3.6
boarding	Girls	0.292	0.085	8.5	0.247	0.061	6.1

It is observed that factor of determination of teacher-learner relationships on loneliness for boys in single gender boarding secondary schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.016$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.206$ . This means that among the boys who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, teacher-learner relationships would determine 1.6 % of loneliness compared to 20.6 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective.

It was observed that factor of determination of learners' peer relationships on loneliness for girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.073$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.249$ . This means that among the girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, teacher-learner relationships would determine 7.3 % of loneliness compared to 24.9 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective. It was observed that factor of determination of teacher-learner relationships on loneliness for boys in co-education day public sub county secondary schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.003$

While in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.090$ . This means that among the boys who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, teacher-learner relationships would determine 0.3 % of loneliness compared to 9.0 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective. It is observed that factor of determination of learners' peer relationships on

loneliness for girls, in co-education day public sub county secondary schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.077$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.044$ . This means that among the girls in co-education day public sub county secondary schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, teacher-learner relationships would determine 7.7 % of loneliness compared to 4.4 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective.

It was observed that factor of determination of teacher-learner relationships on loneliness for boys, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.025$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.036$ . This means that among the boys who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, teacher-learner relationships would determine 2.5 % of loneliness compared to 3.6 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective.

It is observed that factor of determination of learners' peer relationships on loneliness for girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.085$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.061$ . This means that among the boys who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, teacher-learner relationships would determine 8.5 % of loneliness compared to 6.1 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective.

Boys in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools got less of teacher-learner relationships determining loneliness levels through counselling by a shift from 20.6 % of ineffective counselling to 1.6 % in an effective counselling environment. This decline reflects positive impact of effective counselling on teacher-learner relationships in the single gender schools for boys.

In the same category of schools, girls would gain by a shift of significance of teacher-learner relationships power to determine loneliness from ineffective counselling 24.9 % to 7.3 % in an effective counselling environment. These observations show that teacher-learner relationships are important determinants of loneliness in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools and counselling can reduce loneliness by a margin of 19 % for boys and 17.6 % for girls. Boys in co-education day schools got more of teacher-learner relationships determining loneliness level through counselling by a shift from 9.0 % of ineffective counselling to 0.3% in an effective counselling environment. This change reflects positive impact of an effective counselling on teacher-learner relationships on boys in co-education day schools. In the same category of schools, girls lost by a shift of significance of teacher-learner relationships power to determine loneliness from an ineffective counselling 7.7 % to 4.4% for an effective counselling environment.

These observations show that teacher-learner relationships are important determinants of loneliness in co-education day schools and counselling can influence loneliness through this dimension of relationship. Boys in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools got more of teacher-learner relationships determining loneliness level through counselling by a shift from 3.6 % of ineffective counselling to 2.5 % in an effective counselling environment. In the same category of schools, girls

gained negatively by a shift of significance of teacher-learner relationships power to determine loneliness from ineffective counselling of 6.1% to 1.3% for effective counselling environment.

It is observed that girls in co-education schools did not gain from effective counselling but rather became lonelier. This contradicts observation by Penner and Wallin (2012) that association with even one teacher can transform students' lives. The counselling programmes must have alienated girls from teachers. May be the presence of boys made teachers less accessible and this was not addressed through the counselling programmes. As girls tried to compete for teachers' attention, their behaviour could be misinterpreted and rebuked. For example, Clark (2004) reported that a girl may use a perfume or walk style to draw attention, these behaviours would not be tolerated both by teachers and peer counsellors. Guidance and counselling programmes could be geared towards competition girls against boys and this may go against the norm of passiveness adopted by girls just to be popular with the boys as girls' behaviour tally with social expectations. Community interference is indicated on girls' relationships with teachers in co-education day schools. It seems the schools contradict the community because counselling brings more loneliness instead of relief. The schools may guide on teacher-relations where the teacher enjoys controls over the relationship while the community experience is that girls should be wary of men predators.

#### **4.8.7 Sense of belonging to school's coefficient of determination**

Participants' sense of belonging to school scores was regressed against their loneliness scores. The participants were separated into two groups; those who perceived counselling services as effective and those who did not.  $R^2$  values for the two groups

were compared to estimate the impact of effective counselling. Results for sense of belonging to school power to determine loneliness in the schools by gender are in Table 4.35.

**Table 4.35 Sense of belonging to schools' coefficient of determination on loneliness**

School type	Gender	Learners perceiving counselling as effective			Learners perceiving counselling as ineffective		
		r	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> as a %	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> as a %
Single gender boarding	Boys	0.377	0.142	14.20	0.295	0.087	8.70
	Girls	0.270	0.073	7.30	0.533	0.284	28.40
Co-education day	Boys	0.182	0.033	3.30	0.431	0.186	18.60
	Girls	0.303	0.092	9.20	0.587	0.344	34.40
Co-education boarding	Boys	0.210	0.044	4.40	0.170	0.029	2.90
	Girls	0.217	0.047	4.70	0.301	0.091	9.10

It was observed that coefficient of determination of sense of belonging to school on loneliness for boys, in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.142$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.087$ . This means that for the boys who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, sense of belonging to school would determine 14.20 % of loneliness

compared to 8.70 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective.

