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## REVIEW ARTICLE

# CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF EVUORE DIVISION, EMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

The main aim of this research was to find out challenges of Guidance and Counseling (G&C) services in public primary schools and the way forwards in promoting G&C programs. Stratified and simple random sampling were used to select a sample for the study research. From the 10 schools sampled, 10 head teachers and 10 teacher counselors were automatically included in the research sample. Pupils were stratified as per class, and 5 pupils were selected in each class 6, 7 and 8 following simple random sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires for pupils and interview guides for head teachers and teacher counselors. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 20, and presented using frequencies, means and percentages; while qualitative data were analyzed, categorized and presented in form of narratives and themes. From the findings, majority of the pupils perceive that G&C is relevant to them. There is need for the G&C programs in schools, and all school stakeholders should be part of it. Teacher counselors, on their part revealed that G&C molds pupils. Challenges like lacking resource materials, inadequate training of teacher counselors, lack of parental support, pupils fearing to be reported, and having negative attitudes towards counseling, teacher counselors having inadequate time, pupils not seeking G&C, insufficient funds to support the services, lack of proper trainings of teachers and the parents' ignorance were identified. It was therefore recommended that there is need for full integration of G&C into the school curriculum, to conduct the same research study across the country with the participation of parents, guardians, and all stakeholders in learning institutions, and to research how the government can finance the development of G&C facilities in learning institutions.

## INTRODUCTION

The work of giving guidance to students and especially in the early years of life helps in preventing and developing pupils' wholistic development; while counseling itself could contribute towards supporting and giving remedial works to the person receiving the services (Lai-Yeung, 2013). Zulaika *et al.* (2022) observes that, in Kenyan primary schools, boys dropped out at a rate of 1.7% compared to girls' 1.2%. Similarly, boys dropped out of secondary school at a larger proportion (18.3%) than girls did (16.3%). Dropout rates were significant at primary school, due to child labor, early marriages, pregnancy and some committed suicide due to poor performance. One of the most important things in primary education, teachers, parents as well as the whole society is attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE). From 2001, the Kenyan government banned the use of caning in schools with the hope that the number of school dropouts among other indiscipline issues would decrease (Jonasson, 2017). For instance, according to Ajowi and Omboto (2013), about 253 schools went on strike countrywide and most of school stake holders such as teachers associated this with the issue of banning caning in schools. In this sense, guidance and counseling are a type of educational service that should be incorporated into curricula as it has been proven effective in the majority of schools around the globe (Jonasson, 2017).

In addition, primary schools in Kenya have for a long time experienced many issues to do with indiscipline leading to school dropout (Kagoiya & Kagema, 2018).

**Literatures reviewed:** According to Okwenye (2017) many students lost their lives, and others suffered psychologically as most of them lacked someone to guide them during their crisis. In addition, the government thought of saving pupils from these teachers' brutality by banning and withdrawing caning and corporal punishment in all public schools. According to Bynoe (2013), with guidance and counseling, pupils are able to get solutions on how to deal with psychological problems which might affect their studies. According to the study done by Lai-Yeung (2013), it is realized that one of the most important things teachers need to know how to provide guidance and counseling to pupils in schools. One of the skills that teachers in learning institutions readily need is of guidance and counseling since this would lead towards improving pupils' discipline in schools as well as when they go back to their homes. The process of guidance and counseling bridges the gap between the students and the school administration, as they can channel their problems through guidance and counseling officers. It also allows pupils to talk about various things which they feel uncomfortable talking about with their parents, for instance drug abuse.

Moreover, the program of guidance and counseling helps pupils undergoing difficulty in their lives, to have a good place to ask questions and clarity from the counselors, such as those questions they find difficult to ask their parents. For many years, indiscipline has been experienced in schools, either by individual students or in groups. Mulhern (2020), reveals that due to immoral acts like burning down schools, girls having early pregnancies, and causing deaths, among other things, many students drop out of school due to a lack of proper guidance and counseling; as a result, there has been insufficient learning and teaching, as well as subpar academic results. Since the Kenyan government lobbied for guidance and counseling programs instead of caning, little progress has been made in terms of implementation (Okwenye, 2017). From the study by Arfasa and Weldmeskel (2020), many cases have been observed among primary school students as a result of lack of guidance and counseling, with varying effects on educational achievement. In addition, Mackatiani *et al.* (2022) reveal that, poor performance has forced some students to drop out of school in some cases of Kenya, particularly when they lack educational counseling, resulting in low primary school enrollment. In other circumstances, such as elementary schools in metropolitan regions, the community has a negative impact on the learning environment because many of these communities improve learning indiscipline (Onyancha *et al.*, 2021). For example, selling drugs to primary school pupils and some community members failing to report cases of indiscipline to school administration. However, Arfasa & Weldmeskel (2020) reveal that, indiscipline cases are reported in school administration, but some schools lack or become slow in dealing with such cases. Other schools are hesitant to enhance their guidance and counseling departments.

