The Challenges Facing the Implementation of Guidance and Counselling Programs and Opportunities in Public Secondary Schools in Kakamega County

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Abstract:- The study sought to examine the the challenges facing the implementation of guidance and counselling programs and opportunities in public secondary schools in Kakamega County. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The study population was 417 schools. The respondents included principals, teachers, and education officers, members of the Boards of management, support staff and students. Both probability and non-probability sampling designs were used as well as primary and secondary data collection techniques. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as tools for data collection. Quantitative data analysis was done using SPSS version 25. Research findings were presented in tables, graphs, and charts. The study found out that challenges that impact guidance and counselling include unconducive G&C environment, insufficient funds for the G&C programs, and lack of sufficient resources to support G&C programs. The study also found that emerging complexities such as technology and COVID-19 has had a drastic impact on guidance and counselling. However, schools can take advantage of some available opportunities such as peer counselling programs and training more teachers in guidance and counselling to ease the pressure on the few G&C teachers.

Keywords:- Challenges, Implementation, Guidance and Counselling Programs, Opportunities, Public Secondary Schools

I. INTRODUCTION

Conflict management has become one of the seriously planned activities in secondary schools besides curriculum implementation, supervision and evaluation. One of the obvious ways to manage conflicts is through guidance and counselling since the school environment presents various challenges to both teachers and students. According to Lutomia and Sikolia, (2008) students to students' conflicts and students to teachers' conflicts may arise because of examination related cases, psychosocial problems, drug abuse, truancy, lack of implementation of programs and financial challenges. A school might fail to meet its targets and objectives because of the conflict that could occur among students and between teachers and students. The challenges facing secondary schools' guidance counsellors are more performance related than finance due to the fact that schools continue to appoint teachers without relevant training to school counselling positions (Ngumi et al, 2007).

The formation of guidance and counselling departments in secondary schools is one of the most recent advances in the field of education in Kenya, particularly in terms of managing students. After banning of corporal punishment in 2001, it became popular (Ajowi & Simatwa, 2010). The development plan 1999-2000, according to Kenya Institute of Education (KIE, 2004), recommended the enhancement of guidance and counselling in Kenya. The Ministry of Education came up with structures and mechanisms to start guidance and counselling in schools. The agreed mechanisms include decentralizing the processes of supervising and coordinating guidance and counselling activities from the headquarters of the Ministry of education to provincial and district levels of management with the help of KIE in the development of relevant resources for use in providing guidance and counselling in schools. The Teacher's Service Commission (TSC)was also involved in the development of guidance and counselling. The commission was mandated with choosing teacher counsellors as heads of department (KIE, 2004). The major aims of the guidance and counselling idea was to avert occurrence of conflict in schools and society by facilitating change of behaviors, change of belief and values and improved decision making and coping mechanisms, and relief from various forms of stress including mental and emotional.

According to Modo, Sanni, Uwah, and Mogbo (2013), one of the educational services that increase the efficacy of the educational system for goal accomplishment and leading-learners through the learning process is guiding and counselling. This is in keeping with the National Policy of Education's (2004) goals for educational services, including making learning experiences more meaningful for children. It is possible to facilitate the implementation of educational policies, achieve policy goals, and promote the educational system's effectiveness.

According to Okobiah and Okorududu (2006), Guidance and Counselling encompasses acts of linked services and procedures enabling people inside and outside of the school to attain their full potential in emotional, ethical, interpersonal, cognitive, and professional advancement. The study examines the challenges facing the implementation of guidance and counselling programs and opportunities in public secondary schools in Kakamega County.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite all of the pros, initiatives, and counsellors' involvement in guidance and counselling, efficient service utilization in secondary schools faces challenges. It encompasses, for instance, the use of non-professionals guiding counsellors due to a shortage of qualified personnel. Improper use of ICTs in guiding and counselling Department, insufficient continuous staff training and development, insufficient time given to counselling services; and so on. The challenges that have been identified as barriers to efficient guidance and counselling services in the school system by Yu-chin and Yung-Chieh (2012) and Umoh (2000) include inadequate school counsellors and non-professionals, poor incorporation of Information technology into the counselling system, lack of effective use of assessment services through the Computer Assisted Testing Program (CAT), parental negligence, inadequate and incoherent use of orientation, diagnosis and treatment, and valuation services by counsellors, and inadequate school counsellor staff training and development programs.

