

School Guidance and Counseling Programs: Examining its Relationship with Teenage Pregnancy in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

Teenage pregnancy remains a persistent global crisis that profoundly affects the socio-economic wellbeing of nations, citizens and families. It contributes to school dropout rates, lower academic achievements, early marriages, and decreased school attendance for female learners. This study examined the relationship between school guidance and counseling programs and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. The article is an extract study of a study conducted in Machakos County and anchored on social learning theory postulated by Albert Bandura. The research utilized a descriptive research design and a target population of 360 principals, 360 Heads of Department (HoDs) Guidance and Counseling (G&C), 360 Parent Association (PA) chairpersons and, 103,517 students. Data was collected using questionnaires for principals and HoDs G&C, interview schedules for PA chairpersons, Focused Group Discussions (FGD) for students and document analysis. The Collected data were analyzed using SPSS software version 25. Descriptive analysis were done using frequencies, measures of central tendency and dispersion particularly the mean and standard deviation. Hypothesis testing was done using Pearson's' Correlation Coefficient at the .05 level of significance. The findings from the research showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between school guidance and counseling programs and teenage pregnancy ($r_p = .361$ & $r_h = 0.497$; $p \leq .01$). The study concluded that with a strong guidance and counselling framework in public secondary schools, cases of teenage pregnancy would substantially reduce or be eliminated. The study recommended, among others that schools principal's should ensure that Guidance and Counselling teachers receive regular capacity building trainings to update them on current trends in learner developmental behaviors.

Key Words: Guidance and Counselling programs, Teenage Pregnancy, Public Secondary Schools

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1.0 Introduction

Globally, education has been considered as a human right and plays a pivotal role in fostering economic growth and development across nations. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically goal 4 requires nations of the world to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong opportunities for all (United Nations Development Programmes(UNDP), 2015). However, this has not been the case because of issues like adolescent pregnancy that precisely contribute to girls' failure to complete schooling (Muganda-Onyando & Omondi, 2008) even though the main aims of most school system is to ensure that students successfully complete their education within the designated timeline (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2008). It's estimated that about 16 million young girls give birth yearly, which accounts to 11% of all births globally where average teen birth rate in middle income countries is two times higher than high-income countries and five times higher in low income countries (World Health Organization(WHO) (2018). In relation to these statistics, it is apparent that teenage pregnancy is an area of

concern in high, middle and low-income countries, Kenya included and this therefore creates the need for urgent action to come up with appropriate measures to curb the problem, which formed the basis for this study.

Teenage pregnancy remains a persistent global crisis that profoundly impacts the socio-economic wellbeing of nations, citizens and families since it contributes to high school dropout rates, lower academic achievements, early marriages and decreased school attendance for female learners (Molisiwa & Moswela, 2012). Additionally, teenage pregnancy among schooling girls may lead to sexually transmitted diseases, abortion, increased mortality rates as well as effecting the school enrollment (Amadi, 2019). These undesirable impacts have forced nations of the world to adopt different policy initiatives and intervention measures to curb the vice and the prevailing consequences.

Curbing of teenage pregnancy amongst schooling teenagers requires a holistic approach. Therefore, stakeholders in secondary schools can curb the vice through school guidance and counseling programs. Guidance and counseling (G&C) encompasses a variety of procedures which are aimed at empowering individuals to make well-informed decisions and navigate their educational, vocational and personal growth effectively (Vishala, 2008). It primarily, emphasizes receptive services where school counselors attend to the instantaneous requirements and distresses of the learner through individual and group counselling, mentoring and modeling (Wambu & Fisher, 2015). Zambia has established Guidance and Counseling departments in all levels of education to offer G&C services to girls who conceive while in school. Regardless of the presence of G&C department in schools, Mulenga and Mukaba (2018), asserts that there is less sensitization on safer sex and abstinence for girls in Zambia thus leading to high rates of teenage pregnancies resulting to high rates of school dropout amongst the teen girls. The study further revealed that qualified teachers expected to conduct counseling sessions with the girls were inadequate meaning that the problem continues.

