



## INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS-COUNSELLORS' PROFESSIONALS DEVELOPMENT ON GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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### Abstract

This study sought to find out the influence of teachers-counsellors' professionals' development on guidance and counselling programme effectiveness in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study employed descriptive and correlational research designs. Data was collected using teacher counsellors' professional development questionnaire. The findings of this study revealed teacher counsellors have relatively high levels of professional development in guidance and counselling, and teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling had a positive statistically significant prediction on school guidance and counselling programme efficacy. It was concluded that the guidance and counselling personnel who are actually full-time teachers with the extra role of counsellor have high levels of professional development in guidance and counselling, and the high levels of professional development positively influenced school guidance and counselling programme efficacy. Teacher counsellors in Kenya are recommended to enhance and manifest professional development in guidance and counselling in an effort to ensure effective school guidance and counselling programme.

**Key terms:** Adolescent mother, infant, feeding practices, nutritional status, breastfeeding.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of school guidance and counselling programme in Kenyan secondary schools in the early 1970s, the government of Kenya has consistently strengthened guidance and counselling programmes to make them responsive to students' academic, career and personal/social needs. Kabutiei (2007) enumerated chronologically accumulated goals of the secondary school guidance and counselling programme in Kenya. In spite of the sustained efforts to ensure guidance and counselling service, address students' needs, the entire school system is still experiencing challenges that suggest guidance and counselling was ineffective.

The challenges experienced by the school system that may require interventions found in guidance and counselling include slow response to student concerns, rigidity in decision making, lack of inclusivity in matters that concern students, inefficiencies, lack of transparency, lack of democracy and ignoring student needs (G.O.K, 2009), insistent school unrest (M.O.E, 2021), unabated use of corporal punishment (Mweru, 2010, Institute of economic affairs, Kenya, 2010, Najoli et al., 2019) despite its ban in 2001 (R.O.K, 2002, R.O.K, 2013), adolescent pregnancies ( M.O.E, 2020), negative influence of peer pressure, drug and substance abuse, harmful traditional practices, violence and negative media influence (R.O.K, 2013); youth radicalization (G.O.K, 2007); insufficient vocational guidance (Njonge & Nguata, 2014; Sindabi & Ngigi 2014); hopelessness (G.O.K, 2001), runaway indiscipline (Koech, 2016), suicidal tendencies (Nyamori, 2015); academic underachievement (KNBS, 2020); youth radicalization (G.O.K, 2007), neglect of career awareness and planning, life skills education, decision making and problem solving skills, educational planning, stress management, time management and wise use of leisure time (Ajowi & Simatwa, 2015), unrelenting deviant behaviours among students (Njenga & Omulema, 2014), and drug and substance abuse (NACADA, 2011). Weak career guidance (G.O.K, 2018) and inconsistency between guidance and counselling services and students' guidance and counselling needs (G.O.K, 2009) have been observed. Youth neglect, worries about getting/making someone pregnant, getting HIV/AIDS, passing examinations, violence and fighting at home and community have been reported (Nation Reporter, August 18, 2007). The challenges in the school system are attributed to many variables, including teacher counsellor characteristics.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have investigated school counsellors' factors that enhance or hinder guidance and counselling effectiveness, including personal characteristics and professional skill sets (Glenn et al., 2015), quality of counsellor (Fuster, 2018); relational, professional, personality, demographic and diversity, developmental and personal characteristics (Popescu, 2012). In the study of Baldwin and Imel (2013), counsellor effects explained five per cent to 10 per cent of the variance in client outcomes across different therapies. Confirmatory findings were espoused by Jinkerson et al. (2015), who found statistically significant variance in counselling outcomes is contributed by counsellor characteristics, client characteristics and interaction effects. In fact, Changing Works Organization (2008) cited the teacher counsellor among four major variables: client, teacher counsellor, contextual and process factors, directly or in association, attributed to guidance and counselling programme effectiveness. Besides, a discrepancy in performance was observed among counsellors. In an empirical study by Wampold (2001), counsellors differed in their counselling effectiveness, with the differences exceeding treatment effects. Some counsellors were more able than others to influence counselling outcomes.