Various laws govern the administration and management of educational institutions in Kenya. However, it appears that most educational institutions have struggled with conflict resolution (MOE, 2002). According to a report published by the Ministry of Education in 2002, despite implementing guidance and counselling policy, Kenyan educational institutions continue to report increasing student-student and student-teacher confrontations. When such confrontations are not handled properly, the implications are invariably disastrous, especially for students' health, academic performance, and school safety. Many educational institutions have achieved academic success, especially the administration and management team's supervision and counselling (Nyasio, 2015).

III. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was adopted to examine the nature of conflicts in secondary schools in Kakamega County. This is because descriptive investigations are not just limited to factual discoveries. Still, they can also lead to the development of key concepts of knowledge and the resolution of critical problems (Creswell, 2014). Findings and inquiries were made using a descriptive approach, which is based on the collection of data. The current strategies used to manage conflicts in secondary schools. This design also enabled classification, measurement, analysis, and comparison to gathering data: According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), descriptive research is aimed to gather information on the current occurrence and, if possible, derive valid general

conclusions from the facts discussed. The researcher administered a test to accomplish this goal, through the use of interviews and questionnaires to gather as much information as possible.

The study was conducted in Kakamega county, formerly the Western Province of Kenya. Despite the expansive nature of the County, the Study covered all the twelve (12) Sub Counties unreservedly. The Study covered the following categories of public secondary schools: boys boarding, girls boarding, mixed boarding, mixed day, boys' day, girls' day, girls boarding and day, boys boarding and day, and mixed boarding and day secondary schools. Kakamega County was selected because it is one of the counties with an increased number of indiscipline cases, especially the strikes between 2018 and 2020. Besides, Kakamega County has a large number of both urban and rural schools. Therefore, it provided a good room for looking at factors that affect the efficacy of guidance and counselling programs in urban and rural settings.

The study targeted all the four hundred and seventeen (417) public secondary schools in Kakamega County (CDE Office, 2020), all school Principals and teachers in these schools, Heads of department / Deputy Principals, education officers and officers from the Teachers' Service Commission at the County level, Boards of Management, Parents Associations, non-teaching staff, and class prefects and Form Three students from Kakamega County secondary schools.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) define sampling as a process of selecting the number of individuals to represent a larger group of subjects. To determine the sample size from a larger population the formula used by Kombo and Tromp (2006) is presented as shown below:

$$S = \frac{N(CV^2)}{CV^2 + (N-1)e^2}$$

Where:

S = Desired sample

N = Population

CV = Coefficient of variation (set at 0.1)

e = Tolerance at desired level of confidence (set at 0.5 at 95% confidence level.

The researcher used a combination of both probability and non-probability sampling designs. Simple random sampling (probability) to identify the schools. All categories of public secondary schools in Kakamega County were put into stratified groups depending on whether the schools are Boys, Girls, Mixed, Day and Boarding. Kakamega County has four hundred and seventeen (417) public secondary schools. Simple random sampling was then used to pick 20% of schools from all the school categories. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), a sample should be in a range of 10%-30%.

Simple random sampling was further used to pick one student from each Form Three class totaling to four hundred

and seventeen (417) students. The researcher then grouped them into focus groups for Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Further, one Form Three class teacher and one prefect from each school were also randomly selected and a questionnaire administered to them. Simple Random Sampling was also used to pick one non-teaching staff per school.

