

**CHALLENGES FACING TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING GUIDANCE
AND COUNSELING PROGRAMME IN PUBLIC SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN KIKUYU DIVISION IN KIAMBU DISTRICT, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Guidance and counseling (G&C), has been identified as an important aspect in Educational and Training institutions, by many countries in the world, owing to its internationally recognized role of improving all aspects of quality education. Although G&C programme has existed in the Kenyan learning institutions since the 1970s, these institutions still experience problems that are expected to be prevented and even solved through the programme.

This study endeavored to find out the challenges teachers face while implementing the G & C programme in public secondary schools. To begin with, it aimed at investigating how well the G & C teachers were skilled, finding out how well schools were equipped with G & C facilities and how the G & C departments were supported by the school administration. In addition, the study sought to determine the attitude of teachers towards G & C services and identification of other challenges that the G & C programme faced in secondary schools. Finally, ways were suggested in which these challenges could be overcome.

Research questions were formulated in line with the above objectives. The literature reviewed delved into the concept of guidance and counseling, its history and the importance of training of teachers in guidance and counseling skills. The

G & C programmes administrative support, its role in schools, the students' attitude towards G&C service and the impact of G & C in facilitating the teaching and learning process were also explored. The incisive review has helped ground the study and has been utilized to ascertain the findings of the study.

The research design employed was ex-post facto. A sample of 60 teachers and 10 headteachers from Kikuyu Division was arrived at through proportionate stratified sampling of schools and purposive sampling of teachers. Instruments used in the study were teachers' and head teachers' questionnaires to collect data and their validity was established as adequate. Data from the questionnaire was analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics, in particular frequencies and percentages.

From the findings it was established that the G & C teachers did not have adequate G & C skills and lacked sufficient administrative support, especially on financial provision to run the programme effectively. Additionally, challenges such as lack of motivation of teachers and inadequate time to render G & C services. The study further established that in spite of teachers having a positive attitude towards the G & C programme, its ability to boost the teaching and learning process and improve discipline among students was wanting.

The study identified remedies to address these challenges. These included: provision of resources and funds toward G&C programmes in schools, initial training and in servicing of G&C teachers, motivation of G&C teachers, creating

time for G&C programme in the school timetable and involving all stakeholders in G&C issues.

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. A more comprehensive G&C curriculum should be incorporated in pre-service courses for all teachers to ensure that they are fully trained counselors as well as regular in servicing for practicing G&C teachers in schools.
2. G&C departments should be adequately staffed and G&C be allocated adequate time in the school timetable to enable teachers to comfortably handle their clients without overstretching into their free time.
3. Funds be deliberately allocated to the G&C department, and where possible parents and community-based organizations be involved.
4. Recognition and motivation be provided for the G&C teachers.
5. Counseling referral centers manned by the Ministry of Education be made accessible to schools.

From the study the following areas were recommended for further research.

- There is need to investigate how Guidance and Counseling influences the students' performance.
- An evaluation of different G&C curricula offered by different colleges for harmonization purpose.
- A similar study in an urban setting for purpose of comparison.
- An investigation on the viability of Guidance and counseling resource centres which could also act as referral centres for schools.

Summary of the Study findings

Today the G&C programme aims at helping students to develop in three dimensions: personal, social, educational / academic and career guidance. Moreover, guidance was placed in the hands of teachers in order to enable them help learners go up the education ladder without problems emanating from the three dimensions hence enhance their performance.

Despite the fact that the G&C programme has been in existence in Kenya and specifically in Kikuyu Division, incidents of students' unrests in secondary schools were persistent. It is in this light that this study was conducted to establish the challenges faced by teachers in implementing G&C programme in secondary schools in Kikuyu Division. Aspects focused on included the training of G&C teachers in G&C skills, availability of resources, administrative support, attitude of teachers towards G&C services and other challenges impeding on the implementation of the G&C programme and their remedies.

Related literature reviewed focused on the following aspects: concept of guidance and counseling, historical overview, training, administrative support, role of G&C in schools and the impact of effective guidance. The factors were summarized using a conceptual framework. Using an ex-post facto design, the study involved a sample of 50 G&C teachers and 10 headteachers. Of these respondents, 50 G&C teachers and 7 headteachers duly completed the questionnaires. The research questionnaires used were tested and established as reliable (at 0.92 and 0.96 for the G&C teachers' and headteachers' questionnaires respectively). Using Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient, reliability was established. In order to get a more accurate value, the Spearman Brown

Prophecy formula was applied. In addition, consultation and advice mainly from the supervisor was incorporated to increase the validity and reliability of the instruments before issuing them to respondents. Using percentages and frequencies, the gathered data was analyzed to answer the research questions and thus achieve the study's objectives. The following were the results:

On the extent to which G&C teachers in public secondary schools were trained to enable them implement G&C programme, the study found out that G&C teachers were professionally and academically qualified. An overwhelming majority (94%) of the G&C teachers reported that they had undergone some basic form of training during their pre-service course. However, 82% reported that the training was only a single unit in the education course. In addition, three quarters of these teachers never attended any in-service training to acquire skills in guidance, placing the programme in the hands of under qualified teachers and consequently leading to its poor implementation. In general there is need for more training to equip the G&C teachers with more skills and competencies in order to keep abreast with the ever-changing needs that call for modern methods in guidance and counseling.