In some instances, therapist effects were superior to treatment effects (Lindgren et al., 2010), suggestive of the necessity of establishing the characteristics that bring the differences in performance. In support of this

need, Beutler et al. (2004) and Castonguay et al. (2010) found scanty knowledge exists on the characteristics of more effective counsellors actually are and whether different counsellor characteristics are required in therapies of different forms and lengths. Nevertheless, the findings of Beutler and Castonguay and associates may suffice for teacher counsellors in the Kenyan school setting. This study, thus, investigated the levels of teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling and whether it influenced school guidance and counselling programme success.

Teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling is continuing education in guidance and counselling that includes but is not limited to research, consultations, personal therapies, practicums, seminars, workshops, conferences, readings, journaling, mentorships, short courses, supervision, watching videos, and other services in guidance and counselling expected or required of teacher counsellors beyond formal training if any. Professional development in guidance and counselling continuously updates teacher counsellors' skills, knowledge, abilities, values, ethics, approaches, training, techniques, strategies, attitudes, competencies, and capacities in school guidance and counselling service.

Stage theory proposed by Spruill and Benshoff (2000) and Ronnestad and Skovholt (2003) explained professional development for psychologists, counsellors, therapists and other personnel in helping professions. Since this researcher did not find a theory dedicated specifically to the professional development of certified teachers actively engaged in teaching roles with the additional role of a counsellor in the school setting, developmental theories detailed by Myers et al. (2002) guided this study. Moreover, Donald (1974) maintained that the sources of philosophical foundations and methods of guidance and counselling are premised on developmental theories outlined by Myers et al. (2002). Gibbs and Magnus (2010) and Studer (2006), who indicated that developmental models were beneficial in facilitating counsellors' professional growth and efficacy, supported this. In a strict sense, professional development begins after formal training in guidance and counselling (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003). Several approaches for offering professional development in the field of counselling and psychotherapy have been proposed. According to Horn and Masunaga (2006), professional development programmes should be focused, conducted over extended periods of time, guided by analysis of the level of expertise attained, with identification of errors and procedures aimed at eliminating the errors. Lemov et al. (2012) and Miller and Hubble (2011) suggest that professional growth should have an element of learning from feedback and refinement by repetition by the trainee alone and in consultation or supervision. Additionally, Ramani et al. (2019) proposed the inclusion of principles of experiential learning, adult learning and longitudinal curricula.

Conceptually, professional development enhances counsellors' self-awareness and self-reflection skills and enables the counsellor to develop a clear perception of their own and clients' needs (Egan, 2001 & Fuster, 2018); and helps in maintaining professional competency and expertise after initial training (ASCA, 2010; Fairburn & Cooper, 2011). In addition, the school counsellor should keep abreast with educational reforms as they stay up-to-date with emergent guidance, theories, and evidence-based counselling practices (Rhyne-Winkle & Wooten, 1996). In Western contexts, school counsellors attain professional development through coaching, consulting, live webinars, online training and annual conferences (ASCA, 2022) as they enhance their professional success and avoid being professionally obsolete (Peace, 1995; Spooner & Stone, 1977).