Purposive Sampling is useful when there is a need to limit the sample to cases that are likely to be "information rich" with respect to the study. Thus, Purposive Sampling will enable the researcher to sample specific persons in positions of responsibility. Therefore, Purposive Sampling was used to select the school principals, the County Director of Education (CDE), the County Director Teacher Management (CDTM), County Commissioner, Board of Management (BOM) and non-teaching staff members. These respondents have specific important information pertaining to school management that will enhance the study findings. In total, the sample comprised of three hundred and sixty-four (364) respondents.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Guidance and Counselling Environment
To find out the challenges of guiding and counselling programs as a tool for conflict management in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, the study sought to know if schools have a guidance and counselling room that offers a conducive environment such as privacy. From the findings, 10% (22) of the respondents strongly disagreed; 13.6% (30) somehow disagreed while 29.4% (65) disagreed. Cumulatively, 53% of the respondents felt that schools do not have guidance and counselling room that offers a conducive environment such as privacy. On the other hand, a cumulative 42.5% of the respondents felt that schools have guidance and counselling room that offers a conducive environment such as privacy.

From the field interviews, one key informant stated that "I have one main challenge is that there is no set aside room or building where guidance and counselling can take place so you find that we always sit out there and many are the times when the students will not be very much willing to come and approach you as a teacher in case they have issues" (Guidance and Counselling Teacher, 2021).

Echoing the above remarks, another principal stated that "What I know as a trained counsellor, counselling needs some thins put in place for example we need a room, a special room for doing that. In this school you find that we do not have the facilities, so what we do may not be actually counselling. It will just be guidance because you cannot guide and counsel under a tree. That alone makes it not work. So lack of infrastructure is one issue. Another issue is, when you are the principal and at the same time you are the guidance and counselling teacher sometimes it doesn't work because at some point you are punishing and at some point, you should be doing guiding and counselling" (Principal, 2021).

As another respondent reacted, the existing environment in schools is not conducive for guidance and counselling. As

she stated, "Another challenge that I can say disturbing for some time but I think eventually … room. A real private room because general guidance is just okay you can get a group of children and talk to them but when it comes to individual issues where a child really needs some degree of privacy, sometimes in a school situation you lack a very convenient room where you can actually ensure that this child can gain confidence in whoever is talking to them in the teacher or whoever is doing the guidance and counselling."

B. Funding Guidance and Counselling Programs
The study also sought to know if schools provide enough funding towards the guidance and counselling programs. From the findings in table 6.2, 14.5% (32) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that schools provide enough funding towards the guidance and counselling programs. Still on this, 22.6% (50) of the respondents somehow disagreed with the statement; and 38.5% (85) disagreed with the statement. On the other hand, a cumulative of 19.9% of the respondents agreed with the statement that schools provide enough funding towards the guidance and counselling programs.

From the field interviews, key informants felt that funding the Guidance and Counselling initiative was a challenge. As one stated, "Over and above that I think there is also the issue of financing because it is actually a department that needs emphasis just like the tuition department, just like the games department. It is also a department that require the resources. Sometimes the resources that we can use financial resources and other resources that we can use in exposing these people, the teachers or even the affected students to go even and seek for the…" (Head of Guidance and Counselling, 2021).

The current findings are also supported by Osakwe (2013) whose study in Nigeria established that guidance and counselling require adequate funding. Similarly, reorientation through counselling eliminates disciplinary problems and motivation of teachers makes them pay attention to the emotional and psychological needs of students. Counselling services in schools are instrumental in career decision making. He adds that inadequacy of guidance and counselling resources affects students in career decision making.

C. Availability of Resources in Guidance and Counselling Program
Respondents were asked to state if school have books, magazines and other resources that assist students to benefit from the guidance and counselling program. Form the findings in table 6.3, 9.5% (21) of the respondents strongly agreed that schools have books, magazines and other resources that assist students to benefit from the guidance and counselling program; 16.3% (36) of the respondents somehow agreed to this; while 26.7% (59) of the respondents agreed to this. Cumulatively, 52.5% of the respondents agreed that schools have books, magazines and other resources that assist students to benefit from the guidance and counselling program. On the other hand, a cumulative 43.0% of the respondents disagreed with this statement. Therefore, while some teaching and non-teaching staff felt that schools

have books, magazines and other resources that assist students to benefit from the guidance and counselling program others felt that schools do not have these resources.