It was observed that factor of determination of sense of belonging to school on loneliness for girls, in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.073$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective had a similar value of  $R^2=0.284$ . This means that among the girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, sense of belonging to school would determine 7.30 % of loneliness while in those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective it would determine 28.40%.

It was observed that coefficient of determination of sense of belonging to school on loneliness for boys, in co-education day public sub county secondary schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.033$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.186$ . This means that for the boys who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, sense of belonging to school would determine 3.30 % of loneliness compared to 18.60 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective. It was observed that factor of determination of sense of belonging to school on loneliness for girls, in co-education day public sub county secondary schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.092$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective had a similar value of  $R^2=0.344$ . This means that among the girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, sense of belonging to school would determine 9.20% of loneliness while in those who

perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective it would determine 34.40%.

An observation was made that coefficient of determination of sense of belonging to school on loneliness for boys, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.044$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective was  $R^2=0.029$ . This means that for the boys who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, sense of belonging to school would determine 4.40 % of loneliness compared to 2.90 % for those who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective. It is observed that factor of determination of sense of belonging to school on loneliness for girls, in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools, who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, was  $R^2=0.047$  while in those who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective had a similar value of  $R^2=0.091$ . This means that among the girls who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as effective, sense of belonging to school would determine 4.70 % of loneliness just like who perceived guidance and counselling programmes as ineffective 9.10%

Boys in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools got more of sense of belonging to school determining loneliness levels through counselling by a shift from 8.7% of ineffective counselling to 14.2 % in an effective counselling environment. This increase reflects negative impact of effective counselling on sense of belonging to school in the single gender schools for boys. In the same category of schools, girls would gain by a shift of significance of sense of belonging to school power to determine

loneliness from ineffective counselling's 28.4% to 7.3% in an effective counselling environment. These observations show that sense of belonging to school is a significant determinant of loneliness in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools and counselling can reduce loneliness by a margin of 21.2% for girls and an increase by 5.5% for boys in single gender secondary schools.

Boys in co-education day schools got less of sense of belonging to school determining loneliness level through counselling by a shift from 18.6% in ineffective counselling to 3.3% in an effective counselling environment. This change reflects positive impact of effective counselling on sense of belonging to school on boys in co-education day schools. In the same category of schools, girls gained by a shift of significance of sense of belonging to school power to determine loneliness from ineffective counselling 34.4% to 9.2% in an effective counselling environment. These observations show that sense of belonging to school is an important determinant of loneliness in co-education day schools and counselling can influence loneliness.

Boys in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools got more of sense of belonging to school determining loneliness level through counselling by a shift from 2.9% of ineffective counselling to 4.4% in an effective counselling environment. This change reflects negative impact of effective counselling on sense of belonging to school on boys in co-education day schools. In the same category of schools, girls gained by a shift of significance of sense of belonging to school power to determine loneliness decline from ineffective counselling 9.1% to 4.7% in an effective counselling environment.

We observe that boys in single gender and co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools had reverse gain when counselling was effective. These are boys in boarding public sub county secondary schools.

May be the restricted environment is already too hard on the boys and guidance and counselling is perceived as another burden of care. However, there is a possibility that boys' needs for belonging to the schools were not understood and addressed. The boys were likely to have a male teacher as a counsellor and one of the problems associated to that was insensitivity and inaccuracy to assess counselling needs by teachers reported by Ngeno and Shikuku (2014).

#### **4.8.8 Total loneliness explained by correlates of loneliness and counselling**

This study sought to determine the extent to which learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationship and sense of belonging to school determined the level of loneliness in various types of schools. Other factors that determine loneliness and are not included in this study were allocated the deficit (%) to make a full determination of loneliness (100%). This information would assist in planning of counselling programmes in alleviating loneliness. To achieve this, coefficients of determination of learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationship and sense of belonging to school were calculated and expressed as percentages for each school type and gender. Results are in Table 4.36.

