



# Influence of Guidance and Counseling on Students' Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Bungoma South

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## Abstract

For learning to be effective, the discipline of learners is absolutely essential. In this regard, institutions work hard to ensure that the discipline of students is enhanced for them to achieve their desired outcomes. Therefore, this study sought to investigate how guidance and counseling influences students' discipline in public secondary schools in Bungoma South sub-county. Guidance and counselling has become an integral component of the educational framework in Kenya since the ban on corporal punishment was effected in 2001 through the Education Act. This study views guidance and counseling as an alternative disciplinary method as opposed to the traditional and outlawed corporal punishment that educators have employed in learning institutions for long. Bf Skinner (1992) behavioral modification was used as the basis for the study. The study was carried out in Bungoma South sub-county because it had recorded several indiscipline cases in the past three years. The study population was 725 teachers in 62 public secondary schools out of which a sample of 19 deputy principals, 19 guidance and counselling teachers and 218 teachers were drawn to give their views concerning the influence of guidance and counselling on students' discipline in public secondary schools. The study employed a descriptive research design and used and applied both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data was received in the verbatim, transcribed and reported in themes and sub-themes. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as research tools. Data was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Findings indicated that the use of guidance and counseling in public secondary schools positively influenced students' discipline. The study recommended that schools should establish guidance and counselling units and with the support of the government hire professional counselors to offer

the same to students. Finally, the study recommended that students, teachers, parents and even Boards of Management should be sensitized on the value of guidance and counselling services in an institution.

## Subject Areas

Sociology

## Keywords

Guidance and Counselling, Discipline, Influence

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## 1. Introduction

Student discipline poses concern globally due to the sensitivity and importance that the subject has on the lives of children while at school [1]. According to [2], student discipline maintenance in schools faces challenges worldwide yet it is one of the determinants of the quality of the outcomes in the academic settings. To create a conducive learning environment, students are expected to be disciplined by adhering to the school rules and regulations set by stakeholders. A learning environment should be an all-inclusive field where teachers, board members, parents and the society at large have the responsibility to ensure that learning institutions produce the expected results: well nurtured, responsible and disciplined students. According to [3], discipline is one of the components that define perfection in organizational operations.

Traditionally, corporal punishment was employed to instill discipline among students. However, the Kenyan Government through Legal notice No. 56 of the Kenya gazette effected the ban of secondary school students caning making it difficult for teachers to instill discipline through corporal punishment and thus school administrators resorted to diplomacy; and more so guidance and counselling in discipline management. However, [4] argue that despite the government's efforts to administer secondary schools through diplomacy, indiscipline levels are still on the rise. News of secondary schools strikes leading to devastation of significant assets worth colossal amounts of money and disruption of learning processes at the institutions has been rampant. Every year there are reports on students' unrest in the country clearly indicating that, despite the introduction of alternative disciplinary strategies, indiscipline still remains unchecked. In Bungoma South sub-county where this study was conducted; for instance, between 2021 and 2022, more than fifteen (15) public secondary schools: among them a national school, two extra county schools, four county schools and eight sub-county schools experienced learners' unrest which resulted into loss of learning time as well as destruction of property worth millions of shillings (Sub-County Director of Education, Bungoma South Sub-County, 2023). The implication here is that twenty five percent (25%) of the schools in Bungoma South sub-county experienced stu-

dents' unrest between 2021 and 2022. These are shocking revelations that raise concern on whether alternative disciplinary measures and especially guidance and counselling have been adopted by schools or not and if they are being employed, what could be the degree of their application. It is against this background that this research sought to explore the influence that guidance and counselling approach has on students' discipline in government sponsored secondary schools in Bungoma South Sub-County.

The school environment is required to be conducive to facilitate learning processes for better outcomes. In order to achieve this desirable learning environment, discipline ought to be instilled among the students. The connection between discipline and improved performance is a well-documented area of study across various fields. [5] conducted a study with adolescents and found that self-discipline predicted academic performance more accurately than IQ. According to their research, disciplined students consistently outperformed their peers on tests, grades, and long-term academic outcomes.

