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School Guidance and Counseling in Kenya: Historical Development, Current Status, and Future Prospects

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Abstract
Despite the government's emphasis on guidance and counseling program implementation in Kenyan schools and a rapid increase in the number of trained school counselors, lack of standardized training curriculums, ethical standards, counseling models, and role ambiguity persist. This article reviews the historical development of guidance and counseling in Kenya, addresses current challenges, and discusses future prospects for the profession. The authors proposes a paradigm shift from the way guidance and counseling has been conducted in Kenyan schools for the past years and recommends the implementation of organized comprehensive guidance and counseling programs that addresses the needs of all students. Implications for the future training and practice of school counselors and are also addressed.
Keywords: Guidance and Counseling, Historical perspectives, Challenges, Future prospects, Kenya.

1. Introduction

Kenyan high schools are currently faced with many challenges. Reports of drug abuse among youths, socially unacceptable sexual ventures, academic underachievement, poor study habits, teenage pregnancies, truancy, juvenile delinquency, and serious misunderstandings between teachers and students are common in Kenyan educational institutions (Atemi, 2000; Kariuki, 2004). Additionally, media reports of increased school violence, school strikes, burning of schools, and orphaned students from the HIV/AIDS pandemic are several of the myriad problems Kenyan schools struggle with today (Kariuki). Furthermore, breakup of cultural norms, rising unemployment rates, and stress from overloaded curriculum have been cited as the causes of the continued school violence (Buku & Mwanzia, 2004; Karanja & Bowen, 2012; Kariuki; Mwanzia & Mudi, 2005). These problems have led to students' suspension or expulsion from school, while other students drop out of school (Karanja & Bowen, 2012).

In addition to the social issues, students have to deal with high-stakes testing in the education system, a major source of stress (Nyutu, 2007). Schools in Kenya are under enormous pressure to perform well in national exams (Karanja & Bowen, 2012; Waititu & Khamasi, 2010). The education system in Kenya is highly exam-oriented, and competition to secure the limited spots at the universities is high among high school students (Government of Kenya, 1999). Consequently, the Kenyan education system is characterized by high competition, widespread private tutoring, irregular implementation of the curriculum, and a total disregard for the psychological well-being and developmental needs of students in favor of academic achievement (Okech & Kimemia, 2012).

The slow growth of the economy has been blamed for increasing unemployment rates (Sifuna, n.d.). The reality of not finding a job after graduation is rife among most high school students, consequently leading to low motivation in academic achievement (Osoro, Amundson & Borgen, 2000). Since there is little to no career counseling in many Kenyan schools, students lack coping skills to deal with the pressures that come with unemployment. Students are unaware of the job options that exist. There is a great emphasis on the college-bound students and little to no information for the many students who do not qualify to join these colleges (Osoro, et al.). Career counseling must take a new dimension to help students develop skills that will promote job creation instead of job-seeking (Osoro et al.).

It is within this backdrop that the government of Kenya has recommended the implementation of guidance and counseling programs in Kenyan schools. However, the aforementioned problems facing the Kenyan student today suggest the need to develop new preventative strategies to address students' academic, career, and personal/social needs. Despite the government's emphasis of guidance and counseling in Kenyan schools, studies have shown that there is a great variability on how counseling services are provided. Therefore, there is great need for the development of a comprehensive guidance and counseling policy to guide the implementation and service delivery of counseling programs. In this article, we highlight the historical development of guidance and counseling in Kenya, examine the current status of the profession, and explore future prospects of the profession.

2. History of Guidance and Counseling in Kenya

Guidance and counseling in Kenya is a relatively new profession. Formal guidance and counseling in Kenyan schools was officially recognized in 1970. The Ministry of Education (MOE) established a Guidance and Counseling Unit under its inspectorate division. The unit was charged with the responsibility of dealing with educational and vocational guidance, and psychological counseling in schools (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, [MOEST], 2005). This initiative was, however, not well supported; hence, implementation did not occur as intended (Okech & Kimemia, 2012). Recommendations for guidance and counseling services in schools were later made in a government policy document, *The Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies of 1976* (Republic of Kenya, 1976), which stated that guidance and counseling be taught in subjects such as religious education and social education and ethics to promote the growth of self-discipline among students in schools. Despite these recommendations, guidance and counseling services failed to meet the needs of students. Furthermore, the government did not show commitment in ensuring the policy was followed (Okech & Kimemia, 2012).