**Table 4.36 Coefficients of determination of correlates of loneliness**

School type	Gender	% contribution to loneliness for Learners who perceived counselling as effective				% contribution to loneliness for Learners who perceived counselling as ineffective			
		SBS	TLR	LP	Other factors	SBS	TLR	LP	Other factors

Key: SBS= sense of belonging to school TLR= teacher- learner relationships	Single gender boarding	Boys	14.2	1.6	9.7	74.5	8.7	20.6	17.	53.1
		Girls	7.3	7.3	6.5	78.9	28.4	24.9	23.	23.5
LPR= learners' peer relationships	Co- education day	Boys	3.3	0.3	4.3	92.1	18.6	9.0	0.4	72.0
		Girls	9.2	7.7	16.2	66.9	34.4	4.4	13.	47.9
LPR= learners' peer relationships	Co- education boarding	Boys	4.4	2.5	8.6	84.5	2.9	3.6	10.	83.0
		Girls	4.7	8.5	1.3	85.5	9.1	6.1	5.5	79.3

relationships LPR= learners' peer relationships

For boys in the single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools, teacher-learner relationships are first followed by learners' peer relationships and lastly sense of belonging to school in determining loneliness. Learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationship and sense of belonging determine 46.9% of loneliness leaving other factors that were not included in this study to control 53.1% of loneliness. For girls in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools sense of belonging to school is leading followed by teacher-learner relationships and lastly learners' peer relationships in determining levels of girls' loneliness. These factors account for 76.5% and leave only 23.5% of loneliness to be determined by other factors. Thus if peer relationships, teacher-learner relationship and sense of belonging were well addressed we would greatly reduce loneliness. We note that learners in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools' loneliness were plastic to conditions of peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging.

However, these factors were more important in girls' loneliness than boys.

In co-education day school learners, boys' schools sense of belonging to school is leading followed by learners' peer relationships and lastly teacher-learner relationships in determining levels of loneliness. These three factors determine 68.9% of loneliness leaving 31.1% to other factors not included in the study. Girls in co-education day schools had sense of belonging to school followed by teacher-learner relationships and lastly learners' peer relationships determining in that order. These three factors only determined 23.4% leaving 76.6 to others that are not included in this study. We note that loneliness in girls in co-education day schools was greatly determined by outside of school relationships. May be other factors could include peer relationships in the home and neighbourhood as observed by Vickers et al., (2014).

Family backgrounds can be a major concern for the day scholars as they have to experiences the families daily, liking it or not. This informs the teacher counsellor to look for those factors and address them adequately for psychological wellness of the girls. However, issues related to sense of belonging would provide some relief.

For co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools loneliness in boys was determined by learner' peer relationships (10.5%), teacher-learner relationships (3.6%) and sense of belonging to school (2.9%) and other factors not included in this study (83%). It is observed that about two third of the loneliness is determined by other factors.

For co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools, loneliness in girls was determined by learner' peer relationships (5.5%), teacher-learner relationships (6.1%) and sense of belonging to school (9.1%) and other factors not included in this study (79.3%). It is observed that about two third of the loneliness is determined by other factors. It is observed that loneliness in this category of schools is mainly determined by other factors. People factors in schools are mainly the learners and teachers in a

school environment and since loneliness is about relationships' deficits we can assume that their major valued social connections are not in the schools. This situation can be supported by teachers who discourage cross gender relationships.

The power to determine loneliness of peer relationships varied from 0.4 % in co-education boarding public sub county girls to 23.2 in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools' girls. Teacher-learner relationship also had variations from 3.6 % in co-education day boys to 28.4% in single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools' girls. Sense of belonging to school power to determine loneliness varied from 2.9% in co-education boarding public sub county boys to 28.4% in single gender boarding public sub county secondary school girls. We conclude that power to determine loneliness of any of the correlates under this study differed by school type and gender. This implies that there is need to consider contextual factors of gender and school in designing counselling programmes to address loneliness.

Interrelationships between correlates of loneliness were investigated under effective and non-effective counselling. Results were as in Table 4.37. In summary, guidance and counselling programmes to be effective in meeting learners' needs must go beyond the school boundaries to generate and address possible determinants of loneliness. This is more serious for co-education schools where peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school accounts for less than a third of loneliness leaving the rest to other factors. For learners' peer relationships it can be concluded that girls had higher scores for learner-learner relations than boys. The boarding public sub county secondary schools regardless of gender had higher score for learners' peer relationships than day schools.

**Table 4.37 Relationship between Correlates of Loneliness and Loneliness**

School type	gender	Effective counselling			Ineffective counselling		
		LPR	TLR	SBS	LPR	TLR	SBS
Single Gender	Boys	-0.330**	-0.032	-0.358**	-0.294*	-0.499**	-0.417**
Boarding	Girls	-0.266*	-0.255	-0.277*	-0.533**	-0.749**	-0.481**
Co-Educational	Boys	-0.264*	-0.131	-0.205	-0.301	-0.175	-0.028
Day	Girls	-0.324**	-0.368**	-0.410**	-0.587**	-0.211	-0.365
Co-Educational	Boys	-0.219	-0.193	-0.279*	-0.211	-0.304	-0.340
Boarding	Girls	-0.213	-0.240*	-0.079	-0.301	-0.247	-0.234

Key: \* p<0.05 \*\*p=<0.01

This shows that learners' peer relationships were highly important for boarders than day scholars. The availability of alternative learners' peer relationships in the family and community seem to dilute the impact for peer influences at school for day scholars. Further it can be implied that peer influence or pressure to comply with peers would be greater in the boarding public sub county secondary school situation and should be utilized positively for example in positive behaviour change peer programmes.