Since discipline is important in the management of schools and the general outcomes that are seen through the grades individual students get in national exams, schools have opted to use alternative disciplinary methods to address disciplinary concerns in their respective schools: one such method is guidance and counselling. Guidance and counseling is an interactive session where administrators spend time with students advising, mentoring and responding to the students' questions [6]. The sessions entail listening and speaking where students also get an opportunity to express their views and solve problems in life.

By bringing students close through guidance and counselling, teachers have a chance to better understand them. Moreover, some may come from harsh backgrounds where for instance, a student might be starving back at home and when he/she comes to school, he/she sneaks into the school kitchen and eats teachers' breakfast. Guidance and counselling helps to extract all the information from students since it is confidential and the same information is used in leading the same students solve their own problems.

According to [7], guidance and counselling is the process of healing and reconciliation that also entails restoration of humanity, morality and uprightness. Musungu indicates that apart from restoration and healing process, guidance and counselling creates awareness of the available rules and replications of breaking the rules. According to her, guidance and counseling provides course of action to activities that threaten the act of adhering to regulations which enlighten the ways of avoiding indiscipline cases. In addition, counselling process enables students to realize their potentials; boost their morale and encourage them in hard times. The most essential part in guidance and counselling is that it erases the grieving and traumatic experiences hence enabling one to realize their individual potentials.

According to [8], the counselling process helps learners develop efficient decision-making skills for the process is directed both to the disciplined and indisciplined students; indisciplined in this context meaning the students that have bend

the school laws. The disciplined students are guided to continue making the right decisions while the undisciplined ones are helped to realize the perfect path to being disciplined. Simatwa further argues that guidance and counselling empowers individuals to solve problems in life. The administration of the process is a two-way approach which starts with guidance and ends with counselling. In guidance, the subject's problems are listened to and the expert in charge gives solutions to the problem. The counselling process on the other hand entails a structured discussion of the client's problem with the expert with a view of giving the client sufficient options on how best their problem could be solved while allowing the client to manage their own situation. The end product of the process is that a client holds substantial knowledge of the underlying problem and is aware of the next step and the best decision he/she can make.

However, despite the employment of guidance and counselling in public secondary schools, indiscipline cases are still recorded in Kenyan public secondary schools. A literature review on guidance and counselling reveals that guidance and counselling is a multidimensional field essential for supporting individuals' mental health, academic achievement, career development, and social adjustment. In schools, guidance and counselling play a crucial role in academic performance, emotional well-being, and social development. Counselling programs help students navigate academic pressures, on social issues, and future career planning. In a study on the role of counselling in educational settings, [9] underscore the importance of comprehensive counselling programs in schools, which they argue should address students' personal, social, and career development needs. These programs also provide crisis intervention, group counselling, and academic advisory to support students' holistic development.

In United States, school counselors hold the responsibility to make learning an impactful experience for every learner. They are equipped with the knowledge entailing the diversified nature of individuals' ideologies. Counselors must understand that a school environment that is good for one student might be bad for another. Counselors are the facilitators of communication among teachers, students, parents and education stakeholders to be aware of the school environment to jointly create a favorable learning atmosphere. In Japan, the objective of guidance and counselling departments among high school students is to assist every student build abilities to self-understanding, self-discipline, decision-making and life planning in order for them to be able to choose and adjust to the desirable career options [10].

According to [11], discipline should entail the act of directing and training individuals to adhere to certain rules and regulations and using strategies to correct misconduct. The two argue that indiscipline among students include conduct such as involving in drug abuse, bullying, disrespecting others and teachers, failure to pay attention and participate in classroom, sneaking, noise making, theft among others. The high number of behavioural malpractices are better dealt with through guidance and counselling as opposed to the punitive method of corporal

punishment. This view is further emphasized by [12] who regards students' discipline as guidance to moral, physical, psychological and emotional development which enables children to be responsible and active. From a study conducted by [13], guidance and counselling is an effective tool in instilling discipline in learners. Since a school setting contains students from diversified environments with differences on the students' backgrounds, ideologies and conducts, rules and regulations make them more of equal: they are therefore a unifying factor. However, rules and regulations need not be instilled through corporal punishment, hence the need to investigate the influence that guidance and counselling has on students' discipline.