The call for the establishment of guidance and counseling in Kenyan schools was renewed with more vigor in the 1980s and 1990s after the country witnessed the worst arson cases ever to be committed in the schools (Government of Kenya, n.d.). Most notably, in 1999, 17 girls were killed and 70 others raped in a co-ed boarding school. In March 2000, 26 girls were killed in an arson attack at the Bombolulu girls' secondary school (*Daily Nation*, 2000). In 2001, 67 boys were burnt to death in a boarding school by their colleagues as they were sleeping (East African Standard Team, 2001). These and many other incidents grabbed the attention of the government and all stakeholders in education. A commission was set up to investigate the causes of the rising spate of unrest. Following the findings of the commission, *Report of the Task Force on Student Discipline and Unrest in Secondary Schools*, the government recommended that guidance and counseling programs be implemented in all schools (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Additionally, several other authors and organizations continued to make similar calls (e.g., Human Rights Watch, 1999; Kithyo & Petrina, 2002; Sindabi, 1992).

Following recommendations by human rights organizations (e.g., African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect, Kenya, n.d.), the government banned corporal punishment in all schools through Legal Notice, No. 95 of the *Kenya Gazette* (Government of Kenya, 2001). In its place, the government recommended that guidance and counseling departments be established in all schools. Since then, the Ministry of Education has continued to establish guidance and counseling programs. Unfortunately, most of these programs are run by teachers designated as counselors but with very little or no training in counseling (Tumuti, 1985; Wambu & Wickman, 2011). Furthermore, these teachers still continue to perform duties as regular classroom teachers in addition to counseling with little or no time off of their regular teaching duties, a scenario similar to one witnessed in the United States in the 1920s (Gysbers, 2005; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

Further support of guidance and counseling in schools has been evidenced in a policy document (Kenya Education Sector Support Program [KESSP], 2005) detailing the government's plan for education, and guidance and counseling as one of the areas requiring support (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2005). Among the issues identified that need to be addressed through counseling are increasing numbers of HIV/AIDS orphans in schools, inadequate career opportunities, drug and substance abuse among students, and the many family problems that impact students' academic performance (MOEST, 2005). In response to these needs, the government has suggested measures to strengthen the guidance and counseling section at the MOEST headquarters, to in-service primary school teachers, and to ensure schools work with the National Agency for the Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NACADA) and other partners to sensitize teachers and parents about substance abuse. Despite the government's support for provision of guidance and counseling in schools, policy response in this area remains very weak. There are no comprehensive guidance programs in place yet (MOEST, 2005).

Most recently, the Ministry of Education has responded to student's needs by introducing a new subject, called "Social Skills," into the curriculum (C. Muthoni, personal communication, July 20, 2010). This subject is supposed to be taught once a week in every class. The aim of this subject is to equip students with skills for daily living with the hope that students will learn to self-regulate their emotions and behavior and eventually reduce the rate of discipline cases. Although the intentions of teaching this subject are well meaning, the ministry did not train teachers in the curriculum; hence most teachers are unwilling to teach the subject.

From the aforementioned discussion, it is clear that guidance and counseling in Kenya has grown out of the need to address discipline problems in schools (Ajowi & Simatwa, 2010). While addressing discipline issues is important, designating school counseling for this one purpose is a great disservice to the profession and a waste of human resources. Furthermore, the attribution of counseling with discipline has contributed to underutilization of counseling services by students, with many viewing counseling as a service only necessary for those students with "problems." The recognition that guidance and counseling programs are meant to address the holistic developmental needs of all students (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2002), is yet to be realized in Kenyan schools.