**Statement of the problem:** According to the study by Wiener (2020), one cannot escape news about incidents like students fleeing school, setting their buildings on fire, committing suicide, and others quitting school due to pregnancies, early marriages, or even rape cases at schools from radios, social media, television, among others. Venturo-Conerly *et al.* (2021) report a primary school kid was said to have died by suicide after scoring low marks after KCPE results were out. In other cases, young girls and boys have dropped out of school due to numerous challenges in the school community, particularly in Kenya. According to the literature, previous research has examined numerous topics impacting guidance and counselling, particularly in secondary schools. As a result, this study is quite effective in determining such issues in primary schools and offering solutions. The process of guidance and counseling is very important in the study area and because of this its outcome on the pupils and the school stakeholders should be monitored. The knowledge about the challenges and solutions to guidance and counselling is scarce, particularly in the study area, thus this research will be in a good position to address that research gap.

**Purpose of this research:** This study's primary objective is to investigate about the challenges in providing Guidance and Counseling (G&C) services in public primary schools and how to promote G&C programs moving ahead. This study will examine G&C issues that arise in public primary schools as well as potential solutions to such issues. Public primary schools have not been fully covered in the research area despite the fact that numerous studies on the difficulties of G&C services in schools and the ways to promote them have been undertaken. As a result, this study conducted in public primary schools may ultimately result in a significant improvement in the area of guidance and counseling in public primary schools as well as a significant increase in academic accomplishment and the completion of the fundamentals of education.

**Research questions:** In this study, the following research questions were developed:

- What are the challenges of guidance and counseling services in public primary schools?
- What are the possible suggestions in promoting guidance and counseling programs in public primary schools?

**Propositions set for the study:** When conducting this study, the following propositions were taken into account:

- A teacher counselor is present in every public primary school, in one form or another.
- Guidance and counseling services are available to pupils in public schools.

**Research Design:** The data was collected through secondary and primary data. Study employed a survey research design, the selected sample consisted of 304 pupils and 10 teacher counselors as well as 10 head teachers from 10 public primary schools. The public primary schools of classes 6, 7, and 8 pupils were chosen for the study because this was a group of primary school pupils who could read and write and thus required minimum care in the process of filling out the questionnaires. Interviews were conducted among 10 teacher counselors and 10 head teachers. To avoid having only one gender participate, they were chosen at random based on the number of pupils in each school. Headteachers and teacher counselors were selected from the 10 schools using Purposive sampling respectively. All ten public schools were drawn at random from each school. To eliminate any gender disparities, stratified and simple sampling were utilized to include both girls and boys. The research employed questionnaires for the selected sample of pupils and interview guide for teacher counselors and head teachers. To ascertain the validity of questionnaires, interview schedules and questions were given to guidance and counseling experts and also to the supervisors for review. Reliability of the instrument was done through split half method. The researcher obtained all the necessary permits from the various authorities in order to commence the survey.

#### Limitations of the research

The following are the study's limitations:

- The study only included 10 head teacher and 10 teacher counselors.
- The study was carried out in Evurore Division public primary schools in Embu County, Kenya.
- The study primarily focused specifically on classes 6, 7, and 8 pupils, as well as their teacher counselors and head teachers.

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#### Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Response Rate:** The research study involved ten (10) head teachers, ten (10) teacher-counselors and six hundred and thirty (630) pupils. Six fifty (650) respondents altogether were targeted for the study and it was revealed that out of these; six hundred and twenty-four (624) responded fully. This therefore constituted to ninety-six (95.64%) percent response rate. This is therefore considered adequate for the study. For head teachers and teacher-counselors, all of those who were administered gave a 100% response rate. Pupils were given unstructured and semi-structured questionnaires to fill in. The study used only filled and completed questionnaires for the analyses.

**Gender of the Pupils, Teacher Counselors and Head Teachers:** The research study sought to determine the gender distribution in the selected primary schools. From the research, it was revealed that most of the primary schools in the study area had teacher counselors.