After the 1994 Rwanda genocide, the Rwandan government realized that complexity of students' lives intensified day by day. It was ascertained that students needed guidance and counselling to achieve optimal educational goals and gain wholly in their varied life situations. The new 2009 reforms by the ministry of education, commissioned Kudar Group to develop an organized career guidance services to promote the development of secondary school students.

[14] argues that guidance and counselling process is forgotten and isolated and it is mostly applied when a tragedy or a need arises. However, he argues that academic institutions should frequently administer guidance and counselling to students rather than waiting until an indiscipline case or eventuality occurs. Based on this argument, the government of Kenya via the ministry of education recognized and included guidance and counselling in the school curriculum. According to the survey done by [15], if schools can properly embrace guidance and counselling, then students will be well placed to make right decisions in life. This view is supported by [16] who argue that guidance and counselling is the best approach in mitigating the psychological and social problems that students face. However, [14] still has a feeling that there is a shortfall of information and awareness of the importance of guidance and counselling. His assertion is in agreement with a study by [17] who categorically pointed out that in many educational and community settings, there is a shortage of qualified counselors, which hinders the effectiveness of counselling programs, a view that is also held by [18] and [19]. In addition, research conducted by [20] reveals that schools had meagre or no resource allocations to guidance and counseling departments making it difficult to have fully functional guidance and counseling departments. This approach downplays the importance and effectiveness of guidance and counselling in schools. [17] further argue that cultural stigma around mental health and counselling also prevents some individuals from seeking support.

However, studies carried out by other scholars in this field reveal that guidance and counseling may not necessarily foster students' discipline. While studies by scholars like [21] reveal that students encountered challenges that required counselling to mitigate them, others like [22] argue that guidance and counselling services do not automatically guarantee the discipline of students in an institution.

However, the study was not devoid of limitations; for instance, it was tricky to

fully manage the attitudes of the respondents which might have influenced the authenticity of the responses. This was because respondents could provide socially conventional answers to gratify the researcher. The researcher mitigated social desirability biasness from the respondents by communicating and implementing anonymous random model survey. The research was carried out in Bungoma south sub-county which might have limited generalizability. However, the duplication of the study in other counties would enhance greater generalization of the research findings. The investigation was also restricted by the available time though the researcher allowed the participants enough time to answer questionnaires.

Finally, in the conceptual framework of the study, guidance and counselling was an independent variable while student discipline was a dependent variable. According to the study, discipline results in observation of school rules and regulations, time management, improved performance, student self-motivation that inspire them to set their own goals and students' acceptance of responsibility; that is, students taking ownership of their actions, acknowledging both successes and areas that need improvement. The intervening variables included; government policies regarding administration of discipline in public secondary schools, the school policy on various matters of discipline, the employer's (TSC) code of conduct for teachers, parental involvement, teacher-student ratios, school infrastructure, community influences and teachers' motivation. To measure their effect on the study, extraneous variables were controlled through elimination or holding them constant since they were more than one. This was supported by [23], who argues that, the effects of extraneous variables on the study when they are many can best be controlled through elimination.

## **2. Research Objective**

To establish how guidance and counselling influences students' discipline in public secondary schools in Bungoma South Sub-County.