The impact of guidance and counselling is demonstrated clearly by different values of determination of loneliness by the same factor. For the example sense of belonging to school determined 34.4% of loneliness in co-education day school girls' who perceived guidance and counselling as ineffective, compared to only 9.2% for those who perceived counselling as effective.

The contexts of gender, type of school and effectiveness of guidance and counselling programmes contexts, was shown to influence interplay of learners' peer relationships', teacher- learner relationships', and sense of belonging to schools' power to determine

level of loneliness among learners. The three types of schools examined provided divergent results in peer teacher relationships, sense of belonging to school and learners' peer relationships. A surprise case for co-education schools' counselling programmes has been highlighted statistically by very large cases of loneliness not accounted for by the peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging unlike other schools. Further study on the co-education schools should focus on the learners' views on causes of loneliness.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a brief summary of findings and conclusions for each of the objectives. These are followed by recommendations and suggestions for further study. This study set out to investigate contextual factors influencing loneliness among public secondary schools' learners in Murang'a County. Contextual factors were identified as prevalence of loneliness, correlates of loneliness and effectiveness of guidance and counselling programmes in management of loneliness. The factors were studied in single boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County.

#### **5.2 Levels and Prevalence Loneliness**

The first objective was to determine prevalence of loneliness among boys and girls in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. The outcome of this study has confirmed presence of loneliness in learners in public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. For girls, loneliness levels were lowest in co-education day schools (2.83) followed by single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools (2.94) and highest in the co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools (3.03). Boys on the other hand, had the lowest levels of loneliness in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools (2.79) followed by single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools at 2.81 and highest in the co-education day public sub county secondary schools (2.85). It is concluded that there were no gender differences in loneliness except in co-educational day schools where girls were lonelier than boys.

Prevalence of loneliness for boys was 39.8%, 43.2% and 42.2% for single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding schools respectively. For girls it was 46.9%, 49.5% and 55.1% in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding schools respectively. The girls were more prone to loneliness than the boys regardless of school type. Observed prevalence of loneliness was comparable to other parts of the world. The number of lonely person varied greatly between schools and gender but intensity of loneliness was relatively the same for gender except in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools.

In co-education day schools and single gender boarding public sub county secondary schools there were no gender differences in the level of loneliness. However, there were significant differences in the loneliness means scores between the genders in co-education boarding public sub county secondary schools,  $p < 0.05$ , where girls were lonelier than boys. The difference between genders continues to vary from one study to another. This variation has been indicated to emanate from contextual differences and culture.

### **5.3 Uptake of Loneliness Counselling Services**

Objective two was to establish the uptake of loneliness counselling among boys and girls in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. This study found that uptake of loneliness counselling varied by gender and type of school. Boys' loneliness-counselling services uptake was 18.6%, 19.5% and 27.9% for single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding schools respectively. For girls counselling services uptake was 22.2% in single gender boarding, 34.8% in co-educational day and 31.5% in co-educational boarding school.

There was low uptake of loneliness-counselling services. There is need to promote counselling as a way of improving learners' psychological wellness. This study therefore recommends training of teachers in psychological counselling techniques to enable them give appropriate services and demystify counselling.

## **5.5 Summaries of Findings on Correlates of Loneliness.**

Correlates of loneliness among learners were compared. That is, comparison of learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school influence on levels of loneliness among learners in public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County was done.

### **5.5.1 Level of Learners' Peer Relationships**

Level of learners' peer relationships is found to be good for all type of schools as it was above 3.5 out of possible five. We observe that the scores were not significantly different between boys and girls. Peer relationships were established at group as well as dyadic levels. The experiences of both levels of relationships were important and contributed to the wholeness of peer experiences.

Learners' peer relationships were found to vary from one school type to another and for gender. For boys, best learners' peer relationships were in co-educational boarding school followed by co-educational day and lastly single gender boarding schools. While for girls, learners' peer relationships were best in co-educational day schools followed by single gender boarding and lowest in co-educational boarding schools.

Learners' peer relationships were found to be very important for boarding secondary schools' learners more than in day schools. Also Learner relationships were found to

significantly influence level of loneliness. This means a way of using positive peer influence would be a powerful vehicle in behaviour modification strategies in the single gender and co-education boarding schools. It reflects the success of learners to thrive with peers that can easily be expressed as solidarity. Further study on this area can address the peer pressure in the interactions between peers.