It was also seen that majority of the pupils were found to be male and most of them were in class seven and were at the age of 10-11 followed by that of 12-13 and the least were found in the age of 14-18. Of these, the minority were in class eight. In cases of teacher counselors, 20% were male and 80% were female. This showed that female teacher counselors could be the most preferred by most of primary schools and could be that they do better than the male teacher counselors. According to Fatoki (2021), in his study in Nigeria, it is revealed that Compared to a male teacher counselor, most students react favorably to a female teacher counselor. A small percentage of participants in this survey disagreed, and it's possible that this is because each sex believes it can perform better than the other. In his study also pointed out that the sex of the teacher counselor affects the attitude of learner's negatively to a lesser extent. On the side of head teachers 80% were male, while 20% were female. Notably, unlike in secondary schools, primary schools in Kenya can be headed by either a female or a male (Mumanyi, 2013). Nevertheless, from the study, it was realized that majority of the primary schools sampled were headed by a male head teacher. This is in line with the studies of Momanyi (2013) who claims that primary schools can be headed by either gender. From the results it was revealed that majority (60%) of teacher counselors were from 30-39 years with the minority (10%) being from 20-29, while the rest of 40-49 being around 30%. The results showed that the public primary schools in the study area have got teacher counselors who are around the productive age and are mature enough to offer services of guidance and counseling to pupils. None of the respondents (teacher counselors) were above 50 years and this is an indication that all of them are energetic people who can always follow pupils' welfare in terms of discipline and good morals as they receive their primary education. This study concurs with that of Wambeti & Mwenda (2016) who state that, schools want young teacher counselors who are engaged enough to monitor students' conduct and well-being. Most of head teachers, 80% of them were found to be in the age of 40-49 while 20% of them were in the age of above 50 years. These results clearly showed that the primary schools in Evurore division are led by head teachers who are mature enough to look at the issue of indiscipline of pupils in the schools as well as observing the services of guidance and counseling in their schools. Challenges of Guidance and Counseling in Public Primary Schools From the findings, all the head teachers and teacher counselors said that they Teacher counselors and head teachers encounter many challenges during guidance and counseling services. The challenges encountered are presented thematically in the sections that follow

**Table 1. Responses of Head Teachers and Teacher Counselors on Challenges Encountered during Guidance and Counseling**

| Response | No of respondents | Percentages |
|----------|-------------------|-------------|
| YES      | 20                | 100         |
| NO       | 0                 | 0           |

**Table 1. Response Rate**

| Category          | Administered | Responded | Percent |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|---------|
| Pupils            | 630          | 604       | 0.9292  |
| Teacher Counselor | 10           | 10        | 100     |
| Head Teacher      | 10           | 10        | 100     |
| Total             | 650          | 624       | 0.96    |

**Insufficient Time:** During the interview, one teacher counselor said that "she does not have sufficient time with the pupils since they still have class work thus finding it hard to meet pupils for the service of guidance and counseling among other responsibilities such as being class teacher, curriculum master and head teachers" (Interview, teacher counselor 2, May, 2017). In this case, they end up lacking time or finding very little time to be with pupils for guidance. These findings are supported by Arfasa and Weldmeskel (2020) who explains that teacher counselors do not have time designated for guidance and counseling services, and frequently do not have the time to provide all of that.

**Failure of Pupils Seeking Guidance and Counseling:** Both teacher counselors and head teachers agreed "that pupils were not eager to seek guidance and counseling even when teacher counselors are available," (Interview, Head Teacher 2 & Teacher Counselor 7, May, 2017). This could be an indication that pupils fear consulting their teachers probably due to pupils finding their teachers unfriendly. This finding is supported by Mumanyi (2013) who found out that students develop a negative attitude toward unfriendly teachers. Therefore, from the study this really affected the pupils greatly as far as the guidance and counseling is concerned. Moreover, the belief that students do not want to visit hostile teacher counselors is linked to the failure of students to seek guidance and counseling (Fatoki, 2021). In this connection therefore, pupils need to be motivated by a teacher counselor or any other person giving out the service of guidance and counseling who at the same time shows them closeness, friendliness and understanding and so their confidence and trust is won (Onyancha *et al.*, 2021). From his study, the pupils actively need someone to listen to and at the same time with a broad understanding and experience compared to their own.

**Lack of Confidentiality:** From the study, a head teacher gave another challenge "as pupils fear that they may be reported to the administration once they seek guidance and counseling and therefore, they fail to seek counseling services" (Interview, Head Teacher 2, May, 2017). Lack of confidence affects pupils negatively thus becoming a big challenge to the school administration and more so to the department of guidance and counseling. It was found out that, "some teacher counselors would get an issue from the pupils and instead of keeping it confidential, she/he goes on to the staffroom and starts discussing it with other teachers," (Interview, Teacher Counselor, 2, May, 2017). As explained by Onyancha *et al.*, (2021), that, most of these pupils in primary schools have fear of others such as their peers, teachers, parents' friends, family members as well as the general society they live with, either in their schools or in their villages. The study is in line with that of Lai-Yeung (2013) who revealed that, students lost confidence after going under a session of guidance and counseling. This was because they feared that their teacher counselors might pass the information to others such as their parents, guardians, friends, and administration among others.