## **3. Methods**

This research was conducted between May and July, 2023 and it explored the influence that guidance and counselling have on learners' discipline in public secondary schools in Bungoma south sub-county. The sample of the study was taken from 62 public secondary schools, 725 teachers. Sampling is the procedure of selecting a number of persons for a study. The preferred individuals should epitomize the entire cluster from which informants are selected [24]. The sample selected for the purpose of this research was determined by records of the Ministry of Education registration status of schools. The region covers a diversified number of schools with a mixture of high to low performing schools, high to low populated and a context mixture of all levels of school ranking including extra county schools, county schools, and sub-county schools. The unit analysis of the research constituted deputy principals, guiding and counselling teachers and teachers. [25]

indicates that a wider sample better represents a population than a smaller one. Stratified sampling was used to pick the representative size because of the diversity in categories of government sponsored schools in Bungoma south sub-county (boys' boarding, boys' day and boarding, girls' boarding, girls' day and boarding mixed day and boarding, mixed day). Stratified sampling was chosen because it provides an equal chance of representation to the participants and it is proportionally allocated as suggested by [25]. The indicated school categories were divided into strata after which, the investigator employed random sampling to get the designated sample. The names of the schools were written on separate papers; the papers were folded and placed in containers each container representing a given stratum. Upon shaking the containers, random sampling with replacement were used in every container to get the categories required. As [26] asserts, a representative sample constituting of at least 30% of the overall population is ideal for a study. Therefore, from the 62 public secondary schools, 725 teachers and with the help of [26] concept on sampling, the respondents were randomly sampled as follows:

$$30\% \text{ of } 62 = 0.3 \times 62 = 19$$

In this case 30% of 62 schools is equivalent to 19 public secondary schools and using the same [26] concept, the teachers were sampled as follows:

$$30\% \text{ of } 725 = 0.3 \times 725 = 218.$$

From the calculation above, 30% of 725 teachers is 218; therefore, they were sampled to participate in the study (See **Table 1**).

**Table 1.** Sampled secondary schools from Bungoma south sub-county.

School category	No. of schools categorized	No of teachers	No. of Sampled Deputy principals	No. of Sampled guiding and counseling teachers	No. of Sampled teachers
Mixed day and boarding	2	102	2	2	22
Mixed day	11	304	11	11	130
Boys Boarding	2	106	2	2	22
Girls Boarding	2	99	2	2	22
Boys day and boarding	1	55	1	1	11
Girls day and boarding	1	59	1	1	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>218</b>

Source: Sub-County director of education, Bungoma South.

In addition to the sampled teachers in the 19 sampled schools, all deputy principals and guiding and counselling teachers one in every sampled school were automatically sampled to take part in the research. In the same vein, since Bungoma south sub-county is presided over by one sub-county director of education, he was

also sampled to participate in an interview schedule.

#### 4. Instruments

The data collection tools were questionnaires with open and closed ended questions which were administered to the deputy principals, guidance and counselling teachers and sampled teachers. The deputy principals were chosen because they were charged with the direct responsibility of discipline management in schools as the chairpersons of the school disciplinary committee, the guidance and counselling teachers were involved because they received referrals from the deputy principals of cases of students who needed counselling services while teachers were selected because they interacted with the students daily in classroom settings where a number of indiscipline cases occur. Their responses were rated using the Likert scale approach ranging from 5 (strongly agree) - 1 (strongly disagree). Besides questionnaires, the sub-county director of education participated in the study through an interview schedule. An interview is advantageous in that it is conducted to provide an in-depth clarification to supplement the data extracted from the questionnaire [26]. Since Bungoma South Sub-County is manned by one Sub-County director of Education, he was automatically sampled to participate in the study.

This research ensured reliability of the data collected by applying the test re-test model which involved administering similar instrument to the same group of respondents at two different time lapses. [26] indicated that in test re-test approach; a given group is administered to the same test twice to attain maximal reliability. In essence, deputy principals', teachers' and guiding and counselling teachers' questionnaires were given out at two weeks interval to check their dependability. The split-half technique of reliability was used to assess the reliability of the research instrument. The tool was split into two equal halves in terms of even and odd numbered items and scored one by one. Spearman correlation coefficient was calculated from the scores of each half of the test which fell between 0.0 and 1.0. According to [27] a correlation co-efficient of at least 0.8 and above is considered significant. Therefore, a reliability coefficient of +0.80 in this context was considered and accepted.