3. Current Status of School Guidance and Counseling in Kenya

As earlier indicated, school guidance and counseling in Kenya is a relatively new profession in search of an identity. The current practice of guidance and counseling is what Gysbers and Henderson (2001) referred to as a "position" model where a majority of school counselors are teachers appointed to the position of guidance and counseling teacher , with no relief from their teaching duties and with no additional pay. Similar to the United States in the 1920s, these guidance teachers are given a list of duties to perform in addition to their regular teaching duties. In addition, counseling services are conducted without any formal organizational structure (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001).

School counselors are identified first as teachers, and second as counselors (Wambu &Wickman, 2011). The term *school counselor* has not been adopted in Kenya; instead school counselors are referred to as "*teacher-counselors*", "*guidance counselors*," or"*guidance and counseling teachers*." School counseling is yet to be recognized as a profession in its own right, rather than a service ancillary to other educational programs (Wambu & Wickman, 2011). Lack of professional identity has further complicated the role of the school counselor. Kenyan school counselors are struggling with role definition, just as Paisley and McMahon (2001) lamented of school counselors in the United States many years ago.

3.1 The role of the School Guidance Counselor

Despite the presence of school counselors in most schools, their role is unclear to the consumers of counseling services. A majority of school counselors still have teaching responsibilities over and above counseling duties. This dual responsibility leaves the school counselor with very limited time to provide counseling services to students (Kamara, n.d.; Mumiakha, 2011; Wambu & Wickman, 2011). Furthermore, ethical violations of dual relationships with students are common (Nyutu, 2007). It is difficult to build a relationship with a student in a counseling session, while the same teacher is in charge of evaluating the student's academic achievement.

School counseling services in Kenya are mostly provided in high schools, and to a small extent in the primary schools (K-8). In the primary schools, teachers are appointed by the school principal to provide counseling services. These appointments are based on personal qualities as opposed to professional training (Njoka, 2007; Tumuti, 1985). Currently, most high schools have at least one professionally trained school counselor, however, some schools still have a teacher appointed locally either by the school principal or the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) to fill the position of school counselor with no appropriate training. Many of these teachers have only attended workshops and/or short courses (Nyutu, 2007; Tumuti). Lack of training has been identified as a major challenge in the delivery of counseling services (Lavusa, 2010; Njoka 2007; Mumiakha, 2011; Nyutu).

Guidance and counseling in Kenya mainly focuses on responsive services where school counselors attend to the immediate needs and concerns of the student. In most cases, students are referred either by the principal or teachers, and on a few occasions, students may self refer. Upon such referral, counseling may take the form of individual crisis intervention, for example, in the event that a student has lost a parent or sibling. Because school counselors have dual responsibility as teacher and counselor, their availability for counseling is also limited. Counseling is mainly offered during breaks, lunch breaks, and after school. Furthermore, school counselors spend most of their time responding to the needs of only a small percentage of students, mostly those referred to them by either teachers or the school principals due to discipline problems. Consequently, many students have come to associate counseling with discipline, and hence developed a negative attitude towards service seeking (Wambu & Wickman, 2011).

3.2 Current Challenges

The challenges facing guidance and counseling in Kenya today are similar to those experienced by the United States in the 1920s, which include: role ambiguity, a lack of a practical plan to develop and implement school counseling programs, a lack of adequate preparation of teachers to carry out guidance and counseling work, and a lack of resources and equipment (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). The position model in the United States caused guidance and counseling to be considered an ancillary activity that could be conducted by anybody (Gysbers & Henderson), a belief held by some school principals in Kenya today. The need to view guidance and counseling as an integral part of education that requires professionally trained personnel is very rife in Kenya today, as it was in the 1920s in the United States. The position model makes it very easy for assignment of non-counseling duties by the school principals, a problem that continues to plague the Kenyan school counselor today. The challenge to change from guidance counseling to professional school counseling (Lambie & Williamson, 2004) is now a reality in Kenya. Such a change will provide a clear identity and role of the school counselor.

3.3 Counselor Identity and Role Ambiguity

The identity of the school counselor in Kenya is still a subject of debate among all the stakeholders. The confusion persists as to whether the school counselor is a teacher first or a counselor first. The lack of a clear

identity has left the school counselor's role under the interpretation of all, including the school principals, teachers, parents and even the school counselors themselves. In Kenya, the role of the school counselor remains unclear and undefined. School counselors continue to perform classroom duties in addition to their counseling responsibilities (Wambu & Wickman, 2011).