When asked to state what they were doing to overcome the underlying challenges, one of the principals stated that, "Thank you, you have asked me a question, right now I am airing my views that I want the ministry of education to come out and say; we want. this is a policy, guidance and counselling as an office and a directorate and this directorate is independently operating to mitigate matters that are affecting the schools. So, I am giving a recommendation instead how to overcome the challenge. Let the ministry of education because, truth be told, because they have only one counsellor in Nairobi who cannot manage the whole country. We had twenty-one earlier on, we got to know that these twenty-one went to the ministry of gender what ...what... because their department was not given power. So, let the department of guidance and counselling be given a directorate of its own to operate like equipment, like free primary, like anything because it is an integral part of the society for both teachers and learners. And we can come up with ways of working and policies and training policies and all that because we have done that in other areas" (Principal, 2021).

In reacting to the availability of Guidance and Counselling resources, another key informant reacted that "How I would wish that we are able to get some materials that can help us or can lead us, help us to see at least how we can help these students as far as guiding and counselling is concerned. And I can't be specific on that. Some time back I remember we had these videos where kids would… through the ministry or something like that, the students could be shown videos. That is a one-on-one touch, they can see what is happening and then so doing then can they can prevent them from some of these conflicts that they get themselves into. A very good example is when it comes to sex education. You find that they would be shown videos where when you engage in such you might end up with such diseases or such disappointment and that one is something I would really wish that the today's learners, today's child can get access to so that they able to learn from what is happening in the real life" (Head of Guidance and Counselling, 2021).

D. Peer Counsellors' Availability in Schools

Respondents were also asked to state if their schools have peer counsellors to help prevent some conflicts among students. From the findings in table 6.4, 14.0% (31) of the respondents strongly agreed that schools have peer counsellors to help prevent some conflicts among students. Closely, 23.1% (51) of the respondents somehow agreed; while 29.0%(64) agreed. Cumulatively, 65.1% of the teachers agreed that schools have peer counsellors to help prevent some conflicts among students. On the other hand, a cumulative 30.7% of the respondents felt that schools do not have peer counsellors to help prevent some conflicts among students.

Interviews from the field also show that schools have tried to upgrade guidance and counselling by supporting peer counselling. As one key informant stated, "I have peer counselling group that help the students to help each other on their own. Secondly I have responsible student leaders, students who have positions of authority and their duty is not to intimidate but to help in guidance" (Head of Guidance and Counselling, 2021).

E. Functionality of Guidance and Counselling Department

The study also sought to know if schools within Kakamega County had functional guidance and counselling departments with a Head of Department. From the findings, 10.9% (24) of the respondents strongly agreed that guidance and counselling departments were functional in schools in the county; 18.0% (40) of the respondents somehow agreed to this; while 15.0% (33) of the respondents agreed to this. Cumulatively, 43.9% of the respondents felt that schools within Kakamega County had functional guidance and counselling departments with a substantive HOD. On the other hand, a cumulative 50.7% of the respondents felt that schools within Kakamega County did not have functional guidance and counselling departments with a HOD.

From the results, there were mixed findings showing that while fairly a good percentage of schools agreed that they had functional guidance and counselling departments, an equally good percentage (50.7%) of schools felt that they did not have functional guidance and counselling departments.

The functionality of guidance and counselling is also affected by lack of directive from the Ministry of Education. As one officer stated, "There is no directive from the ministry to institute guiding and counselling. There is no directive. We are just being told that there should be guiding and counselling in schools. So even what I have done in the past is personal decision. It is not because it has come from the ministry. So, we have not been mandated, we have not been given power to be able to do that. There are people out here who have the skills but they are not being used. We have people who have done guidance and counselling, but no one has identified them to use them and that is why the guidance and counselling and the psychologist association in Kenya we are coming up on how have ourselves be recognized as a commission" (Sub-County Director of Education, 2021).