### **5.5.2 Teacher-Learner Relationships Findings**

The most robust finding of this research is in the fact that teacher-learner relationships were central in influencing of sense of school belonging, learners' peer relationships and loneliness. The importance of teachers' humane conduct and sensitivity in dealing with learners has far reaching effects in other areas of learners' life. This observation should be interpreted into teachers' training curriculum that makes teacher an efficient communicator armed with emotional intelligence skills.

Teachers in boarding schools played socialization/parenting role much more after instructional time than for day scholars. Also, through the supervision role of the teacher on school programmes like night studies, cleaning, sleeping time observance and others that resulted to conflictual teacher-learner relationships. The social role and instructional role conflicts end up spoiling for learners' opportunities to enjoy schooling especially in boarding schools.

From teacher-learner relationships point of view, boys are best in day schools or in co-educational boarding schools. The explanation as to why boys in co-educational boarding schools do not have issues with teachers need to be investigated further as to

how gender context influences relational abilities of boys or that of teachers. How does presence of girls modify boys' relational behaviour and the vice versa?

The other side of the same observation would be to investigate how teachers favour boys in co-educational schools leaving out girls who do not get a similar chance to interact with teachers.

### **5.5.3 Sense of Belonging to School Findings**

As the type of school tended towards co-educational boarding (increased) the sense of belonging to school for boys increased, though this relationship is not significant, it points to the dislike of boarding schools by boys. May be the more girls the school had the better for boys' belongingness to the school and the threshold of number of girls in a co-educational school to influence boys positively towards bonding with the school need to be investigated further. As type of school tended towards being co-educational, the liking of the school (sense of belonging to school) by the girls decreased. Girls preferred to be in single gender schools while boys would like the co-educational school more. The consequence of sense of belonging to school has far reaching effect in school discipline, academic performance, school dropout rate among other important outcomes.

### **5.5.4 Peer and non-peer Counsellors and Correlates of Loneliness.**

Fourth objective aimed at Comparing peer and non-peer counsellors in levels of learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships, sense of belonging to school and loneliness in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. In single gender boarding schools' boys, there were 30 peer counsellors out of 144 learners, while girls'

in the same category there were 44 counsellors serving 99 learners. This translates to 20.8% of learners being peer counsellors for boys and 44.4% girls being peer counsellors. In co-education day schools there were 19 out of 74 boys (25.7%) who were peer counsellors, compared to 33 out of 83 girls (39.8%) in the same category. For co-education boarding schools 23 boys out of 87 (26.4%) were peer counsellors compared to 39 out of 105 (37.1%) girls in the same category. It was observed that girls regardless of school type were provided with a high percentage of peer counsellors than boys in the corresponding school category. It is recommended that more peer counsellors be trained among the boys to improve their ratio to non-counsellors for better services to the boys.

Sense of belonging to schools in peer counsellors was significantly lower in single gender boarding girls but observed to be significantly higher in co-education day schools' boys. Teacher-learner relationships for peer counsellors were found to be significantly higher for peer counsellors in single gender boarding boys but significantly lower among girls in the same school category. In co-education girls who were peer counsellors had higher teacher-learner relationships than the non-Peer learners. It is recommended that peer counsellors training be standardized to enable identification of factors that could adversely affect peer counsellors.

Further teachers need to be sensitized on their increasingly important role of socializing the learners especially in boarding schools where the families and outside community interaction is restricted. On learners' peer relationships, serving as a peer counsellor resulted to reduced mean score for girls in single gender schools while boys in the same category increased their score. However, the differences in the learners' peer

relationships between counsellors and non-counsellors was not significant in all school types.

### **5.6 Perception of Guidance and Counselling Programmes and Loneliness.**

Fifth objective intended to evaluate how perception of guidance and counselling programmes impacts on learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school in single gender boarding, co-educational day and co-educational boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County. In girls in single gender schools, perception on effectiveness resulted in a statistically significant difference in learners' peer relationships. Girls who perceived counselling services as effective had higher scores than those who perceived counselling services as ineffective. All other schools did not report significant differences in learners' peer relationships.

On teacher-learner relationships boys and girls in single gender boarding schools, who perceived counselling services as effective, scored significantly higher than those who perceived counselling services as ineffective. It was only in the single gender boarding school teacher-learner relationships showed significant differences between those who perceived counselling services as effective and those who did not.

### **5.7 Correlates of Loneliness' Power of Determination**

The power of learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships, and sense of belonging to school to determine levels of loneliness in boys and girls in single gender boarding; co-educational day and co-educational boarding public sub county secondary schools in Murang'a County were examined.