The correlation coefficient was computed as follows:

$$r = 1 - 6 \frac{\sum d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)} \quad (1)$$

where,

$r$ —Spearman's coefficient of correlation

$d$ —The difference between ranks of pairs of the two variables

$n$ —the number of pairs of observation

#### 5. Data Analysis

According to [26], data analysis entails breaking down the data into sub-groups

and summaries. The data that was derived from questionnaires and interviews was organized, analyzed and presented using frequency tables based on the objective of the study. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected in this study. Quantitative data was analyzed by way of descriptive statistics with the application of statistical package for social science IBM SPSS 22, (2013) version. The package was used to run descriptive values which included frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation with the aim of presenting quantitative data in form of tables, graphs and charts based on research questions. Descriptive statistics enables researchers in formulation of generalization [28]. Qualitative data was analyzed via discussion among other content analysis techniques such as narrative.

## 6. Findings and Discussion

The target population for this study were deputy principals, guidance and counselling teachers and teachers and the sub-county director of education. From this population, a sample was drawn and the following **Table 2** outlines the response rate from the respondents:

**Table 2.** Response rate.

Target group	Number sampled	Number Returned	Percentage
Deputy principals	19	18	94.74%
Teachers	218	205	94.04%
Guiding and counseling teachers	19	18	94.74%
Sub-county Director of education	1	1	100%

**Table 3.** Gender of teachers.

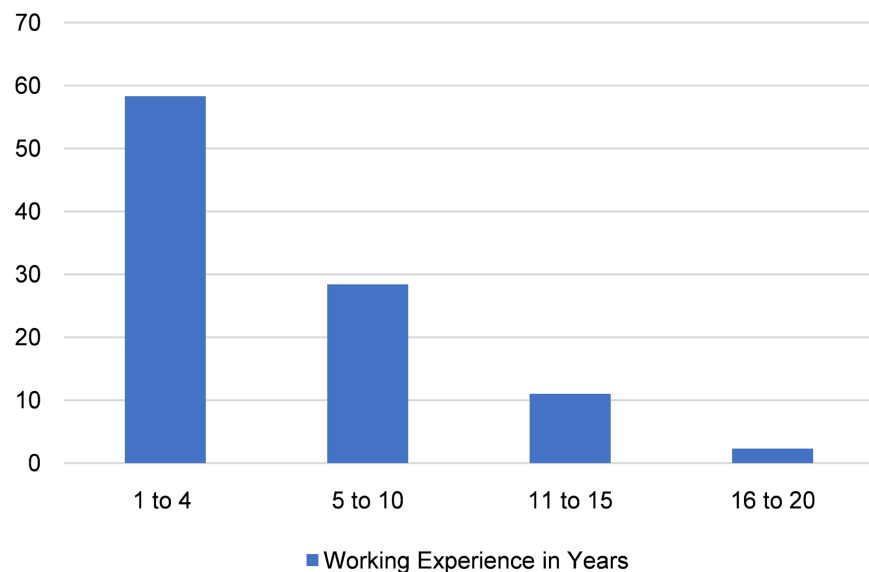
Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Female	122	55.96	55.96
Male	96	44.04	100
Total	218	100	

Source: Primary data (The researcher 2024).

From **Table 2**, 19 public Secondary Schools were sampled; 19 deputy principals, 19 guiding and counselling teachers and 218 teachers from the same schools were taken and used to give their views on how guidance and counselling influences students' discipline. From **Table 3**, a sample of 218 teachers, 122 (55.96%) female teachers inclined to take part in the study as compared to their male colleagues

who participated at 96 (44.04%). Therefore, the number of men who were willing to take part in the study was lower compared to that of their female counterparts. This finding correlates with other studies which have suggested that men are likely to be more selective in the types of surveys or research they engage with, often avoiding those they perceive as irrelevant and overly long. A study by [29] found that men tend to respond less to surveys in higher education contexts because they perceive them as time-consuming and unengaging.