Previous findings by Cheloti et al (2014) show that there are several problems with students which can be solved by guidance and counselling. Some of them are: Problems arising from inter-relationships, sexual problems, disagreement with parents, feeling of stress, conditions arisen from separation and losses., feelings arisen from jealousy and enmity, problems related to deaths and separations, feelings of confusion, inability to make decisions, emotional and sexual abuse, anger management, anxiety and sorrow, and mental depression (Cheloti *et al.,* 2014).

To overcome the challenges faced by the guidance and counsellor, one key informant stated that "The only thing that I have done is to empower those we put in place to manage the department. We take them for workshops when we have workshops at the sub-county level, when we have workshops at the county level, we normally ensure that they attend so

that they improve on their guidance skills" (Head of Guidance and Counselling, 2021).

The idea of teachers for workshops was also echoed by another key informant, who insisted that "As I said earlier, we go for workshops. Whenever we hear there is a workshop for guidance and counselling, we send a few of our teachers or I go depending on what level. So that is one area that helps to at least get some knowledge on how to go about it, not just the usual talks we give at parade to guide the children but how to actually do proper guidance and counselling. So, we go for those workshops. We tried and created a small room that we thought was private enough so those are some of the ways we try to overcome the challenge" (Principal, 2021).

To ensure an effective guidance and counselling department within the school, one respondent stated that "This one I think it is until the stakeholders are brought on board so that perhaps they build the school, give us the facilities so that we have departmental rooms and we set a side one that can be a guidance and counselling department. Then two, I think the ministry of education should also take guidance and counselling training seriously so that they have any service courses for teachers some who may volunteer to become counsellors. Then I also want to bring in the issue of peer counselling, I think if it can also be enhanced so that the students can also guide each other I think the department can also be strengthened in this school. But for me to achieve that for example the peer counselling, I need also support from the personnel the way I stated it is a hard being you know at one point you being seen as their tough administrator another minute you are supposed to be guiding and counselling that child" (Guidance and Counselling Teacher, 2021).

To overcome the underlying challenges, one principal stated that "The challenges of capacity, we are trying to overcome it by, that is why we have created peer counselling to handle certain sections. We are also engaging other teachers who are not necessarily in the department of the G&C, to other than being teachers we also give them opportunities to also have a chat with the students. Like in our school we normally have assembles on Wednesday where it is a G&C session at various time and number of people. Different teachers will come up with different topics and try and talk to the student. In building the capacity of teachers so that they are well endowed to handle the challenges, the only thing that we have been doing is to help organize and facilitate workshops where experts could train them. Though this has not been forthcoming so regularly, but the workshops have always been attended. The ministry also organizes some of them. Social media, I cannot say we have got a control over, we still have problem with that though we are trying to curtail the possession of phones in school because that is what they use but that is the biggest nightmare of any head today. Social media and phones."

Another respondent stated that for the schools to have effective Guidance and Counselling departments there was need to ensure that: "First at ministry level, G&C needs to be devised and facilitated by the ministry of education. Two, we would propose, I would propose that qualified trained G&C personnel- somebody who is equipped with a lot of guidance and counselling skills be posted to schools primarily for that. Just like a teacher is posted to teach Mathematics, these ones can be posted to schools to handle Guidance and counselling primarily as that is their area of operation. So funding needs to be there and capacity and manpower availability is also very important."

F. Student Discipline Since 2018

The study also sought to know the status of student discipline. Respondents were asked to state to what extent they felt student discipline had improved since 2018. From the findings, 10% (22) of the respondents strongly disagreed; 13.6(30) somehow disagreed; while 24.9% (55) disagreed. Cumulatively, 48.5% of the respondents felt that student discipline had not improved since 2018. On the other hand, 9.5% (21) of the respondents strongly agreed that student discipline had improved since 2018. Another 20.0% (44) somehow agreed while 17.2% (38) agreed to this. Cumulatively, 47.9% of the respondents felt that student discipline had improved since 2018.

While some respondents feel that student discipline had improved since 2018. Others equally felt that it had not. This is due to the fact that while some schools had effective guidance and counselling programs in schools, others had dysfunctional departments.