Empirical findings affirm the positive influence of counsellor's professional growth in guidance and counselling on the efficacy of guidance and counselling performance (Sink & Stroh, 2003; Webb et al., 2005; Young & Kaffenberger, 2015; Betters-Bubon & Donohre, 2016; Holcom-McCoy, 2007; David & Cobeanu, 2014 & Johnson, 2016). School counsellors who persistently engage in professional development as mandated by ASCA National Model have been associated with student positive academic and behavioural outcomes (Sink & Stroh, 2003; Webb et al., 2005). The school counsellors who are members of ASCA undergo professional development in compliance with state requirements (ASCA, 2010). Another study confirming the role of professional development on guidance and counselling outcomes was conducted by Young and Kaffenberger (2015). The two scholars found participation in professional development enabled school counsellors to use data appropriately to influence student achievement and college and career readiness. Corroborative findings emanate from the scholarly work Betters-Bubon and Donohue (2016), Holcom-McCoy (2007), Howell et al. (2007, David and Cobeanu (2014). Findings from the aforesaid researchers affirmed the significant association between professional development and psychotherapy outcomes. In a Colorado study, Johnson (2016, August 2) reported a successful professional development initiative for school counsellors which support the teacher counsellor's professional development in enhancing guidance and counselling delivery. In Western counties, professional development is for post-degree professional nurturing (Howell et al. 2007).

Miller et al. (2018) found no association between participation in supervision and attending post-graduate continuing education and psychotherapy outcomes. Miller and colleagues suggested the use of the therapeutic factors to enhance therapy outcomes instead of teacher counsellor characteristics. The literature reviewed in this study was not based on certified teachers actively engaged in a teaching role with the extra role of the counsellor in a developing country's setting hence the want of this study. This study thus aimed to (i) explore levels of teacher counsellors' professional development and (ii) establish whether the teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling influenced school guidance and counselling programme effectiveness in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya. This study hypothesized that when teacher counsellors with high levels of professional development are engaged in school guidance and counselling, the school guidance and counselling programme becomes effective.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive and correlational research designs (Kathuri & Pals (1993). Data was collected using teacher counsellors' professional development questionnaire with a reliability coefficient  $\alpha$  of .715 and another questionnaire with academic, career and personal/social competencies to ascertain the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme. The study's target population is all teacher counsellors in Kenyan public secondary schools. The accessible population is all teacher counsellors in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya, obtained from County Education Office, Nakuru (2018). To obtain a representative sample, the 338 teacher counsellors in 338 secondary schools in Nakuru County were subjected to a simple random sampling technique (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) gave a sample size of 182 teacher counsellors.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to distribute the teacher counsellors in the 11 sub-counties within Nakuru County and to obtain 157 female teacher counsellors and 55 male teacher

counsellors. Two forms three students were purposively picked in each of the 182 schools who filled out academic, career and personal/social competencies questionnaires for triangulation purposes. The scores from the professional development were regressed against scores from academic, career and personal/social competencies. The data collected was analysed using means, standard deviations, percentages, frequencies and a simple regression technique. The Likert scaled items were converted to percentages using a percentage of maximum possible (POMP) technique proposed by Cohen et al. (1999) as a more understood metric better than Z scores. The hypothesis stating 'no influence' between the variables was tested at a .05 level of significance using SPSS version 24 for windows.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to generate scores for regressing with teacher counsellors' professional development scores, teacher counsellors' perceived effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme in enhancing students' academic, career and personal/social competencies scores were generated and presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Teacher Counsellors' Perceived Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing Students' Academic, Career and Personal/Social Competencies (N = 175)**

Competency area	Mean	SD
Academic competency mean scores (max = 40)	31.55	4.95
Career competency mean scores (max = 45)	34.42	4.71
Socio-personal competency mean scores (max = 75)	59.07	7.94
Effectiveness of G&C in percentages using POMP	78.16	9.81

It is quite evident from Table 1 that the POMP generated of 78.16 per cent standard deviation of 9.81 was effective according to this researchers' categorization in which scores between 1 to 33.3; 33.4 to 66.8; 66.9 to 100 per cent were less effective, moderately effective and effective school guidance and counselling programme respectively. The POMP of 78.16 indicated general conformity that the school guidance and counselling programme was effective in helping the students attain requisite academic, career and personal/social competencies. The findings upheld those earlier established by Kabutiei (2007), Boitt et al. (2015), Kiptui et al. (2016) and Carey and Dimmitt (2012). The scores from students' perceived effectiveness of guidance and counselling programmes in enhancing academic, career and personal/social competencies presented in Table 2 validated teacher counsellors' perceived effectiveness of guidance and counselling programmes in enhancing students' academic, career and personal/social competencies.