Similarly, the respondents who participated in the study had varying teaching experience in the profession. **Figure 1** explains this well:



**Figure 1.** Teaching experience.

From the findings in **Figure 1** above 127 (58.3%) of the sampled teachers had a teaching experience of 1 to 4 years; 62 (28.4%) had been in the service for 5 to 10 years while 24 (11.0%) were in the bracket of 11 to 15 years and 5 (2.3%) had been teaching for 16 to 20 years. From these findings, most young teachers with as little experience as 1 to 4 years and 5 to 10 years respectively were classroom teachers while those between 11 to 15 years and 16 - 20 years respectively were few since most of them were in administrative positions like deputy principals, guidance and counselling and departmental heads. Despite the fact that most indiscipline cases were handled by teachers who had not been in the service for long, they were however guided by their senior counterparts who were in positions of leadership and the ministry of education policy guidelines on matters of discipline.

Questionnaires were administered to the deputy principals, teachers and guidance and counselling teachers and their responses were tabulated in **Table 4**.

Findings presented in **Table 4** below show that 74 (30.71%) of the deputy principals, teachers, and guidance and counseling teachers strongly agreed that the institution encountered students' indiscipline cases that required guidance and counselling, 119 (49.38%) of them agreed, 12 (4.98%) were neutral, 16 (6.64%)

disagreed while 20 (8.30%) strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents, 193 (80.09%), strongly agreed and agreed that institutions encountered students' indiscipline cases that required guidance and counseling. This is in agreement with a study conducted by [21] that highlighted that students go through problems (social, domestic, interpersonal relationships, career choices and even mental) that require counselling in order for them to receive the necessary support.

**Table 4.** Deputy principals', teachers' and guidance and counseling teachers' responses on guiding and counseling and student discipline.

ITEM	SA	A	N	D	SD	TOT
The institution encounters students' indiscipline cases that require guiding and counselling	74 30.71%	119 49.38%	12 4.98%	16 6.64%	20 8.30%	<b>241</b> <b>100%</b>
Guiding and counselling positively influence students' discipline in school	76 31.54%	120 49.79%	13 5.39%	13 5.39%	19 7.88%	<b>241</b> <b>100%</b>
Guiding and counselling do not deter the indisciplined students from further misconduct	27 11.20%	34 14.11%	22 9.13%	83 34.44%	75 31.12%	<b>241</b> <b>100%</b>
Guiding and counselling is an effective approach of instilling discipline in your school	60 24.90%	134 55.60%	13 5.39%	20 8.30%	14 5.83%	<b>241</b> <b>100%</b>

Source: SPSS Output. Legend: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Neutral (N) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD).

The findings also show that 76 (31.54%) of the deputy principals, teachers and guidance and counseling teachers strongly agreed that guidance and counseling positively influenced students' discipline in school, 120 (49.79%) of them agreed, 13 (5.39%) were neutral, 13 (5.39%) disagreed while 19 (7.88%) strongly disagreed. A large number of the respondents, 196 (81.33%) strongly agreed and agreed that guidance and counselling positively influenced students' discipline. They argued that guidance and counseling provided a good platform for response to various challenges faced by students including academic pressure, social issues and mental health concerns. The findings correlate with a study by [30] which emphasizes that effective counseling services led to improved student behaviour, reduced dropout rates, and better academic outcomes. He further indicates that when students receive adequate support from trained counselors, they are more likely to engage positively with their education.

Additionally, findings presented in **Table 4** above show that 27 (11.20%) of the deputy principals, teachers and guidance and counseling teachers strongly agreed that guidance and counseling did not deter the indisciplined students from further misconduct, 34 (14.11%) of them agreed, 22 (9.13%) were neutral, 83 (34.44%) disagreed while 75 (31.12%) strongly disagreed. From the findings, a small number of the respondents 61 (25.31%) agreed and strongly agreed that guiding and counseling did not deter the indisciplined student from further misconduct while a large number of respondents 158 (65.56%) confirmed that guiding and counsel-

ing deterred indiscipled students from further misconduct because guiding and counseling provided learners with the skills to solve their problems. These findings contradict with the study by [22] which revealed that the mere presence of guidance and counseling services does not guarantee a reduction in student misconduct. He further argues that cultural factors play a crucial role; for example, many students may not feel comfortable seeking help or discussing their problem due to stigma associated with mental health issues.