In their responses, a number of principals felt that discipline had deteriorated within the last 3 years because of the changing nature of conflicts. As one key informant stated, "I may not have been there, but the recurring nature of crime and conflicts in schools, they show that it is continuous and even it is going out of hand. Right now, we have children giving birth at the age of 10, or 12 from the statistics that we get from the ministry of health. Meaning that it is getting out of hand. Motor cycle (Boda-boda) riders came on board, they are playing their role. Because lack of finance and socio-economic hardships, children are taken into labour- that is child labour and all that. While they are in child labour they are abused, conflicts continue. Because of hardships in homes, people are breaking, marriages are breaking day in day out and this cascades to the children and it brings the situation to be dire in Kakamega County. I may say it is getting worse. Guidance and counselling has not come in. Probably in 2009 it was a little better but what I am learning between 2018 when I came to this place, the situation is dire. Yes, it needs intervention and very quick intervention" (Principal, 2021).

Echoing the above remarks, another key informant stated that "Okay, I think the youth of today seems to have many challenges as compared to the youth of the previous years, the reason being the permissiveness they have in the society where the child decides what to do, when and what time. Long time ago I think children were very obedient, they listened to their parents and they took well instructions. Another thing, we have absent parents so parenting has been left to the teacher. The parents have absconded their parental roles. Ones the student is in school they imagine that the teacher will do everything. Some of the parents are using the

kids as baits to get some little especially girls, you find that these girls even when they engage in relationships outside school, the parent don't take, it is upon themselves to come and share with the school so that they put their heads together and because of that it has encouraged them to do what is not right. They are ruining themselves, some on drugs, but what is affecting day schools mostly is relationships within and without the school which lead to early pregnancies. Many female students start getting involved in these vices as early as at form one level, making it for them to complete their studies. However, for those who complete end up finishing late as they dropout a bit to take care of their own babies. Not because of lack of fees only, just because of lack of role models in the society. They have become absent parents unlike the years before and including 2019, when things were working desirably. That's why in my opinion, today the social fabric is no longer interwoven" (Guidance and Counselling Teacher, 2021).

These findings are also supported by Alizadeh (2011), who found that conflict in schools may arise due to the psychological deficiencies created by dysfunctional homes. Worry, hatred, inferiority complex, superiority complex, anger and other negative emotions which fuel violent behaviour, could develop in people when they are exposed to poor parenting or disaccord amongst family members. In addition, in homes where parents/guardians display violent behaviour, children usually adopt violence as a way of asserting authority.

Some respondents also felt that COVID-19 had played a key role in the deteriorating student discipline. As one stated, "It's true, our children have never been the same since they came back last year in October for the form fours who sat for their final examinations and these other ones who resumed later on. They came back without previous taught knowledge. Is like we were to start the syllabus a fresh and after the COVID – 19 Pandemic also if you take statistics of the girls who never reported back to school, it is so big. Maybe like this school to be specific, in the form three class, 10 girls never returned and most of them were reported to be expectant. But again, what baffles the school, the parents have never just come to school to say my child…this and that happened. Last year those who did sit for their examinations, two girls came back very expectant, they wrote their exams in that family way. Some like the boys got into doing drugs, some got into small businesses like selling onions, tomatoes. So, you know they already now got used to money, and someone who is used to being given some money after you sell some items becomes hard to concentrate. Some were given boda-boda so as to work for people so its true Covid played a very negative role on the students" (Principal, 2021).

Form the previous literature, pressure piled on youngsters can result in disastrous outcomes if not well controlled. As of April 24th 2015, A&E (Art and Entertainment) Television Networks reported on its history website that the worst high school shooting in U.S history was the Columbine High School Massacre of April 20 1999, which occurred at Columbine High School in Columbine, Colorado. The perpetrators, reportedly, two senior students,

murdered twelve (12) students and one teacher; injuring twenty-one (21) additional people, after which the pair then committed suicide. This incident proved that school violence is, indeed, a global threat, the National School Safety Centre records one of the worst cases of school violence to have occurred in Beslan, Russia, in 2004, with three hundred and fifty (350) people killed, half of which were children.