Learners peer relationships were more important than for day scholars in determining levels of loneliness. Boys in coeducation boarding schools were uniquely affected by peer relationships. Teacher-learner relationships gained more power to determine level of loneliness in girls both in co-education day and co-education boarding schools, for those who perceived counselling as effective. This may be a case of skewed counselling programmes which is not favourable to girls in co-education schools in regard to relationships with teachers. Boys in boarding schools (single gender and co-education boarding) have issues with sense of belonging to school in that effective counselling in those schools resulted to lowered power of sense of belonging to school to determine levels of loneliness.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

The study arrived at the following conclusions

- i. Loneliness was present and affected between 40 % and 55% of the learners. Girls more than boys were prone to loneliness.
- ii. Learners' peer relationships, teacher-learner relationships and sense of belonging to school were moderate but significant determinants of loneliness. Their power to determine loneliness levels in learners was correlated to school type and gender of learners.
- iii. Guidance and counselling for loneliness should take into consideration prevailing school environment in terms of contexts of gender and type of school to be holistic is clearly demonstrated.
- iv. Teachers' role in socializing the learners cannot be alienated from the instructional role. There is need to plan vigorously for the two roles and work out to get an all-round person coming out of our schools.

## **5.9 Recommendations**

From the findings of this research the following suggestions are made

- i. Guidance and counselling should be strengthened to make co-education institutions favourable to girls. The girls too can achieve high sense of belonging and by belonging benefit more from the schools' guidance and counselling services.
- ii. Sensitization of Teachers on importance of their socialization role in determining teacher-learner relationships and its implication in the manifestation of loneliness should be done.
- iii. Holistic guidance and counselling services need to be demystified, and provided for learners as well as teachers so that therapeutic community can be easily achieved.
- iv. Future of school counselling programmes should be built around empowering learners to help themselves through effective peer counsellors' training.
- v. This research recommends privatization of boarding services for boarding schools to reduce poor teacher-learner relations, so that the boarders like the day scholars can enjoy and benefit from positive relationships with teachers.

## **5.10 Recommendation for Further Study**

- i. Boys in boarding schools have issues with sense of belonging to school. This should be investigated further in relation to discipline in the backdrop of student unrests observed in Kenya in the boarding schools targeting burning of dormitories.
- ii. Study on loneliness should be extended to different communities could have studies done to map learners' loneliness in ethnic communities of Kenya.
- iii. Loneliness should be explored under other contexts to broaden the knowledge on how to manage it in schools.

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## APPENDIX I: LEARNERS QUESTIONNAIRE

### Introduction

My name is Peter Muriuki a doctorate student at Karatina University. I am conducting a research entitled ‘contextual factors influencing loneliness among learners in Murang’a County’. Your honest answers to the following questions will assist greatly in mapping and alleviating the vice.

Please answer the following questions honestly. Your answer will help in planning for better students’ welfare in secondary schools in Murang’a County

**Instructions:** answer by putting a Tick against your appropriate response.

1. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

2. Your Age in year’s \_\_\_\_\_.

4. I am a peer counsellor in our school Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Type of school. 1. Boarding \_\_\_\_ 2. Mixed-day \_\_\_\_ 3. Mixed boarding \_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you sought counselling due loneliness, in the last 3 months yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

7 How do you rate counselling services in your school? Effective \_\_\_\_\_ ineffective \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX II: LEARNERS' PEER RELATIONS SCALE

The following questions are mean to assess the level peer relationships. Answer them with the first feeling that comes to your mind after reading the statement. There is no preferred response.

Instructions: for the statements give choose appropriate response from a) strongly agree, b) agree, c)not sure, d) disagree, e) strongly disagree and tick (√) in the appropriate box.

	Statement	Strongly agree	agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	No one chooses me for a friend					
2	We have caring learners in this school					
3	I easily conflict with other friends					
4	No one likes me in this school					
5	I give help to others in need					
6	I feel supported by other students					

### APPENDIX III: TEACHER -LEARNER RELATIONSHIPS SCALE

The following questions are about your relationships with teachers. Respond to them as you perceive and experience each of suggested interactions. No response is preferred.

Please respond to the following statements by ticking (√) in the box the response that best describes your opinion.

	<b>strongly agree</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>not sure</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>strongly disagree</b>
I do not seek advice from academic staff					
Most of my teachers really listen to what I have to say					
Teachers invite students to raise their concerns					
Teachers care about the student opinions in my school					
Teachers apologize to us if they make mistakes					
There's at least one teacher in this school whom I can talk to if I have a problem.					

#### **APPENDIX IV: SENSE OF BELONGING TO SCHOOL SCALE**

The following questions are about your relationship with the school. Respond to the statements as you experienced in the school.

Please respond to the following statements by ticking (√) in the box the response that best describes your views at this moment.

	<b>strongly agree</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>not sure</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>strongly disagree</b>
I am unhappy at this school					
If I had the chance, I would choose to go to another school.					
I am bored in this school					
I do not feel wrong about disobeying the school rules as long as I do not get caught					
I obey the school rules because I am afraid of the school administrators					
I don't feel safe at this school					

## APPENDIX V: PERTH A-LONENESS SCALE

The following questions are meant to assess your level of loneliness. Respond according to your experiences of the suggested interaction.