Finally, from the findings presented in **Table 4** above 60 (24.90%) of the deputy principals, teachers and guiding and counseling teachers strongly agreed that guidance and counselling is an effective approach, 134 (55.60%) of them agreed, 13 (5.18%) were neutral, 20 (8.30%) disagreed while 14 (5.83%) strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents 194, (80.5%) agreed and strongly agreed that guidance and counselling was an effective approach of instilling discipline in the school. Their views correlate with research by [13] which concluded that career counselling has; for instance, a positive impact on students' career decision-making, self-efficacy, and readiness. The authors found that students who received career guidance were better equipped to make informed decisions about their future hence reducing career-related anxiety.

All the participants were asked to respond to the open-ended question on whether they agreed that indiscipled students were referred for guidance and counselling in their schools and most of them answered in the affirmative. One of the deputy principals said:

*Referral cases happen when students appear before the disciplinary committee, their cases are heard and determined but for purposes of deterring repetition of the misconduct the students are referred for guidance and counselling. Students who also find themselves ensnared in habits they are unable to break are referred for guidance and counselling.*

On the same question a teacher from one of the schools had this to say:

*When a student shows a steady decline in academic performance, he/she is immediately referred for guidance and counselling. Such cases are many and they have to be referred to the professional counselor to establish the underlying factors for poor performance. Students who show a sudden change in behaviour are also referred for guidance and counselling.*

Concerning referral cases, a guidance and counselling teacher said:

*Many referrals come from the office of the deputy principals, others from the principals, class teachers and on fewer occasions parents referred their children for counselling to address some domestic issues that eventually affected the education of their children. However, some cases can not be handled within the school and needed to be referred for specialized support from professionals. Cases that relate to mental health, drugs and substance abuse required more intensive attention outside the school environment.*

These findings correlate with the study by [16] that found that effective referral systems can significantly enhance the outcomes for students facing psychological or social challenges. Despite the significant role that referral plays, the study further found that counselors often lacked clear guidelines on when and how to refer students to external services.

Responding to the question on the challenges the school encountered when using guidance and counselling among learners as a method of instilling discipline one of the deputy principals had this to:

*The biggest challenge in using guidance and counselling is limited resources that result in inadequate facilities such as lack of offices and furniture. Another one is lack of professional counselors in our institutions.*

On the same question, a guidance and counselling teacher reiterated:

*As a school we are committed to ensuring that the students undergo counselling to help them learn the skills to solve their own problems; a few setbacks notwithstanding. The major setback here is cultural factors where students fear to seek for counselling because of the feeling that they would be stigmatized.*

These responses were in agreement with [18] who found out that inadequate funding for school-based counselling initiatives resulted in poorly equipped offices which lacked essential materials for effective intervention.

One teacher was of a different opinion, he said:

*The greatest setback of guidance and counselling in institutions is not financial resources, it is insufficient trained teachers. The teachers whose role is key in guiding the students lacked formal training in counselling psychology.*

This view correlates the research done by [19], who asserts that there is a shortage of trained counselors in Kenyan schools, which limits access to the vital services.

Another guidance and counselling teacher had the opinion that:

*Guidance and counselling is difficult to implement because of the parents' and some teachers' attitudes that still favour punitive measures over rehabilitative approaches. There are some of these stakeholders who have never departed from the traditional thought of corporal punishment.*

Responding to the question on their views on how best guidance and counselling could be used in public secondary schools to instill discipline a deputy principal suggested:

*The government of Kenya should train and post professional counselors to schools since the teacher counsellor is overloaded with class work and lacks enough time to counsel the students.*

These suggestions are similar to the research by [20] who pointed out that many

schools operate on minimal budgets allocated for psychological support services which hamper their ability to provide adequate care. In her study she argues that adequate funding and resources are essential for establishing effective counselling programs.