A study by Ajowi and Simatwa (2010) in Kenya shows that all public secondary schools have Guidance and Counselling (G&C) departments. However, despite the availability of these departments most of the teacher-counselors are untrained while some of the teachers tasked with G&C roles were burdened with other tasks (Okech & Kimemia, 2012). Therefore, this may mean that the G&C services offered in schools may be ineffective to the students and thus this could be the reason for the high rates of unwanted pregnancies among school going girls in Kenya. This research purposed to examine the impact of school G&C program as an intervention measure in addressing teen pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The government contemplates that once learners join school; they study the whole course and complete the level. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2014) show that 47% of teenage girls in Kenya are already sexually active before the age of 18 years, and that about 13000 teen girls drop out from school annually due to pregnancies. Statistics at Machakos County Education Office indicate that teenage pregnancy has taken an upward trend where 44 secondary school teenage girls became pregnant with 21 of them taking national examinations when pregnant while 4 girls delivered while writing their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE) and 19 girls dropped from school in 2016 (Machakos County Education office, 2020). Further, the statistics indicate that, in 2017, 113 secondary school girls became pregnant while in 2018, 147 girls in secondary schools in the county became pregnant. On the same note in 2019, the number of secondary school girls who became pregnant was 151. The reasons for the upward trend over the years are unknown. Therefore, the study was conceived on this premise with a view of investigating the teenage pregnancy crisis, which if not checked, will compromise the strides made in achieving gender equity and equality in education in Kenya.

Kenya has adopted several policy intervention procedures to curb teenage pregnancy like; the Return to School policy (1994) which states that expectant girls should be accepted to be in school and be permitted to resume schooling after delivery. Similarly, the Adolescent Reproductive Health policy (2003) enacted to improve the reproductive health, safety and quality of life of Kenyan adolescents and youth. Other initiatives include; stringent measures against those found guilty of defiling minors leading to unwanted pregnancies (Sexual Offence Act, 2006). Despite these measures, teen pregnancies are still rampant in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya hence, the need for this research

1.2 Study Objective

The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between school guidance and counselling programs and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya

1.3 Study Null Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between school guidance and counselling programs and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

2.0 Empirical Literature

2.1 School Guidance and Counseling Programs and Teenage Pregnancy

Guidance and Counseling (G&C) are procedures geared towards assisting learners to understand themselves and make informed decisions before engaging into premature sexual behaviors, which may lead to unwanted pregnancies. Kinra (2008) explains G&C as a collaboration process through which the counselee and the therapist who is qualified and refined to give assistance interact, with an aim of helping the learner acquire skills to deal more meritoriously with himself/herself and the reality of life. Likewise, Nkechi (2016) describes G&C as a practice of assisting a person to be mindful of himself or herself and the means in which he/she is reacting to the inspirations of his or her surroundings. G&C in schools provides individual and small group counseling services and peer counseling services to students particularly those who have discipline issues (Osodo et al., 2016).

Baugh (2018) did a study on the significance of G&C in current education structure in America. The findings of the study were that, G&C promotes the development of life skills like self-esteem, decision-making, self-realization as well as self-respect among students. Dowden et al. (2018), researched on the implications of school counselors on teenage pregnancy education in the US using a sample size of 16 girls and critical race theoretical framework. The study found that G&C is relevant to pregnant or teen mothers in schools because it helps them to overcome social stigma and psychological stress due to the pregnancy or parenting as well as how to be accountable and responsible. The sample for the current study was 450 respondents and was guided by the social learning theory to examine how schools use G&C programs to curb teenage pregnancy.

A study by Nweze and Okolie (2014), on effectiveness of G&C programmes in secondary schools in Ebonyi State, adopted an ex-post facto descriptive survey design. The researcher targeted senior school students and a sample of ten secondary schools. The study used a sample of 300 participants that is; 30 Head Masters and 270 learners. Information was gathered using questionnaires. The study found that G&C is a procedure of scheduled intercession within a school organization by which the full growth of learners' is inspired in areas related to individual, social, emotional, professional and educational needs as well as promoting self-understanding. Therefore, this study aimed at filling the gap on how G&C is being used as an intervention measure in curbing teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

Hako and Mbango (2018) did a research to explore the significance of G&C programs in a Namibian school setting. The study adopted a documentary assessment method to survey the purpose of Guidance and Counselling and the role of teacher counselors. The findings revealed that, although G&C had execution hitches such as little time allocation, insufficient teachers, overloaded syllabus and scarcity of reference materials, it was however able to address issues such as teenage pregnancy, child abuse, school dropout, drug and substance abuse, and violence. The study has not directly provided literature on how G&C program is an intervention measure in curbing teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools, thus the need for this study.