Instructions for every section: respond by giving the most appropriate answer from

a) Always b) very often c) often d) sometimes e) rarely f) never

### Factor 1: Friendship

My friends will stand by me in almost any difficulty \_\_\_\_\_.

I can turn to my friends for help when I need it \_\_\_\_\_.

I get plenty of help and support from friends \_\_\_\_\_.

I have friends that I can trust to do what they say they will do \_\_\_\_\_.

Most of my friends are true friend's \_\_\_\_\_.

I feel part of a group of friends \_\_\_\_\_.

### Factor 2: isolation

I have nobody to talk to \_\_\_\_\_.

I feel like I do not have a friend in the world \_\_\_\_\_.

I am not close to anyone \_\_\_\_\_.

No one cares much about me \_\_\_\_\_.

I feel sad because I have no friends\_\_\_\_\_.

I do not have a close friend\_\_\_\_\_.

**Factor 3: positive attitude to solitude**

I have discovered the benefits of being alone\_\_\_\_\_

There are positive things about being lonely \_\_\_\_\_

There are benefits of being on my own \_\_\_\_\_

I feel calm and relaxed when I'm by myself\_\_\_\_\_

I feel happy when I'm all by myself\_\_\_\_\_

I want to be alone \_\_\_\_\_

**Factor 4: Negative Attitude to Solitude**

When I am by myself I feel lonely \_\_\_\_\_.

When I am lonely, time seems to drag and I don't enjoy things \_\_\_\_\_.

When I get bored, I am unhappy -.\_\_\_\_\_

When I am all by myself, I wish I had a friend to be with.\_\_\_\_\_

If I feel lonely, I don't know what to do \_\_\_\_\_

I am unhappy being so isolated from others \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX VI: KREJCIE AND MORGAN (1970) TABLE**

*Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population*

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
<i>N</i>					
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
	136	1100	285	1000000	384

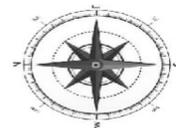
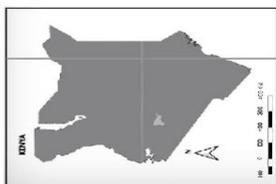
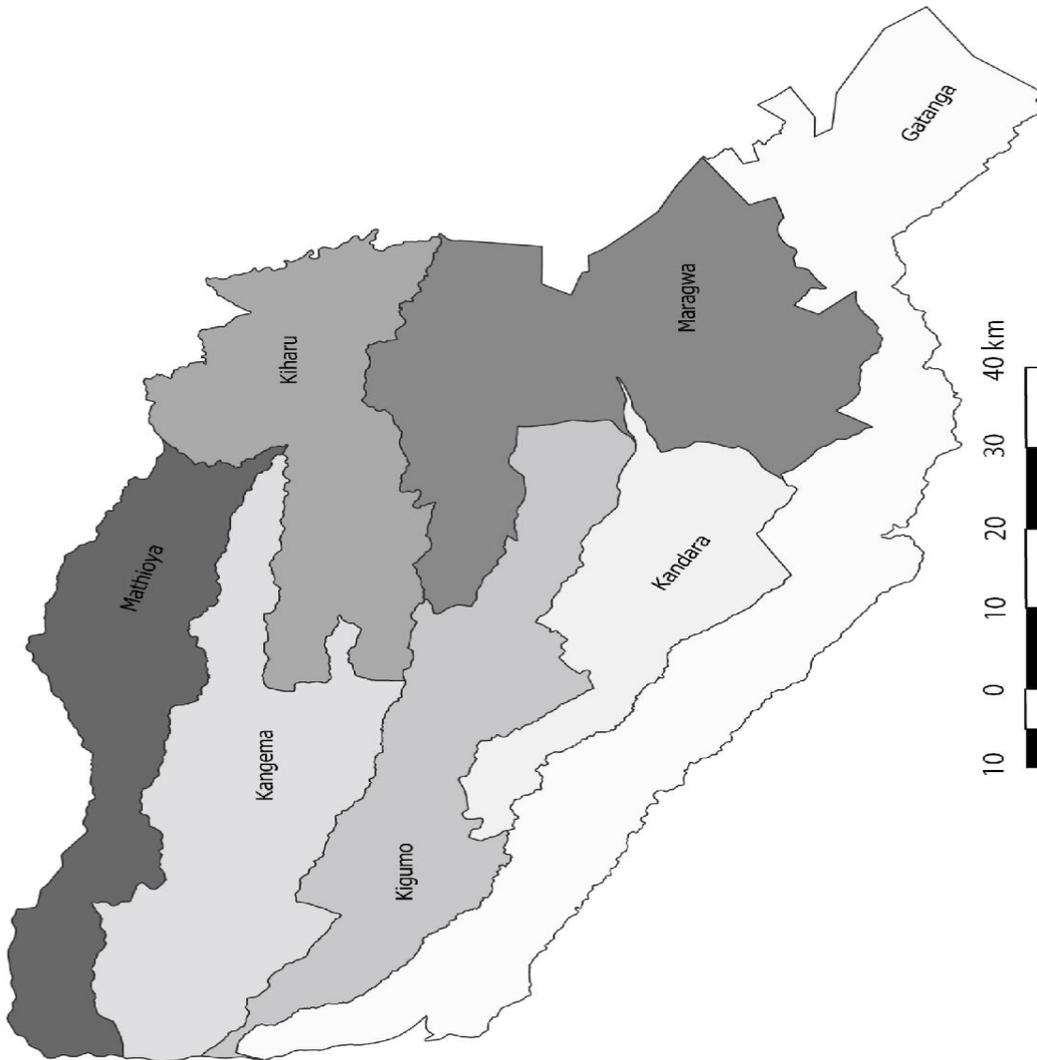
Note.—*N* is population size.