On his part, one of the teacher counselors suggested as follows:

*The government needs to allocate resources for construction and acquisition of all the facilities required for guiding and counselling services.*

But when asked to respond on the same question, a teacher who had a contrary opinion said:

*For guidance and counselling to be effective in schools, students, parents and teachers should be sensitized on the need for guidance and counselling and the trio should be encouraged to freely seek for counselling services whenever need arose.*

To supplement the data extracted from the questionnaires, the study through a structured interview, sought views of the sub-county director of education on guidance and counselling. Responding to the question whether guidance and counselling was used in schools within his jurisdiction as an alternative disciplinary approach, the director said:

*“Guidance and counselling is an office that is operational in the schools in my sub-county.”*

According to his response, all schools had a functional guiding and counselling office.

Concerning his views on guidance and counselling in comparison to other methods of discipline, the sub-county director of education said:

*“While we can’t brush off other methods of discipline, guidance and counselling is superior to them all.”*

According to the sub-county director of education, other disciplinary methods discussed in other studies were applicable in the school environment but guidance and counselling was the most effective. His assertion agrees with a survey conducted by [15] which revealed that students who received career counselling were more likely to pursue fields aligned with their interests and strengths, leading to greater job satisfaction.

When asked to respond on the challenges of administering guidance and counselling in schools, the director noted the following:

*“The biggest challenge in effecting the program of guidance and counselling is shortage of trained counselors.”*

His sentiments are in line with the survey conducted by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) in 2020 which established that only 30% of schools had access to trained guidance.

Responding to the question on how the challenges above could be mitigated to make administration of guidance and counselling effective, the director made the following suggestions:

*“Each school should appoint and train a teacher in basic counselling skills to be in charge of guidance and counselling department.”*

According to the director most counselors have limited training which limits them in providing the services.

From the study, it was concluded that guidance and counselling was an effective approach in enhancing the discipline of students since it provided them with the necessary support and skills to solve their own problems for better mental, emotional well-being and career growth. To achieve these goals, all schools need better resources, trained personnel and supportive policies. A well-implemented counselling program in schools is crucial for nurturing well-rounded, resilient and motivated students in a positive school environment.

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of the study revealed that institutions encountered students' indiscipline cases that required guidance and counselling. Further, it revealed that all institutions had functional guidance and counselling units which had internally appointed and trained counselors among the teachers to offer counselling services in schools.

From the responses of 196 (81.33%) respondents, the study revealed that guidance and counselling positively influenced students' discipline in school by providing them with a platform where they discussed their problems with the counselors who helped them to solve the same problems. However, it was discovered that the department was coupled with a myriad of challenges which included: limited resources and properly trained and equipped school counselors.

The study further revealed that many counselling cases were referrals from teachers, deputy principals, principals and even parents who identified the problems the student had and referred them to the relevant offices. However, it was found out that some students failed to seek for counselling services for fear of being stigmatized and branded by other students.

From the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended that the government of Kenya should provide regular training for the teachers and counselors on emerging student issues to equip them to handle the issues bedeviling the education sector. These teachers should be posted in all public secondary schools and learners and teachers sensitized through workshops on the importance and need for seeking for counselling services.

The study further recommends that there should be a deliberate intention from the school administration and the government of Kenya to allocate more funds to schools for developing counselling facilities. The same funds could be used to build offices, acquire required facilities and motivate teachers who are involved in

the process of counselling.

Another recommendation was that the Ministry of Education should put in place policies that ensure that each school has a trained counsellor to deal with issues affecting learners in schools. These counselors should keep proper records of the students who receive the counselling services and establish well-defined referral procedures for cases that needed to be handled by other professionals outside or within the school since it was discovered that there were poor records in schools for students who had undergone the counselling process.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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