**Lack of Privacy:** From the findings, lack of privacy was mentioned by both teacher counselors and head teachers as another challenge, who said that "this is mainly contributed by lack of offices or rooms for guidance and counseling" (Interview, Teacher Counselors 5, May, 2017). According to one counselor teacher, observed that "pupils would wish to have a place such as a room or an office for the service and not in an area that is open to everybody and especially to their fellow pupils. This in turn tends to drive them away from seeking guidance and counseling" (Interview, Head Teachers 5, May, 2017). Wambeti & Mwenda (2016), in their study on "Rethinking school guidance and counseling in Kenya" they note that Youngsters were scared of being spotted in counseling rooms by their classmates. Pupils from Evurore division have similar feeling thus leading to failure of them going for guidance and counseling services. Majority of the pupils said that they rarely seek guidance and counseling. These findings are also supported by that of Smith (2013), who suggests that every learning institution needs to have a counseling room or center with private offices which is secured from any strangers and let it be probably meant for students and teacher counselors only.

**Insufficient Funds:** From the findings, the head teachers mentioned "insufficient funds," (interview, head teacher 9, May, 2017) as another challenge facing the service of guidance and counseling. While most of the head teachers observed the need to involve MoE. One head teacher noted that "the ministry of education having introduced free primary education and even giving funds for it, they fail to recognize the department of guidance and counseling thus leading to failure of the service," (interview, head teacher, 4, May, 2017). In this case, there are no funds for implementation as well as they do not support teacher counselors for their study. Another head teacher also added that, "their primary schools have got limited

*budget that cannot accommodate establishment and implementation of guidance and counseling services thus becoming a big setback,*" (interview, head teacher, 7 May, 2017). This study is similar to that which was carried out by Mongare (2005) who noted that school budget is not able to accommodate the needs of the guidance and counseling activities and services. In addition, Were (2006), points out that programs of guidance and counseling keeps on changing so that it caters for learners' needs in the school. In this case funds are always needed to ensure its continuity.

**Lack of Trained Guidance and Counseling Teachers:** From the result, one of the head teachers said that, *"none of the trained teacher counselors has ever been posted in my school,"* (Interview, Head Teacher 5, May, 2017). Another said that *"the ministry of education has never taken any of our teachers for guidance and counseling training"* (Interview, Head Teacher 5, May), and other another said that *"teacher counselors are not enough in primary schools and therefore this would contribute towards its failure"* (interview, head teacher, 7 May, 2017). These findings are consistent with Wong & Yuen (2019), who stated that, in many schools including primary schools the appoint teachers who are not qualified for the job of guidance and counseling which end up failing the department and the process of the guidance and counseling. Some teachers who had not desired to be teacher counselors were appointed to head the department and hence no seriousness was found in those schools in terms of guidance and counseling.

**Lack of a Well-Established Guidance and Counseling Departments:** From the study, one teacher counselor highlighted that *"lack of guidance and counseling departments and lack of resource materials for the work of guidance and counseling in primary schools around the study area pose a big challenge on the service and this in turn leads to inability and failure of the guidance and counseling services"* (Interview, Teacher Counselors, 8, May, 2017). According to Lai-Yeung (2013), he further revealed in his study that, there are some hindrances that negatively affect the learner seeking help from a teacher counselor such as lacking time to visit teacher counselor, lack of privacy, not knowing where the teacher counselors are, teacher counselors being too busy and unavailable for the students in need. Again, he noted that the students do not go for guidance and counseling because they feel shy or embarrassed especially due to the nature of the problems for instance a personal and a very serious problem which becomes very hard for them to discuss with their teachers responsible for guidance and counseling services. Wong & Yuen (2019), in their study among secondary schools in Hong Kong observe that for learning institutions need to carry out effective services guidance and counseling, and there must be availability of materials such as enough of resources, space such as rooms or office for conducting such services as well as equipment like computers, writing materials meant for guidance and counseling among others.