*S* is sample size.

**APPENDIX VII: RESEARCH LOCATION: MURANG'A COUNTY**

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ANGA

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LOCA

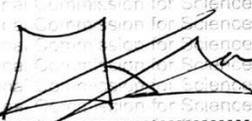


## APPENDIX VIII: RESEARCH PERMIT

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:  
MR. PETER MURIUKI BARU  
of KARATINA UNIVERSITY, 1669-1000  
Thika, has been permitted to conduct  
research in Muranga County**

**on the topic: RELATIONSHIP  
INFLUENCING LONELINESS OF  
LEARNERS IN KENYA: A CASE OF  
MURANGA COUNTY.**

**for the period ending:  
14th January, 2020**



**Applicant's  
Signature**

**Permit No : NACOSTI/P/19/33407/26946**

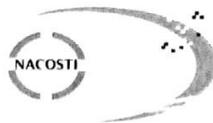
**Date Of Issue : 15th January, 2019**

**Fee Received :Ksh 2000**



**Director General  
National Commission for Science,  
Technology & Innovation**

## APPENDIX IX: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION - NACOSTI



### NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone : 254-20-2213471,  
2241349,3310571,2219420  
Fax: +254-20-318245,318249  
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke  
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke  
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete  
Off Waiyaki Way  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No. **NACOSTI/P/19/33407/26946**

Date: **15<sup>th</sup> January, 2019**

Peter Muriuki Baru  
Karatina University  
P.O. Box 1957-10101  
**KARATINA.**

#### **RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on ***“Relationship influencing loneliness of learners in Kenya: A case of Muranga County”*** I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Murang’a County** for the period ending **14<sup>th</sup> January, 2020.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Murang’a County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

**GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM  
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
Murang’a County.

The County Director of Education  
Murang’a County.

*In witness whereof, the Director-General has signed and affixed the official seal of the Commission at Nairobi, Kenya, on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2019.*

**APPENDIX X:**

**RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION - COUNTY COMMISSIONER**

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**THE PRESIDENCY**

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Telephone: 060-2030467  
Email: cc.muranga@interior.go.ke

COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
MURANG'A COUNTY  
P. O. BOX 7-10200  
MURANG'A

*When replying please quote*  
**REF.NO.PUB.24/11/VOL.II/84**

**5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2019.**

**PETER MURIUKI BARU  
KARATINA UNIVERSITY  
P.O BOX 1957-10101  
KARATINA.**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION.**

In reference to a letter **NACOSTI/P/19/33407/26946** dated **15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2019** from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation regarding the above subject, you are hereby authorized to carry out research on "**Relationship Influencing Loneliness Of Learners In Kenya: A Case Of Muranga County**" for the period ending **14<sup>th</sup> January, 2020.**

  
COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
MURANG'A COUNTY

**PETER MAJIWAH**  
For: **COUNTY COMMISSIONER**  
**MURANG'A COUNTY.**

**APPENDIX XI: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION BY COUNTY DIRECTOR OF  
EDUCATION**



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION**

Email: [cdemuranga@gmail.com](mailto:cdemuranga@gmail.com)  
Telephone: 060 2030227  
When replying please quote

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
P.O BOX 118 - 10200  
MURANG'A

REF: MGA/CTY/EDU./RESEARCH/GEN/64/VOL.III/129/199      5<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

Peter Muriuki Baru  
Karatina University  
P.O.Box 1957-10101  
**KARATINA**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

The County Education office is in receipt of your request and authority letter from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation Reference No. NACOSTI/P/19/33407/26946 dated 15<sup>th</sup> January ,2018 to carry research on" **Relationships influencing loneliness of learners in Kenya:"A case of Murang'a County.** Permission is hereby granted to carry out research in Murang'a County for a period ending **14<sup>th</sup> January ,2020.**

You are kindly advised to deposit a copy of the final research report to the County Director of Education office.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Kiilu'.

Anne Kiilu  
County Director of Education  
**MURANG'A**