These findings are supported by Jacoby (2008), who asserts that conflictive attitudes are closely related to conflictive situations. Conflictive attitudes refer to the common patterns of expectation, emotional orientation and perception that accompany involvement in a conflict situation. These might result in anger, resentment, suspicion, and cognitive processes such as stereotyping and selective approaches to new information. As Jacoby further states, these frequently become self-perpetuating in that previous experiences of a conflict will reinforce or exaggerate conflictive attitudes in the future.

COVID-19 had made students to become prone to anger and violent reactions. As one principal narrated, "Yeah I want to believe so, children are agile, they are like they are stressed, it's like they want to create issues; I am sick, I am this and this; they want to go home; they feel maybe being in school is a bit too hard for them. Now they compare that long holiday they were so relaxed, they come back things are a bit hard; a lot is expected. Like form twos are like 'madam you mean next year we have exams?' So, when you tell them 'Yes, we have exams next year, you are form two but you are candidates next year. Settle down and study.' And is like that is also creating a lot of pressure in them, and with built pressure then small, small things make them not feel so good" (Principal, 2021).

As Bradshaw (2007) show, as a source of conflict, attitudes, in the form of internal drives and thoughts, may push individuals towards conflictive behaviour. He clarifies this behaviour by suggesting that in many cases, conflicts might be said to exist even though no conflict-related actions have taken place. That means that a lack of conflictive behaviour does not necessarily mean there is peace.

Further, Allis & Kame (1999) survey on indiscipline among 2170 preparatory and secondary school students enrolled in the mainstream governmental schools in Alexandria in Egypt found that indiscipline among school students and its predictors were investigated. A few indiscipline cases were related to family background whereas the majority was related to the children themselves. Guidance and counselling was suggested as the best alternative.

While most key informants felt that discipline had deteriorated as years go by, other respondents felt that he situation was improving. As one principal highlighted, "2019 going backwards there were comparatively lack of harmony, there were conflicts how certain things ought to run but 2021 we are very homogeneous, we are very much okay. We may have a few challenges here and there but generally we are moving on very well as a school. And primarily because we have strengthened that department. We have given it more

time, we have allocated it office, we are trying to give them or spare some resources for them to run so as we may be able to work effectively" (Principal, 2021).

G. Availability of Guidance and Counselling Teachers

Despite some of the challenges facing guidance and counselling in schools, the availability of Guidance and Counselling teachers is a good opportunity for the growth of the practice within schools. From the interviews, Guidance and Counselling teachers stated that they play a key role in mitigating student-student conflicts. As one teacher stated, "I get in close contacts with the students and one thing I have always told them is that we are in school and when we are in school, we are brothers and sisters. Regardless of where you come from, once you are in school being in that uniform it means we are all the same and hence we are a small family, we are brothers we are sisters it is a matter of encouraging them to be another's keeper. To be a brother's keeper, to be the sister's keeper. Then another thing that we also criticize on so much if we always remind them of who they are and why they are here, so that they are always focused on what brought them here. When they know that "I am a student and I must carry on the role of a student then once I am in school, then it really deters them from those conflicts amongst themselves" (Head of Guidance and Counselling, 2021).

Another respondent stated that "All these learners that we have each one of them have a parent, a parent -teacher. We have put them in small groups with their parents who are teachers who are now foreseeing what they are doing on daily basis and that one has really helped them to avoid these conflicts amongst themselves. They have parents in small groups, they have a teacher, these are people who have children, who are supposed to be a father or a mother and at that point in time you find the student has no issues with conflicts as such" (Head of Guidance and Counselling, 2021).