The study made an enquiry about the school administrative support given to G&C programme. Most (82.0%) respondents reported that the staffing of the G&C departments was inadequate since they had only one G&C teacher. This was contrary to the government recommendation of having 5-8 members in the G&C committee in a school (MoEST, 1999). Inadequate time for G&C programme in secondary schools in Kikuyu Division was a challenge, concurring with the ministerial findings that time is a resource

that affects effective and efficient implementation of G&C services in schools and if not allocated adequate time, the programme suffers. The G&C teachers were in need of financial and administrative support of the G&C programme, challenges that may have rendered the G&C programme ineffective.

The study sought to find out the availability of resources that were at the teachers' disposal for implementing G&C programme in public secondary schools the division. The findings indicate that generally, schools in Kikuyu Division had reference and recording materials. However, they lacked G&C offices and videotapes. This means other than offices and videotapes; resources were not a major challenge to the implementation of the G&C programme in the division.

Information was gathered about the teachers' attitude towards G&C services. The study established that almost ninety percent (91.2%) of the two sets of respondents (headteachers and teachers) had positive attitudes towards G&C programme. More than half of the teachers were willing to take up the counseling roles in schools while both headteachers and teachers were positive about the programmes' ability to promote the teaching and learning process in their schools.

Concerning other challenges that the study identified, 85.7% reported lack of motivation as the TSC did not recognize their certification after attending short courses on G&C. Persistent school strikes despite the existence of G&C services in schools for over three years or so was also reported. In addition, teachers lamented that there lacked a clear

demarcation between the role of G&C teacher and that of discipline master while lack of cooperation from other teachers, students and parents was reported as a challenge. Other challenges that were cited include lack of professionalism and a referral center among others.

The study identified ways of addressing these challenges. These included: provision of resources and funds toward G&C programmes in schools, initial training and in servicing of G&C teachers, motivation of G&C teachers, creating time for G&C programme in the school timetable and involving all stakeholders in G&C to appeal for their cooperation.

Conclusions of the study

From the findings, several conclusions were arrived at:

First, the study revealed that teachers in Kikuyu Division required training in G&C skills. The training of teachers is imperative because as all the headteachers and G&C teachers reported, it equipped them with the skills to handle all sorts of student related problems. Therefore, teachers handling G&C in schools should undergo training either through pre-service or in-service.

Secondly, it was established that schools in Kikuyu Division had fairly adequate resources for G&C departments other than offices and videotapes. This means that resources were not a major challenge in the implementation of G&C programme. However, there was need to equip the G&C departments with electronic facilities.

Thirdly, the study found out that the difficulties faced by teachers in implementing G&C programme in the division were compounded by inadequate administrative support with the headteachers making no deliberate effort to support the implementation. Majority (82.0%) of the teachers reported having only one teacher in the G&C department. They also cited being overworked, lack of time and finances to run the programme. This points to a discrepancy between the ministries' policy and the practice in schools. This calls for a more pragmatic approach in G&C programme implementation, which requires a more deliberate move to staff the G&C departments and allocate time for G&C.

Fourthly, the G&C teachers in the division were found to have positive attitude (91.2% of all the respondents), towards the G&C programme in schools. This was evidenced by teachers' willingness to take up the G&C roles in their schools and being positive about the programme's ability to improve the teaching and learning process in schools. The G&C programme would benefit from the positive teachers' attitude, which should be taken advantage of to improve its implementation.

Lastly, challenges reported by G&C teachers in implementing G&C programme in schools included lack of motivation of the trained G&C teachers and lack of co-operation from the administration, other teachers, students and parents. In addition, teachers reported that, G&C required more support for its potential to be fully exploited in curbing student related problems in schools. Among the remedies recommended were: adequate training of G&C teachers, equipping the G&C department with resources to enhance G&C programme in schools, motivation of G&C teachers in terms of promotions, lesser workload and involving all stakeholders in G&C issues.

From these findings, it is evident that the G&C programme is facing a myriad of challenges, which are hindering its effectiveness despite its potential. If such challenges were alleviated, the programme would go a long way in alleviating learner problems and school strikes among others.

The following Recommendations were made based on the study findings

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The MoEST should to step up pre-service and in-servicing courses for G&C teachers in schools to improve their skills for implementing G&C programmes. The teacher training colleges need to come up with a more comprehensive curriculum for all teachers to be fully trained counselors before they leave college. Other bodies such as KIE and KESI can also assist in the training of G&C teachers. These courses will enable teachers to address emerging issues in G&C and expose them to G&C related problems as well as keeping them up-dated with new developments in the area.
2. Headteachers should ensure that funds be deliberately allocated to the G&C department, and where possible parents and community-based organizations be involved. The funds can be used to provide and equip G&C offices to make ensure conducive environment for offering G&C services. Where funds are lacking, parents and community-based organizations could help in putting up G&C offices and electronics such as televisions, video decks and tapes on different topics that can be of help to the youth.

3. Headteachers should facilitate working together with teachers, parents and student to make G&C programme a success. This could be through organizing meeting and ensuring liaison with all stakeholders. This will solve the role conflict between G&C and discipline.
1. The MoEST through TSC should ensure G&C is given special consideration when posting teachers to schools. This would ensure that schools have at least a trained teacher in the area. This will go along way in motivating them to perform their duties with commitment.
2. The MoEST together with partners should put up in each district a counseling referral center manned by the ministry and with a pool of counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, lawyers and doctors for consultations when required by schools. This would help G&C teachers in handling cases that need more than counseling.

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