Lack of clear definition of roles has greatly hampered the delivery of services by Kenyan school counselors. The roles of the school counselors in Kenya are diverse, depending on individual schools. In most cases, the school principals assign duties to the school counselor. Different stake holders have different expectations of the role of the school counselor. Some narrowly define the role of the school counselor as working with students with behavioral and adjustment problems, mainly through individual counseling (Wambu & Wickman, 2011). This narrow definition of roles has left out the roles of advocacy, leadership, and consultation with parents and teachers, as stipulated by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2012) National Model. Further, it negates the importance of group counseling and classroom guidance in addressing students' academic, career, and personal/social issues. School counselors often have an ideal view of their role but are confronted by the demand for administrative work or lack of clinical practice beyond their training (Okech & Kimemia, 2012).

Absence of career information and counseling is evident in many schools. Although schools have a career master, delivery of services is limited by lack of training (Nyutu, 2007). The career master's main role is to help students fill out university application forms. Very little information is provided with regard to available career options for the students upon graduation. As a result, students select college courses with little knowledge of the work environments to which these courses will lead them (Nyutu, 2007). The role of a career master could easily be replaced by a well trained school counselor in career development.

To establish a unique professional identity and maintain effective school counseling programs, Kenyan school counselors need to have a clear definition of their roles and interventions and be prepared with sufficient skills and knowledge pertinent to effective counseling services (S. Lee, 1997). Furthermore, school counseling programs can only be effective in enhancing students' academic, career, and personal/social development if school counselors become proactive in defining their roles and communicating those ideas to the school environment and in demonstrating their competency with tangible evidence (S. Lee). School counselors need to determine their professional roles based on their training. Without adequate training, a clear definition of role interventions, or a well-structured guidance programs, Kenyan school counselors will continue to perform non-counseling duties at the whim of school administrators instead of addressing the many challenges students are currently facing.

3.4 School Counselor Training and Qualifications

Traditionally, a pre-requirement to train as a guidance counselor has been that one must already be a certified teacher. Hence, the entry point for most guidance counselors was master's level. Recently, this requirement has changed with some universities offering training for school counselors at the bachelor's level. Training counselors at the bachelor's level may have the benefit of producing more school counselors to serve in high schools and primary schools that currently do not have trained professional counselors. Conversely, training school counselors at different levels creates an additional challenge of producing school counselors with different levels of expertise. Lack of clear standards to guide the training of counselors or even the expected outcomes of students could have devastating results.

With such variability in training qualifications, the question that begs for answers is whether Kenyan school counselors are well prepared to help with the academic, career, and personal/ social issues affecting students. The successful performance of counseling services requires school counselors who are well equipped not only with a strong knowledge base but also with strong clinical skills obtained through experiential training. Unfortunately, most training programs in Kenya do not require school counselors-in-training to participate in either practicum or internship in a school setting. Some programs have students undertaking practicum in other settings such as the hospitals. It is not clear how many hours the students have to complete during practicum. In the United States, counselors-in-training are required to complete a total of 700 hours for their clinical practice (practicum and internship). The lack of clinical skills in a school setting is a great barrier to service delivery by school counselors in Kenya.

An additional challenge in the training of school counselors in Kenya lies on the area of supervision. In most cases, school counselors are supervised by their course instructors in the university settings. This form of supervision is insufficient without the involvement of site supervisors, due to time limitation and frequency. Furthermore, course instructors may not have sufficient information about the school setting to adequately advice the interns on the unique challenges they may be facing at their sites. The absence of field supervisors compromises the effective training of school counselors on the ethical and clinical practice.

3.5 Ethical Standards

The importance of ethical practice in counseling cannot be overemphasized. The absence of a unified ethical code for school counselors in Kenya poses a challenge. The current ethical standards pertain to the entire counseling profession. For a long time, professional counselors in Kenya have been operating under the guidance of foreign ethical codes especially those developed by the American Counseling Association (ACA). Ethical codes specific to the Kenyan setting were developed in 2012 by the Kenya Counseling and Psychological Association (KCPA) (Okech & Kimemia, 2012). School counselors are expected to adhere to these general ethical standards.

