ABSTRACT
In Kenya, up to 31.9% of girls have experienced sexual abuse. Reports from Suba Child Help Line indicate that in 2015 alone, they handled 1,251 cases of child abuse and of these, 651 (52%) were girl-child sexual abuse cases. Guidance and Counseling (G&C) services should help individuals make intelligent decisions and understand themselves so they work towards realizing their potentials. G&C services have been put in place in schools yet there are still many cases of Girl-Child Sexual Abuse. Purpose of this study was to examine perceptions on the role of guidance and counseling on girl child sexual abuse in public primary schools in Suba and Mbita sub counties, Kenya. Objectives of the study were to; Determine Teachers’ and Pupils’ perceptions on prevalence rates of girl-child sexual abuse in public primary schools of Suba and Mbita sub counties, Determine the perceived extent to which poverty, cultural values and family backgrounds play roles on girl-child vulnerability to sexual abuse and to establish perceptions on Teachers’ participation on Guidance and Counseling in addressing prevalence rates of girl-child sexual abuse. The study was based on a conceptual framework showing how G&C may influence vulnerability to girl-child sexual abuse. G&C was the Independent Variable and Sexual abuse the Dependent Variable. The Intervening Variables were; Ministry of Education (MoE) policies, School Management and Girl-Child personality. Descriptive survey design was used. Study population consisted of 3000 girls in STDs 7 and 8, 88 head teachers and 88 G&C teachers. Using Krejcie and Morgan formula, a sample of 307 pupils was used from 9 Primary schools. Purposive sampling of 9 G&C teachers and 9 head teachers was done from the sampled schools. Reliability coefficient of 0.769 of the instruments was obtained after a test-retest was done. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and means. Qualitative data was transcribed and coded into themes and sub themes. The results obtained from the research reveal that there is a high prevalence of girl child sexual abuse, though the girl pupils do not perceive it as affecting them; that family backgrounds, poverty and cultural values contribute to vulnerability. Teachers have used the little time they can get to provide G&C services to the pupils. Findings of this study may be of significance to the pupils of Suba and Mbita in revealing further why they are vulnerable to sexual abuse, to G&C teachers in reassessing their roles and to the Ministry of Education in formulating policies that may help to strengthen guidance and counseling and to reduce prevalence rates of girl-child sexual abuse. The recommendations are that The Ministry of Education should train and post teachers to deal with G&C as part of the curriculum. Further, time and facilities should be provided for the provision of G&C services and the G&C teachers given a lighter load so as to enable them spend quality time with the pupils.