**Table 2: Students' Perceived Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Enhancing Academic, Career and Personal/Social Competencies (N = 318)**

Measure	N	Mean	SD
Score academic(maximum = 40)	318	32.61	6.06
Score career (maximum = 35)	318	26.05	6.25
Score socio-personal (maximum = 85)	318	69.88	11.86
Guidance and Counselling effectiveness (maximum = 160)	318	128.54	21.07

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When the overall mean guidance and counselling programme effectiveness was converted to percentage using POMP, it gave a POMP of 80.34, indicating the students' validated the teacher counsellors' perception that the guidance and counselling programme was effective in instilling academic, career and personal/social competencies.

In order to achieve objective one of this study, teacher counsellors' responded to 16 items on teacher counsellors' professional development questionnaire, which were measured on a Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree to disagree with a score of five to one respectively strongly. Reverse-coded items were considered. The findings are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Teacher Counsellors' Professional Development in Guidance and Counselling**  
**Descriptive**

Item	N	Mean	SD
I always participate in activities of professional organizations to improve my G&C skills.	172	3.70	1.07
I constantly read books on G&C to improve my G&C skills	172	4.19	.728
I actively participate in G&C workshops, which I attend to improve competencies in the area	168	3.49	1.21
I rarely attend seminars even though they enhance one's G&C knowledge	167	3.01	1.29
I frequently read journals on G&C to enhance my G&C abilities	171	3.96	.97
I rarely discuss student G&C challenges with my superiors (principal, deputy principal)	171	3.00	1.46
I often read magazines on G&C to widen my G&C experience	173	3.94	.97
I rarely read research reports on G&C to improve my G&C proficiency	174	3.61	1.17
I share G&C experiences with peers to enhance my skills in the profession	175	4.15	.85
I share with peers G&C materials that I possess to advance our capabilities as services providers	173	3.87	1.01
I do not share resources with other teacher counsellors since doing so does not affect my G&C skills	174	4.11	.92
I watch movies on G&C to enhance my G&C competency	174	3.53	1.22
I often purchase books on G&C to improve my ability to guide and counsel students	172	3.51	1.23
I participate in short courses in G&C to improve my G&C capacity	171	2.37	1.26
I do not discuss students' G&C needs with the G&C committee in my school	174	2.20	1.22

I do not participate in conferences to enhance G&C teachers' aptitudes	173	3.55	1.255
I rarely watch videos on G&C strategies	173	3.55	1.32
<b>Professional development mean score</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>58.82</b>	<b>8.32</b>

Conversion of the teacher counsellors' professional development means a score of 58.82 in Table 3 to POMP yielded a POMP of 69.20 per cent, standard deviation of 9.79. The mean POMP of 69.20 indicated the teacher counsellors had high professional development according to this researchers classification in which teacher counsellors who scored between 1 to 33.3; 33.4 to 66.8; 66.9 to 100 per cent were considered low in professional development, moderate in professional development and high in professional development respectively. However, the high standard deviation indicated a wide range in professional development among the teacher counsellors. In addition, focused group discussion showed that some teacher counsellors were newly appointed to the position of teacher counsellor, so they may not have engaged in many professional development activities. This finding corroborated with Konstam et al. (2015), who found involvement in continuing education and learning experiences lead to high levels of professional growth necessary for sustained counselling outcomes.