The practical application of these ethical standards is limited given that they are not developed with the consideration of the unique Kenyan school setting. For example, maintaining confidentiality in the school setting can be more challenging for the school counselor. Sometimes, school principals and teachers insist on getting to know what school counselors discussed with the student. Without some guidelines to refer back to in an attempt to explain why it is not ethical to disclose the contents of a session, school counselors will find it difficult to justify their position.

Record keeping is also a challenge. Lack of a specific counseling room in some schools could pose a problem in the safety and confidentiality of counseling files. Additionally, lack of ethical standards on record keeping creates confusion about how to keep the records, for how long, and who has access to the records. The development of ethical standards specific to school counseling is critical for school counselors in Kenya.

3.6 Lack of Support and Resources

Finally, lack of resources and support creates significant difficulties for school counselors in Kenya. School counselors have apparently reported a lack of support from the school principal, school board members, teachers, parents, students and the community. School counselors cannot succeed in their roles if they work in isolation. To be effective, school counselors will need support from all the stakeholders. Additionally, lack or limited resources in the form of counseling materials such as DVD's, books, office supplies, and sometimes a counseling office hinders effective service delivery. Schools need to set aside funds to help in the running of the counseling department.

For counseling to be effective, the setting and the location of the counseling office must be taken into account. Unfortunately, to date, some schools in Kenya do not have a counseling office, and even where present; it is either ill equipped with the necessary supplies or poorly located. In some schools, school counselor share the office with other teaching staff, consequently confidentiality of student's records can be easily compromised.

The lack of community-based support poses another challenge to school counseling in Kenya. School counselors need access to community based resources where they can refer students who may be in need of prolonged therapy. Without such support, the scope of services school counselors can provide will be limited. Lack of consultation and referral sources can also limit the help students can receive. Additionally, a general lack of support from the school system and the community can discourage school counselors from effectively performing their roles.

4. Future Prospects

The future of school counseling in Kenya is not all bleak. However, drastic measures need to be undertaken to ensure better provision of counseling services to all the students. Such changes call for more sophisticated approaches to the policies and models of school counseling. Such changes will also include a redefinition of counselors' roles, restructuring training programs, implementing a comprehensive school counseling programs, and development of systemic support.

4.1 Redefining School Counselor Role and Identity

In order for school counselors in Kenya to perform their roles effectively, there is need to fully define their roles and functions. The role of the school counselor has not been clearly understood among the school staff, administrators, parents, and even among school counselors themselves. A clear definition of the roles of school counselor could help decrease the discrepancies in role expectations among school administrators, teachers, parents and students. Collaboration between all the stake holders will be required in defining counselor roles.

The role of the school counselors are defined based on a given a contextual background. For example, in the United States, school counselors are considered as vital members of the education team. They help all students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social, and career development. Additionally, school counselors design, implement, evaluate and enhance a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success (ASCA, n. d.). Through leadership, advocacy and collaboration, professional school counselors promote equity and access to rigorous educational experiences for all students (ASCA, n. d.). Given this background, it is imperative that the roles of the school counselors in Kenya require redefinition within a social cultural context.

The current problems facing the Kenyan student require school counselors to be knowledgeable about psychological and behavioral interventions, both at the preventive and responsive levels. School counselors are also well positioned to identify students with serious problems and consequently refer them for further therapy. Moreover, school counselors also need to serve the role of leadership and advocacy, and providing support for a safe learning environment for all students. With clear roles and professional identity, school counselors can function more efficiently and provide students with the much needed help. School counselors should be well prepared to address the academic, personal/social and career development needs for all the students.