**Lack of Proper Training in Most of Teachers given the Work of Guidance and Counseling:** This was another challenge as mentioned by head teachers. As noted previously, most of schools do not allocate funds in the department of guidance and counseling, it was revealed that *"the teacher counselors are never taken for any workshops and educational seminars thus limiting their capacity to offer this service"* (interview, head teacher, 9, May, 2017). This result is in line with that of (Momanyi, 2013) who argues that teacher counselors are never taken to seminars and that makes them unaware of the current trends and issues in guidance and counseling. Chandler *et al.* (2018) argue that, the guidance and counseling services in many of the learning institutions are never taken seriously. For instance, in many cases, teacher counselor or any teacher given the duty of offering the service of guidance and counseling is not given enough service treatment as she or he is supposed to be. These findings concur with that of Arfasa & Weldmeskel (2020) who observes in their study on *"Practices and challenges of guidance and counseling services in secondary schools"* that there is a significant issue with not making use of the time set aside for volunteer advice and counseling in schools, since it was noticed that these times were never used as they were intended to be.

**Parents Ignorance:** From the findings, this was mentioned as another challenge by one of the head teachers of who said that, *"most of parents in the study area are not supportive and sometimes they neglect their children as well as they do not encourage their children to seek guidance and counseling"* (interview, head teacher, 8 May, 2017). This in turn drives children away from the service of guidance and counseling. In addition, another head teacher noted that *"some of the parents have no time for their children and this greatly influences them negatively towards the seeking of guidance and counseling"* (Interview, Head Teacher 7, May, 2017). Problems Encountered by Teacher Counselors during Guidance and Counseling

**From the results, it was revealed that teacher counselors encounter many critical problems in their day-to-day process of giving guidance and counseling. These are discussed thematically as follows:**

**Mentally Challenged Pupils:** One of the teacher counselors said that, they come across pupils who are mentally challenged or have psychological problems which sometimes becomes so hard to deal with. More so if they have not been going for trainings and seminars for guidance and counseling it becomes very hard to understand such pupils (Interview, Teacher Counselor 10, May, 2017). According to Ministry of Education New Zealand (2007), in their study on The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1-13 it was revealed that in the year 2001, the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand was able to produce a set of guidelines for Mentally Healthy Schools. In this guideline, it included criteria for implementing mental health promotion initiatives in schools such as secondary schools and focused on areas like: student and staff empowerment, cooperation with other sectors, participation and collaboration.

**Pupils Withholding Their Problems and Skipping School Days:** Another problem that some teacher counselors encounter was that, *"some pupils staying at home and skipping school days without even seeking any guidance and counseling from their parents and thus staying with their problems until their situations become worse"* (Interview, Teacher Counselor 3, May, 2017).

**Poverty Level of Pupils:** From the findings it was realized that, due to poverty level in the area, pupils drop out of school mainly as a result of financial crises. Based on the results, it was revealed from teacher counselors, that pupils drop out of schools due to poverty back at their homes. The pupils coming from poor families tend to provide labor on behalf of their parents or even go out to seek employment or casual jobs for payment so that they get something to feed on as well as for clothing. In this case, they end up missing school days most of the time and finally terminate completely. Frequent absenteeism led to poor performance. *"Persistent low performance often led to dropping out"* (Interview, Teacher Counselor 4, May, 2017). This study is in line with that which was conducted by Anca and Sorin (2014). In their report on early school dropout: causes and possible ways of prevention, they said that child labor has contributed towards school dropout at early ages. This could be mainly in primary schools.

**Parents Illiteracy:** From the study, a teacher counselor observed that *"pupils drop out of the school especially if parents did not go to school and hence do not see the importance of taking their children to school up to completion"* (Interview, Teacher Counselor 6, May, 2017). In this regard, it is observed that such pupils have very little chances of becoming successful in their primary education since their parents do not encourage nor support them.

**Family Breakups and Separation:** From teacher counselors' responses, one teacher counselor said: *"family break ups are another cause of pupils dropping out and this is especially due to alcoholism, separation and divorce, violence in the family among others"* (Interview, Teacher Counselors 6, May, 2017).

**Early Pregnancies and Marriages:** From the findings, it was revealed that early marriages and unplanned pregnancies have forced many of girls to drop out of schools; and teacher counselors mentioned that girls especially around upper classes in the study area tend to drop out of schools when they get married and also when they get pregnant or have got children. This is mainly seen in poor families, of which finally result in termination of primary education (Interview, Teacher Counselors 5, May, 2017). Njobvu & Simuyaba (2020) explain creating a program for prevention and intervention indicates that peer pressure, if not carefully considered, may impede the provision of advice and counseling to students. This involves making decisions based on the preferences of their peers. This might result in more early marriages and pregnancies in this situation (Jonasson, 2017). This study is similar to that of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (2007) who identified other challenges that were found among the students with the need of seeking the services of guidance and counseling and they included; household poverty related such as parents' absenteeism and working long hours, poor housing among others.