As another key informant stated, the guidance and counselling inefficacy stems from lack of trained counsellors in schools. As he said, "We don't have trained personnel equipped with the skills that are required to do proper guidance and counselling hence the possibility of picking any lady teacher form among those in school and let her become our Guidance and counselling teacher. So that again becomes a challenge. The challenges are many but those are just a few" (Principal, 2021). This view is supported by Duda (1996) study report which concluded that: teachers lacked the skills and techniques to handle students' problems effectively; teachers had an overloaded curriculum and little or no time for counselling.

Previous literature shows that equipping teachers with guidance and counselling skills was key to attaining tranquillity and seamless running in schools. In his study, Nassey (2012) in New Zealand established that teachers' use of classroom-based management strategies were appropriate and that teachers believed that through the methods, they monitored and communicated to their students frequently during the lessons.

In line with this, another respondent stated that "The first challenge is capacity, it has to do with manpower. We have a population; the number of teachers we have dealing with G&C are fewer than the students that we have. Like we have a thousand students but we have only two teacher helping to coordinate them. That is less. Sometimes it may not reach everybody. The second challenge that we have is training capacity. Those we have, teachers that we have taking care of these actually first of all teachers. What they normally go for simply workshops for G&C but they may not have the necessary or requisite expertise to handle certain complex issues and therefore some issues are very complex affecting the students, very complex that may require an expert to handle over a long period of time. So that training bit of it is still a challenge in our institutions" (Principal, 2021).

Just like the other respondents, another key informant cited lack of trained teachers as a cause for ineffectiveness in the G&C department. As he stated, "we don't have trained guidance and counselling teachers. We don't have teachers trained or personnel that is trained for guidance and counselling. Maybe we have gone for a few workshops here and there but we were never trained to be guidance and counselling people. A few of us may have gotten trainings here and there along the way just in the course of teaching; maybe there is a workshop in counselling, maybe there counselling workshop somewhere else, maybe a one-day workshop, maybe a one-week workshop. So the main issue is that the people whom we are using to guide and counsel are not trained people. Many of them have also learnt on the job. They have learnt this guidance and counselling on the job and I feel that that is really a major issue on guidance and counselling that we lack that training that may be necessary" (Head of Guidance and Counselling, 2021).

In previous findings, Brown (2013), emphasizes on positive reinforcement approaches, which effectively increased positive behaviour, which led to clear and positive communication between teachers and students in New Zealand. In addition, Klopfer (2014), revealed that training on proactive behavioural management had positive influence on teachers' self, emotions, teaching style and reactions towards children and their use of management strategies in the classroom.

Chepkirui (2011) in his study on appointment of heads of departments for guidance and counselling teachers in Bureti district in the year 2011 reveals that most of teacher counsellors in were appointed as heads of guiding and counselling departments without any prior training on their roles or responsibilities. Arudo (2008) emphasizes that many schools have teacher counsellors who were in office by title offering dismal services to students. This is why it was recommended that teacher counsellors require training in the guidance and counselling (Arudo, 2008). Enough reliable training and knowledge will help teacher counsellors to perform their responsibilities effectively. Technological and social changes and educational demands for counselling have been identified as the factors that engineer the need for training among teacher counsellors (Ndichu, 2005). Students

in public schools are exposed to technology today unlike in the past. Unless trained on the implication of the changing technology, the teacher counsellors may be underdogs to learners in displaying technological skills. This will negatively affect the effectiveness of their performance as guidance and counselling responsibilities.

V. CONCLUSION

When it comes to the challenges and opportunities of guidance and counselling programs as a tool for conflict management in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, the study found that some of the challenges that impact guidance and counselling include unconducive G&C environment, insufficient funds for the G&C programs, and lack of sufficient resources to support G&C programs. The study also found that emerging complexities such as technology and COVID-19 has had a drastic impact on guidance and counselling. However, schools can take advantage of some available opportunities such as peer counselling programs and training more teachers in guidance and counselling to ease the pressure on the few G&C teachers. The study concludes that guidance and counselling in schools within Kakamega County suffers from insufficient funds, insufficient resources, and lack of sufficiently trained teachers in guidance and counselling. Besides, the emerging factors such as technology and COVID-19 has completely changed the landscape of guidance and counselling.

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