To test the null hypothesis that stated  $H_{01}$ : teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling do not have a statistically significant influence on guidance and counselling programme effectiveness in public secondary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya, simple regression was done to interrogate whether the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme was predicted by teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling and the findings presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Model Summary of Regression between Teacher Counsellor Professional Development in Guidance and Counselling and School Guidance and Counselling Programme Effectiveness**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.299 <sup>a</sup>	.089	.084	9.48136

Table 4 showed that a large proportion of .299 (29.9 per cent) of the variation in efficacy of school guidance and counselling programme was explained by teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling. The variation of .299 indicated the high ability of teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling to explain the efficacy of school guidance and counselling programme. Coefficient Correlations of teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling as a predictor of guidance and counselling programme efficacy were presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Coefficient Correlations of Teacher Counsellor's Professional Development in Guidance and Counselling as Predictor of Guidance and Counselling Programme Effectiveness**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	57.100	5.132		11.126	.000
Professional dev. POMP	.302	.073	.299	4.118	.000

In Table 5, teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling contributed a beta coefficient of .299. This coefficient indicated an increase of one per cent in teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling, resulting in an increase in guidance and counselling programme efficacy of 29.9 per cent, which was significant. The positive coefficients of .302 and .073 suggested teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling were positively correlated to school guidance and counselling programme efficacy. The betas of .302 and .073 are significantly larger than zero signifying significant effect sizes. ANOVA of professional development in guidance and counselling and guidance and counselling programme effectiveness were presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: ANOVA of Professional Development in Guidance and Counselling and Guidance and Counselling Programme Effectiveness**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1524.339	1	1524.339	16.957	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	15552.036	173	89.896		
Total	17076.375	174			

The findings in Table 6 revealed the observed F (16.957) was greater than the critical tabled F value of 1.71 (N=173; df =1;  $\alpha=.05$ ). The null hypothesis is thus rejected since the p-value of .000 was statistically significant as it was less than the set value of  $\alpha=.05$  significance level. It was thus concluded that teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling significantly predicted school guidance and counselling programme efficacy. Furthermore, the model had a good fit since the R-squared of .089 was significantly different from zero, and the p-value of .000 was less than the set value of the .05 significance level.

The findings of this study corroborated empirical and theoretical literature reviewed in this study (Jennings et al., 2005; Sink & Stroh, 2003; Webb et al., 2005; Young & Kaffenberger, 2015; Betters-Bubon & Donohue, 2016; Holcomb- McCoy, 2007; Howell et al., 2007; David & Cobeau, 2014; & Johnson, 2016). This study has confirmed and extended the significant role of professional development in guidance and counselling of certified active classroom teachers with a number of lessons equal to other teachers with no extra role of counsellor play in ensuring effective delivery and implementation of school guidance and counselling programme.

The high teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling scores were interpreted to mean the teacher counsellors actually engage in the professional development activities provided, such as attending conferences, seminars, workshops, watching movies and videos, purchasing books, reading books, journals, research reports, sharing guidance and counselling materials and experiences, and discussing guidance and counselling needs and challenges students to face. The participation was motivated intrinsically since the teacher counsellors who participated in the focused group discussion opined that the majority of professional development activities they engaged in were self-initiated.

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This was in contrast to findings by Howell et al. (2007), in which school counsellors attended conferences, seminars and learning institutes at their own expense and on their time because they were largely motivated by the need for recertification mandated by the Utah State. Teacher counsellors in Kenya are certified teachers and no state requirement for certification and recertification as counsellors.

The participation of the teacher counsellors in the aforementioned professional development imparting activities predicted the efficacy of school guidance and counselling programme in enhancing students' academic, career and personal/social competencies. The interpretation was that attending conferences, seminars, workshops, watching movies and videos, purchasing and reading books, journals, and research reports, sharing guidance and counselling materials and experiences, and discussing guidance and counselling needs and challenges students face improve teacher counsellors' professional development. This was in accord with findings by Young and Kaffenberger (2015), who found school counsellors who engaged in professional growth activities, resulted in the proper use of data to affect student development, and college and career readiness.