**Repetition of Classes:** The other cause as mentioned by one teacher counselor was "*repetition of classes which lead to poor relationship with other classmates*" (interview, teacher counselor, 7 May, 2017). This finally leads to loss of morale to continue with education and as a result they get discouraged and terminate their education. The other challenge observed was "*the issue of feeling inferiority complex, lacking personal confidence, lacking self-motivation and lack of interpersonal relationship*" (Interview, Teacher Counselor 6, May, 2017). This can be compared to the study done by Wambugu (2010) who argues that inferiority complex among the students may affect them even more becoming anti-social and later on leading to introduction of other related issues such as use of drug abuse and poor academic performance.

**Suggestions for Promoting Guidance and Counseling Programs in Public Primary Schools:** From the findings, all of the respondents agreed that there are challenges in conducting guidance and counseling in their primary schools. Head teachers suggested ways such as:

**Constructive Way of Guidance and Counseling:** One of the ways that were suggested by one of the head teachers was "*having a constructive way of guidance and counseling*" (Interview, Head Teacher10, May, 2017). As supported by Rosvall (2020) who concedes that guidance and counseling services help students to be disciplined and capable of dealing with problems in their everyday life, academics, and physical surroundings. From the study done by Oye *et al.* (2012) schools should make an effort of including the program of guidance and counseling in their normal teaching time table so that it becomes a kind of a compulsory thing to be done in classes. In addition, it is recommended that head teachers should not have false impression that their schools can function well and effectively without a teacher counselor. In this way, they should include the aspect of ICT programmed information. Alternatively, one can support the study done by Oye *et al.* (2015), who talk of activities such as training and parent empowerment on issues to do with guidance and counseling so that they could practice to their children when they return home after school. According to Oye (2015), there is need to be strictly in following and sticking to the school rules and regulations to avoid loopholes and unrest in schools and some small issues such indiscipline in classrooms when they are learning. These findings are also supported by the study which was done by Wong & Yuen (2019), and has got an opinion that guidance and counseling require frequent trainings since it is through training of school teacher counselors that implementation and effectiveness in school guidance and counseling services would arise. This needs to be accompanied by guidance and counseling resources such as that which is suggested by Crane *et al.* (2021) that, school guidance and counseling services need to have materials like career choice exploration materials, computers for computer-assisted career guidance programs, self-development resources, test taking skills, career choice exploration materials, college catalogues, packages, among others.

**Advanced Course in Guidance and Counseling:** Majority of teacher counselors have only done the certificate course in guidance and counseling (70%), very few have done diploma in guidance and counseling (20%) and only one has done a degree in the same. From the results none of them has done a master's degree in guidance and counseling. Based on these findings, it is vividly to state that these primary schools' teachers need to advance in the course of guidance and counseling so that they become more knowledgeable to the services of guidance and services.

**Need of a Female Teacher Counselor:** A head teacher indicated that, "they should be given a female teacher counselor since pupils prefer that gender, this could be that they use a softer communication skill thus giving interest to pupils to seek the services" (interview, head teacher 4, May, 2017). This is supported by the findings of Momanyi (2013) and Abreu *et al.* (2020) who states that, although not very dramatically, the gender of teacher counselors may have a detrimental impact on how students perceive them. From the findings, it was observed that young female teacher counselors need to be availed in primary schools so as to attract many of the pupils going for the service. Onyancha *et al.* (2021) explain that, students' attitudes are negatively impacted by the teacher counselor's gender orientation. Moreover, this will keep a good relationship between them and so enable them complete primary education. Another teacher counselors said "*that due to lack of privacy and fear that issues from different pupils seeking advice may be taken to the administration for further action*" (interview, teacher counselors 2, May, 2017). This need to be improved mainly through availing of guidance and counseling offices rooms in schools. In addition, teachers involved in the services of guidance and counseling should be given an attention that, they need not to reveal issues of guidance and counseling to others whatsoever. This agrees with findings of Corey (1996), who notes that due to lack of confidentiality among counselors can hamper effective guidance and counseling services since the entire counseling profession is based on confidentiality.

One of the teacher counselors who was interviewed revealed that "*they believe that guidance and counseling can be a solution to sustainability of pupils schooling*" (interview, teacher counselor 1, May, 2017). This was because according to them, the pupils they get advised on how to study as well as how they need to go up to completion of their studies. Guidance and counseling would also help pupils to become flexible on the issue of second chances or repetition of classes that has been discouraging pupils and finally drop out of school (Interview, Teacher Counselor 10, May, 2017). One of the teacher counselors said that from their experience and/or knowledge, the school life of learners or pupils change in a very great way after guidance and counseling. This was because most of pupils change their bad behavior and habit after undergoing guidance and counseling. There is also continuity in their education and minimal drop out (Interview, Teacher Counselor 7, May, 2017).