Salgong, Ngumi, and Chege (2016), conducted a research to investigate the role of G&C in improving learners discipline in secondary schools in Koibatek district, Kenya. The research used descriptive survey design, a target population of 2624 students, 23 principals, 23 school counselors and 227 teachers from which a sample size of 262 students, 8 principals, 8 school counselors and 24 teachers selected. Questionnaires and interview schedule were used to gather information. Alfred Adler (1998), theory of personality and the humanistic theory of Albert Bandura (1995) guided the research. The study found that G&C helps individuals to appreciate oneself to

address life practices in a better way, by being capable of identifying the issues that prompt the harms and look for suitable approaches of undertaking the situations that may lead to unhealthy life styles as well as improving student's discipline. Our research and this study differ in terms of target population, sample size and the theory in which the study was anchored hence the need to address the research gap on how school guidance and counselling is being employed as an intercession measure in curbing teenage pregnancy.

Osodo et al. (2016) did a study to establish the importance of peer counselors in the advancement of student discipline in Ugunja Sub-County, Kenya. The research used descriptive survey design and targeted 3500 students from which the selected sample size of 246 students was selected. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to gather information. The research found that peer counseling aided schoolchildren to improve their behaviors, know themselves and to develop a positive self-image. The study recommended the desire to motivate the peer counselors in order to perform optimally. The reviewed study varies from my study, in that the target population and sample size are different in comparison. Subsequently, the need to conduct this study to seal the gap on how stakeholders in schools use G&C as an intervention measure to curb teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The social learning theory promulgated by Albert Bandura in 1966 guided the study. The theory postulates that children learn and behave through the influence of both formal instructions that is in what manner parents, teachers and other authorities and role models behave and observation of how their peers and grown-ups behave. Further, the theory posit that, reinforcement from others influences behavior. By being reinforced for some behavior and, or perhaps even punished by other people, a child or students learns socially approved behaviors (Bandura, 1977). According to the theory, learners learn to conduct themselves, through social interaction and observation rather than verbal instruction. Consequently, peer counselors, parents, and teacher counselors are able to encourage good behavior while discouraging undesirable habits among students. Whether it is the parent, the counselor and the teacher counselor, one has to behave like a role model to the student in each setting. Similarly, Bandura social learning theory emphasizes that students learn life skills through means of instruction, practice and response rather than just observation. In a school situation, social learning theory contends that teachers teaching life skills need to create a proper atmosphere by which students learn positive manners through role modeling, mentoring, observation and social interaction. Therefore, teachers' reinforcement is therefore important in G&C as well as learning and shaping of student's behavior.

3.0 Methodology

This study used descriptive research design. The descriptive research design also describes the state of affairs as it exists without any manipulation of the variable (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). The descriptive survey also allows for the gathering of information, summarizing, presentation and interpretation of data for purpose of classification (Kothari, 2004). The descriptive research design was critical in the examination of the role of parental socio-economic support; school guidance and counseling programs; principal's involvement of parents in student's discipline and Life Skills Education in curbing teenage pregnancies in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The design was used because of several advantages. The design has the ability to describe and portray characteristics of an event or situation. Secondly, the descriptive research design describes the state of affairs as it exists without any manipulation of the variable (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). Thirdly, the descriptive survey design allows for the gathering of information, summarizing, presentation and interpretation of data for purpose of classification (Kothari, 2004). Additionally, the descriptive research design was critical in the examination of the role of school guidance and counseling programs in curbing teenage pregnancies in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya. The target population comprised of 360 Principals, 360 Guidance and Counselling (G&C) Heads of Department (HODs), 360 PA chairpersons, and 103,517 students. The total sample size was 450 respondents comprising of 189 principals, 189 Heads of guidance and counselling, 36 parent association chairpersons and 36 form three classes who were chosen for the FGD. The study used questionnaires for principals and HoDs G&C, interview schedule for PA chairpersons and Focus Group Discussions schedule for students and document analysis for data collection. Qualitative information was structured into themes and reported in stories as per the objective of the study. Quantitative data in the instruments was examined using percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation.

The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) program version 25 was used to aid data analysis process. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the level of association among the variables subsumed in the study in order to test the study hypothesis at the .05 level of significance. According to Darius (2013), an alpha level of .05 for social sciences is deemed good. A value of $p < 0.05$ showed attaining a significance therefore rejection of null hypothesis and approval of alternative hypothesis, or else will mean that the null hypothesis would be upheld.

4.0. Findings

In this study, the researchers administered 189 questionnaires to principals, 189 questionnaires to heads of Guidance and Counselling, 36 interview schedules to the PA chairpersons, and 36 Focused Group Discussions schedules to form three classes in the three category of schools. The instrument return rate was 75.13 percent for principal's questionnaires, 75.66 percent for heads of G&C, 88.89 percent response rate for the PA chairperson's interview schedules, and 97.22 percent response rate for the students Focus Group Discussion schedules.