4.2 School Counselor Preparation/Training

For school counselors to become contributors to educational reform and enhance student success, counselor training programs will require a transformation of both preparation and practice (Paisley & Hayes, 2003). New preparation and service delivery should reflect the changing needs of the Kenyan students in the twenty first century. To bring about this type of transformation, collaboration will be needed from all stakeholders, including college lecturers, Ministry of Education officials, County Education Departments, and school counselors. Changes will entail evaluating the content of the courses offered, in addition to the teaching strategies. Evaluating the program design would involve a review of (a) the rationale for and the basic assumptions of the underlying programs; (b) the content of the curriculum and its program structure; (c) teaching methodologies; and (d) program evaluation (Paisley & Ben-shoff as cited in Hayes & Paisley, 2002, p. 169). Additionally, such transformations will require deliberate integration of theory and practice in program structure, curriculum development, and summative evaluation. Transforming counselor education from an individual-oriented to a systems-oriented approach would require a broadening of the curriculum by, for example, adding new content related to schools and communities as systems (Hayes & Paisley).

The training of school counselors should be based on clearly defined competencies. In the United States, school counselor training is guided by Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards. Unfortunately, the current curriculum in Kenya is based on a community-based counselor or private-practitioner model with little consideration for experiential learning or unique demands of a school setting. School counselor preparation programs might need to review curriculums offered in other countries and tailor them to fit the unique needs of the Kenyan schools, for example those offered in the United States.

The curriculum for school counselors should include both theory and experiential training. While acquiring a wide knowledge base through lectures and workshops is good, practicum and/or internship within the school setting prepares the school counselors for the actual roles and functions they will perform upon graduation. Relevant practicum and internship will require coordinated supervision from both the university instructor and the field supervisor. This can only be achieved through partnership between the university and the schools (Romano, Goh, & Wahl, 2005).

Additionally, ethical issues should be considered in re-examining current training of school counselors. This calls for the development of ethical standards specific to school counseling. These ethical standards should be taught to the counselors-in-training to equip them with the principles on how to solve ethical dilemmas they may encounter within the school. In order to successfully define their roles and function effectively, school counselors in Kenya will need to operate within a comprehensive guidance and counseling program.

4.3 Comprehensive School Guidance and Counseling Programs

Although school counseling in majority of American schools is moving toward a comprehensive guidance program approach (Gysbers, 2012), Kenyan schools are still in need of coordinated guidance programs. There is an obvious need for a more organized form of guidance, a realization that was made in the late 1960s in the U.S. (Gysbers, 2005). Lack of an organizational structure detailing how school counseling should be conducted in schools has led to inconsistencies and variations in how guidance and counseling is conducted in different schools.

The problems Kenyan students are experiencing today require school counselors to abandon traditional methods and adopt a new proactive approach (Musheno & Talbert, 2002). This new approach is developmental and encompasses and integrates prevention, remediation, and crisis intervention to meet the needs of all students (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). There is need for a shift from a service delivery to a systematic and programmatic approach if the needs of all students will be addressed. Schlossberg (2001) contended that preventive efforts are a more economical use of counseling services than a remedial active model. Furthermore, a comprehensive guidance and counseling program would provide evidence to policy makers of the need to render support for counseling services available to all students (Lapan, 2001).

The ASCA National Model (2012) can serve as a guiding framework for developing a Kenyan school comprehensive counseling model. The need to provide developmental counseling programs for all students in Kenya has become increasingly evident in this era of rapid societal change. Several authors have called for

implementation of Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs (CGCP) in Kenyan schools (Human Rights Watch, 1999; Lavusa, 2010; Nyutu, 2007; Nyutu & Gysbers, 2008). Given the wide array of challenges facing Kenyan high schools today, it is important for policy makers to understand clearly that school counselors could help solve current problems that plague the schools. School counselors should be employed not to merely fill up a position, but to implement comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in their schools (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2003) to meet the needs of all students.

Comprehensive guidance and counseling programs would provide school counselors with the organizational structure to focus efforts and organize activities and services that promote critical aspects of student development. Furthermore, Herr (2001) suggested that planned comprehensive guidance programs could clarify what school counselors could do, or should do, to contribute to the mission of the school; what differences they could make in the lives of students; and the degree to which school counselors could be held accountable. Additionally, implementation of comprehensive programs would provide equitable access to guidance and counseling services to all students (ASCA, 2012; Lapan et al., 2003).