**The Need for Support from the Ministry of Education:** From the findings it was also recommended that, the ministry of education should support primary schools in coming up with good curriculum that can be used in schools as well as providing funds for construction of the offices. Besides, books should be made available so that they can be used in the learning the subject and even for the services of guidance and services (interview, all teacher counselors, May, 2017). One of the head teachers emphasized "*the important of the government and the ministry of education should sponsor teacher counselors for the courses and trainings on guidance and counseling*" (Interview, Head Teacher 8, May, 2017). This has been supported by Yunis (2006), who pointed out that trainings are very important in the service of guidance counseling. In this regard therefore, by supporting these teachers it will become very important in the services of guidance counseling probably because lack of funds among them could be the most limiting factor in most of them. In 2012 the same government started grants to primary schools (Hong Kong Education Department, 2012). So, in this way, it was able to boost the program of guidance and counseling as much as it could thus improving students' discipline.

As a teacher and a counselor, one teacher counselor expressed the opinion that “the Ministry of Education could start a curriculum on guidance and counseling and get incorporated in other curriculum so that it becomes part of the study” (interview, teacher counselor, 1 May, 2017). In this way, this will in turn help pupils stop dropping out of school or in other words pupils would get sustained in their schooling. The Ministry of Education is responsible for transfers of teachers and so it needs to look at the age of the teacher counselors and have an initiative of providing young teacher counselors in primary schools. This is because, according to the teacher counselors interviewed, pupils like young teacher counselors. Therefore, it will lead to development of interest to pupils seeking guidance and counseling, as well as reducing the age gap between them (Interview, Teacher Counselor 8, May, 2017). This is supported by the study which was done by Lai-Yeung (2013) on the need for guidance and counseling training for teachers and it was observed that guidance and counseling leads to changes in schools as well as in the department of education as whole. For examples in Hong Kong the services of guidance and counseling in many schools have experienced many changes. Such changes include, adopting a preventive approach to guidance and counseling, especially since the year 1986 (Hong Kong Education Department, 2001). Another change includes giving an official guide referred to as “*Guidance Work in Secondary Schools – A Suggested Guide for Principals and Teachers*”, and this was mainly to ensure that all the education departments receive guidelines to be used by teachers who are full time teaching staff. This was to enable them deliver well as well as offer other duties of teaching. Another main objective of the guideline was to ensure that learners realize the full potential of whole person development.

In addition, the plans of education also found it so necessary to work closely with the government so that the program of guidance and counseling could be integrated in the subsystems of the education. This also needs to involve other partners of the education such as the school administration, parents, and learners and in some cases religion bodies for instance churches (Lai-Yeung, 2013). In order to combat drug misuse among young people, the Kenyan government has to improve the NACADA office and the Office of National Policy on Drug Abuse. (Chepkonga, 2020). It is suggested that they be provided training and parent empowerment programs on topics related to counseling and guidance so they may practice with their kids when they get home from school. As soon as it is realized, interventions to control the affected students should begin, especially right away, in order to halt any further deterioration and even to stop such affected students from turning to drug usage (Chepkonga, 2020). Wambugu (2010), gives his opinion that the lower administrations such as chiefs need to be holding campaigns on the importance of guidance and counseling.

**Trainings and Office Availability:** A of the teacher counselors also said that “there is need for serious trainings or induction in guidance and counseling for all teachers” (interview, teacher counselor 10, May, 2017). This is in agreement with Mumanyi (2013) that teacher counselor require trainings related to guidance and counseling so as to feel competency in their work. According to the study done by Lai-Yeung (2013), it is realized that one of the most important thing teachers need to know despite the fact that they have skills or not, is to provide guidance and counseling to pupils in schools. A teacher counselor noted that, one of the skills that teachers in learning institutions readily need is of guidance and counseling since this would lead towards improving pupils’ discipline in schools as well as when they go back to their homes. And she further observed that the counseling offices can be helpful since it helps pupils to a greater extent” (Interview, Teacher Counselor 3, May, 2017). And another teacher counselor noted that, pupils who have been left in schools can be given an intensive guidance and counseling so as to ensure completion of their studies not only in primary education but also in tertiary education. He therefore proposed having good offices for the services of guidance and counseling where they can comfortably conduct services of guidance and counseling. This helps in the aspect of privacy and confidentiality (Interview, Teacher Counselor 6, May, 2017).