4.1. Relationship between School Guidance Counselling Programs and Teenage Pregnancy

Guidance and counselling (G&C) programs play a critical role in molding the behavior of individuals especially learners. In this respect, the respondents were asked the question of if they had G&C sessions in their institutions of which they affirmed. This implies that all the schools in the study sample had guidance and counselling programs. Further, the researchers wanted to confirm the kind of topics covered during the counselling sessions. According to the principals, the following topics are covered during the guidance and counselling sessions: drugs and substance abuse, sex education, HIV/AIDS, time management, abstinence, hygiene, sexual relations, career choices, and self-awareness and communication skills. As for the HODs G&C, topics covered during guidance and counselling sessions include: abstinence, pregnancy, boy-girl relationships, cleanliness, career choices, personal hygiene, self-esteem, drug and substance abuse, sex education, peer pressure, dangers of teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, self-confidence, self-awareness, gender-based violence and time management.

Furthermore, the researcher needed to establish the frequency of carrying out guidance and counselling in the institutions. Table 1 displays the analyzed findings.

Table 1: Frequency of conducting guidance and counselling sessions in schools

How often do you have G/C sessions on teenage pregnancy in your school?				
	PRINCIPALS		HODs	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Weekly	66	46.5	55	38.5
Monthly	14	9.9	21	14.7
Termly	49	34.5	51	35.7
As need Arises	13	9.2	16	11.2
Total	142	100.0	143	100.0

Source: Field Data (2023)

As can be seen from Table 1, about 47 percent of the principals affirm that their schools conduct G&C periods on teenage pregnancy weekly. This was followed by about 35 percent of the principals who undertake counselling sessions on a termly basis. About 10 percent of the principals said they conduct the sessions on a monthly basis while 9 percent conduct the sessions as need arises. Similarly, 39 percent of the HODs in charge of guidance and counselling said they conduct guidance and counselling meetings on teenage pregnancy on a weekly basis while about 36 percent undertook the programmes on a termly basis and 15 percent undertook the programme on a monthly basis. Only 11 percent of the HODs said they conducted the guidance and counselling sessions on teenage pregnancy as need arises.

Principals Views on School Guidance and Counselling Program and Teenage Pregnancy

Principals' were requested to provide their opinions on how guidance and counselling programs had influenced teenage pregnancy. Examination of the responses obtained from the principals is shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Principals view on school guidance and counselling program and teenage pregnancy

	SD	DA	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
The school has a functioning G/C department	2.1	29.6	3.5	35.9	28.9	3.60	1.244
The school has a structured way of sensitizing students on teenage pregnancies and sexuality	6.3	66.9	4.2	16.2	6.3	2.49	1.043
Students always seek G/C services in school	1.4	3.5	4.9	81.7	8.5	3.92	.631
Group counseling provides learners with skill necessary for mitigating teenage pregnancy		17.6	14.8	44.4	23.2	3.73	1.010
Individual counseling help in curbing teenage pregnancy among schooling teenagers		2.1	4.2	70.4	23.2	4.15	.583
The principal invite mentors and peer counselors to talk to students about teenage pregnancy		1.4	2.8	66.2	29.6	4.24	.570
Mentoring and peer counseling equip girls with skill which enable them to delay sex debut hence reducing teenage pregnancy			.7	50.7	48.6	4.48	.515
						3.80	.361

Source: Field Data (2023)

From Table 2, it is evident that a better part (65.8%) of the principals agreed that their schools had a functioning guidance and counselling department while nearly one-third disagreed to the declaration (mean = 3.60). Further, around 73 percent of the principals disagreed that their schools had a structured way of sensitizing students on teenage pregnancies and sexuality while 22 percent of them agreed. Additionally, about 90 percent of the principals agreed that students always seek G/C services in school (mean = 3.92). Regarding the statement that group counseling provides learners with skills necessary for curbing teenage pregnancy, about 68 percent of the principals consent the account while 18 percent differed and the rest were ambivalent. It is also notable to note that roughly 94 percent of the principals concur that individual counseling helps in curbing teenage pregnancy among schooling teenagers (mean 4.15). 96 percent of the respondents agreed that the principals' invite mentors and peer counselors to talk to students about teenage pregnancy (mean =4.24) while 99 percent of the principals agreed that mentoring and peer counseling equip girls with skills which enable them to delay sex debut hence reducing teenage pregnancy (mean =4.48). In general, it can be said that guidance and counselling played a key role in influencing teenage pregnancies in the study area based on the level of agreement by the principals (Mean =3.80; sd = .361).