The teacher counsellors in this study engaged in the aforesaid guidance and counselling activities to improve, advance and enhance their guidance and counselling skills, competencies, knowledge, abilities, proficiency, capacities, aptitudes, and strategies. This was in accord with ASCA (2010), which contemplated professional development as means of maintaining professional competency and expertise after training. Furthermore, findings by Sink and Stroh (2003) revealed a positive correlation between school counsellors who consistently participate in professional activities mandated by the ASCA National Model in compliance with state requirements and improved students' academic and behavioural outcomes. Poignantly, Howell et al. (2007) indicated professional development assists therapists in maintaining their effectiveness. The item on attending short courses scored low (a mean of 2.37) may be interpreted to mean there were no short courses on professional development or the short courses were offered. Still, teacher counsellors found them not useful, or they were more expensive than seminars and workshops.

Sometimes short courses may last more than a week, and there is confusion between a short course and a certificate course. A short course description may not be clear whether it is a professional development or training programme. Another item scoring low (mean of 2.20) was discussing guidance and counselling student needs with the guidance and counselling committee. Discussing students' needs with other stakeholders, particularly school administrators and guidance and counselling committee members, helps the teacher counsellor develop a clearer perception of the student's needs (Egan, 2001). The researcher, during data collection, found out that the guidance and counselling committee suggested in G.O.K (2009) rarely existed in the secondary schools visited for data collection.

Though the outcomes in the reviewed literature varied according to counselling settings, training levels of personnel, the professional identity of the therapists' experience of therapists, cultural milieu, symptom severity and type of clients assisted, overall, the findings point to the significant role that professional development in guidance and counselling had on guidance and counselling efficacy. In addition, the findings contributed to an increased and clearer understanding of teacher counsellors' characteristics that enhance or hinder the delivery of school guidance and counselling services that may help in the development of school guidance and counselling programme. It was clear from the findings of this study that the professional development of Kenyan teacher counsellors was not affected by the huge teaching

load neither the lack of professional training of the teacher counsellors nor lack of government policy directing operationalization of school guidance and counselling programme.

## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Conclusions:** In the light of these findings, it was clear teacher counsellors had high scores in professional development in guidance and counselling. It was thus concluded that teacher counsellors in Kenyan public secondary schools have high levels of professional development in guidance and counselling, which positively and statistically predicted school guidance and counselling programme effectiveness. Furthermore, there was a statistically significant relationship between teacher-counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling and school guidance and counselling programme effectiveness. Therefore teacher counsellors' professional development in guidance and counselling was a quality feature that enhanced guidance and counselling services among certified active classroom teachers who double as counsellors in a developing country milieu. It can also be concluded that when teacher counsellors with requisite levels of professional development in guidance and counselling manage the school guidance and counselling programme, there are high chances of improved students' academic, career and personal/social competencies.

**Recommendations:** In the light of these findings, it was recommended that teacher counsellors, in efforts to enhance the effective delivery of guidance and counselling services, should strive to develop, maintain and manifest the quality of professional development in guidance and counselling because the characteristic of professional development in guidance and counselling predict guidance and counselling programme efficacy. While upholding the suggestion by ASCA (2010) that puts the responsibility of maintaining professional development on individual teacher counsellors, there was a need for stakeholders in school guidance and counselling to come up with validated needs-based facilities, resources, institutions, and professional development programmes for Kenyan teacher counsellors. The Kenyan teacher counsellors may use the facilities, resources and programmes to update their skill sets in school guidance and counselling. The existing professional development activities should be enriched, and teacher counsellors should be encouraged to engage in them. Production of evidence-based movies, videos, books, journals, and other professional growth-instilling materials needs to be enhanced. There was a need to identify and profile proficient teacher counsellors and professional counsellors recommended as supervisors and role models for the teacher counsellors as suggested by (Studer, 2005 & Wilczynski et al. 2010).

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