It was realized that teachers have always been giving guidance to students despite the fact that they are not trained on guidance and counseling. In this conjunction therefore, there is need to provide training on guidance and counseling to teachers at various degrees. Both service-related and life-skills-related skills and knowledge are necessary for the guidance and counseling training they recommended having. Teachers requested training in interpersonal relationships, communication skills, and interpersonal skills that primarily deal with day-to-day living in the same study. From these angles, the Kenyan government should accept that in order to provide teacher-counselors with the necessary training (Lambie & Haugen, 2021). Guidance and counseling especially when it is meant for changing the attitudes against the physically challenged persons is considered very productive (Bella-Awusah *et al.*, 2022). From his study, he explains that a very close observation of events and people in our contemporary society shows clearly that they do very little about them as far as the services. Mostert (2016), conducted a study in Africa and reveals that. In many circumstances, communities disregard and even neglect people with disabilities. So, teacher counselors need to be trained if they are not, and this is to equip them with guidance and counseling skills that enable them deal with the physical challenges of people. As a result, when this is done in schools, particularly in primary schools, other students will be able to respect them and be able to learn alongside them (Mostert, 2016). In addition, a particular program for those who are physically challenged needs to be added to the regular school curriculum so that even those individuals may access the necessary advice and counseling information.

**Teacher Counselor Counseling Experience:** On the issues of counseling experience, 80% had done the work of guidance and counseling for 0-5 years while 10% had done for 6-10 years and 10% had done for more than 10 years. Based on the result above, it was revealed that there is less experience of the teacher counselors in the service of guidance and counseling and this may hinder the contribution to the guidance and counseling activities. A number of them indicated that the services can be improved by ensuring that teacher counselors who have a long experience in their profession to be availed in primary schools since they are equipped with knowledge and ways out on how to deal with the service of guidance and counseling (Interview, Teacher Counselors 6, May, 2017). Onyancha *et al.* (2021), suggest that any learning institutions such as primary schools, need to be continuously offering a form of preventive programs that would mainly focus on the need of pupil sat schools. Such programs can include; peer counseling and mentoring, life skills programs, gender a based programs among others. Other programs would include; gambling addiction, drug abuse, sexuality among others.

**Parents’ Involvement in Guidance and Counseling:** One of the teacher counselors “suggested that parents be involved in the service of guidance and counseling of their children, which will help pupils, parents and teachers” (Interview, Teacher Counselor 3, May, 2017). The study is agreement with that of Njobvu & Simuyaba (2020) who states that there are several ways for students to gain awareness and connect to the guidance and counseling program; these include students participating in various peer support programs, particularly those related to guidance and counseling provision, and bullying awareness programs that should be taught in school health-related curricula. Others include implementing an integrated approach to counseling across all schools and employees. A successful guidance and counseling programs, need an established of a very strong body of leadership in schools’ community including parents, teachers and the administration (Ames *et al.*, 2019). He added that the leadership needs to strategies a well prepared annual-plan goals which is related to the school practices. He also highlighted a number of advantages of leadership as far as the guidance and counseling activities are concerned. The other important aspect of leadership involves whereby there is a string involvement by the heads of schools such as head teachers and the principals as well as other leaders in pastoral care centers. For instance, heads may attend meetings regarding students and he or she is able to get information about individual students.

Finally, Ames *et al.*, (2019) suggest that There is a need to establish a powerful board of parents, or rather, community members, who would collaborate closely with the other boards currently established. From the study done by Stickl Haugen *et al.* (2022), In order for teacher counselors to be available the majority of the time and not have any classroom responsibilities, they must be assigned less work than other employees in their particular area.

**Need for Privacy:** One teacher counselor noted that, "*there is need for privacy in guidance and counseling in primary schools*" (Interview, Teacher Counselor 10, May, 2017). The study concurs with that of Minga (2018), who argues that the main reason for keeping counseling rooms and spaces away from locations where everyone can be seen is to protect the privacy of the clients, in this case students or learners. In this approach, schools would be able to draw in a large number of the students and pupils who might otherwise seek advice and guidance services elsewhere.

### Recommendation

- The administrators need to examine the most effective age for teacher counselors.
- The school administration should make certain that professionals in guidance and counseling are invited to talk and stimulate students on a variety of life topics.
- The school administration and the ministry of education should ensure that finances are constantly accessible for the guidance and counselling program.
- Occasionally, the Kenyan government should improve the office of National Policy on Drug Usage, in collaboration with the NACADA office, to combat drug abuse among young people.

## CONCLUSION

It was concluded that challenges included a lack of resource materials, apprehension that students would be reported to administration, insufficient training of teacher counselors, a lack of parental support, and students' negative attitudes toward counseling. There are ways to improve guidance and counseling, such as establishing a functional and well-equipped department, training teacher counselors in counseling skills, and receiving full support from all stakeholders.

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