School counselors can become more accountable when they follow the framework of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program and provide evidence of their contribution to student success (Gysbers, 2004). A comprehensive program provides a means of evaluating programs to ascertain their effectiveness (Dahir, 2012). For a long time, school counseling in Kenya has lacked a standard by which to evaluate programs; hence, accountability cannot be established. The ASCA model could help assess the impact of the programs on student achievement. The ASCA model could also serve as a framework for designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive, developmental, and systematic school counseling program specific for the Kenyan schools.

Implementing school guidance and counseling programs in Kenyan schools using the ASCA National Model as a framework could provide structure and consistency of counseling services as well as provide a common "voice" among school counselors in all schools (ASCA, 2012). Additionally, a comprehensive school guidance and counseling program could ensure that every student has equitable access to the counseling services. The school counseling program can become an integral component of the academic mission of the school (ASCA, 2012). The program will stipulate specific competency levels of knowledge and skills that students ought to acquire. It will also provide a school counseling program that is comprehensive in design and is systematically delivered to all students (ASCA). Finally, the Kenyan school counseling model should address the academic, personal/social and career development of all the students.

4.4 Development of Systemic Support

Effective implementation of a comprehensive school guidance and counseling program requires collaborative efforts. According to ASCA (2012), school counselors are called upon to become leaders to manage the program. However, to be successful, school counselors cannot operate in isolation. They need to collaborate with other school staff, administrators, parents, community resources, and students (ASCA, 2012).

To achieve support within the school system, school counselors are advised to engage in cooperative efforts with the stakeholders in the development and implementation of the school counseling program (ASCA, 2012). The school principals have a strong influence on shaping the role of the school counselor. Consequently, a key component of the school counselor's leadership role is a collaborative relationship with the principal. By engaging the stakeholders in the implementation process, school counseling will be viewed as complimentary as opposed to competing with the roles of the administrator and the teachers. School counselors should actively seek support from the school principal and the teachers.

School counselors also need to develop and strengthen their relationship with community-based resources. School counselors need to be aware of community-based resources and establish a strong relationship with them to ensure continued care for the students referred to them. Additionally, school counselors should seek support from other school counselors, researchers in the field, and counselor educators in nearby colleges and universities to facilitate consultation and exchange of knowledge. Such support is necessary for the successful implementation of a guidance and counseling program.

5. Conclusion

School counseling in Kenya is a relatively young profession, still struggling to find its identity. Despite numerous calls by the government for the implementation of guidance programs in schools, lack of clear policies has rendered school counseling ineffective and its future questionable. However, as schools continue to grumble with various emerging students' behavioral, social, and psychological problems such as drug and substance abuse, bullying, violence, suicides, and high drop-out rates, the government has acknowledged the need to strengthen school counseling. While this recognition is a move in the right direction, the practical implication of it is yet to be realized.

Although school counseling in Kenya is faced with many challenges, it is worth noting that there has

been an increase in the number of trained school counselors in the field. The appointment of Guidance and Counseling Department heads by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) should now take into account the training of such individuals. Additionally, TSC should ensure that each school has a trained full time school counselor who does not have the dual responsibility of teaching and counseling.

Despite the many challenges currently facing school counseling in Kenya, there is a general consensus that guidance and counseling plays an important role in student development as evidenced by numerous calls from the government to implement guidance programs. The continuous support by policy makers, school administrators, teachers, parents, students, community, and training institutions is paramount for school counseling to maintain significant positive impact on students. Implementation of comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs could be a great avenue to ensuring that all students have access to counseling services. However, before this objective could become a reality, research needs to be conducted on the training and preparation of school counselors. Additionally, research on the perceptions of the role of the school counselor by various stakeholders such as the school principal, teachers, parents, and students could illuminate areas of discrepancy and provide suggestions for improvement. The support of the school principal is crucial in the successful implementation and maintenance of a comprehensive school guidance and counseling program. With the right support and goodwill from all the stakeholders, the future of school counseling in Kenya is bright. It is now time to put the constant rhetoric by the government about strengthening guidance and counseling programs in schools into practice.

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