The principals were asked an open-ended question, to give their opinion on the association between school G&C and teenage pregnancy. All of them agreed that there was a relationship further qualifying that adequate guidance and counselling leads to decrease in teenage pregnancies and that guidance and counselling programs can help the students develop positive attitude towards sex and relationships therefore improving self-esteem, which reduces teenage pregnancy. The positive outcomes of guidance and counselling according to the principals were that: G&C equips teens to resist peer pressure, it leads to lowering pregnancy risks, teaches communication to discuss sexual health with parents and partners, it teaches boundary-setting to prevent unwanted pregnancies; guidance cultivates empathy and discourages exploitative relationships; guidance emphasizes career aspirations, deterring early parenthood; counseling equips teens to resist peer pressure thus lowering pregnancy risks; guidance also helps teens identify and build supportive social networks and it equips teens to manage stress and avoid impulsive behaviors.

The principals were asked how the G&C used in their schools could be used as an intervention measure in curbing the rate of pregnancies in schools. The principals gave varied opinions such as; it can be used to inform students about the dangers of premarital sex and attendant responsibilities (35%); through guidance and counselling students get to be informed about contraception and reproductive services (45%), and get education

about online risks, protecting against exploitation (23%). Further, students get to be taught effective communication about sexual health with partners (15%). It also helps them to set goals focusing on long-term goals, which will distract them from teenage pregnancies (13%).

As for the need of strengthening guidance and counselling in schools, all the principals agreed that there was need to reinforce G&C services in institutions. This is so in order to ensure that the students are well equipped and informed as well as empowered to make informed decisions thus leading to reduced teenage pregnancies. A strong guidance and counselling framework will help in addressing underlying issues that may contribute to teenage pregnancies such as low self-worth, peer pressure, and deficiency of resources or knowledge. It was held by most principals that counselors could help students to make cognizant choices on their sexual health and lessen the danger of unplanned pregnancies

4.2 HODs Views on School Guidance and Counselling Program and Teenage Pregnancy

Just like the principals, HODs were also subjected to similar questions regarding the correlation between G&C and teenage pregnancy in the research area. Analysis of the Likert scale type of items, which were responded to, is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Views of HODs regarding role of G&C and teenage pregnancy

	SD	DA	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
The school has a functioning G/C department		.7	2.1	37.8	59.4	4.56	.577
The school has a structured way of sensitizing students on teenage pregnancies and sexuality	1.4	32.2	7	33.6	25.9	3.50	1.227
Students always seek G/C services in school	9.8	53.1	16.1	15.4	5.6	2.54	1.047
Group counseling provides learners with skill necessary for mitigating teenage pregnancy		2.1	9.8	74.8	13.3	3.99	.563
Individual counseling help in curbing teenage pregnancy among schooling teenagers	.7	4.9	17.5	46.2	30.8	4.01	.864
The principal invite mentors and peer counselors to talk to students about teenage pregnancy		2.1	12.6	51.7	33.6	4.17	.722
Mentoring and peer counseling equip girls with skill which enable them to delay sex debut hence reducing teenage pregnancy			1.4	47.6	51	4.50	.529
Overall						3.89	.407

Source: Field Data 2023

It can be observed from Table 3 that 97 percent of the HODs assent that their schools had a functioning G/C department (Mean= 4.56). Opinions were however different regarding the statement that the school has a structured way of sensitizing students on teenage pregnancies and sexuality wherein over one third of the HODs disagreed while about two thirds agreed with the statement (Mean = 3.50). As to whether students always seek G/C services in school, nearly 63 percent of the HODs differed to the declaration while about 20 percent acceded (Mean = 2.54). over 88 percent of the HODs agreed that group counseling provides learners with skills necessary for mitigating teenage pregnancy (Mean = 3.99) whereas about 76 percent of the HODs held that individual counseling help in curbing teenage pregnancy among schooling teenagers (Mean = 4.01). regarding the statement that the principal invites mentors and peer counselors to talk to students about teenage pregnancy, nearly 85 percent of the HODs concur to the account while about 13 percent expressed a neutral view (Mean = 4.17). Finally, 98 percent of the HODs agreed that mentoring and peer counseling equip girls with skills which enable them to delay sex debut hence reducing teenage pregnancy (Mean = 4.50). Overall, the HODs agreed that

guidance and counselling programs had a role towards curbing teenage pregnancy in schools within the study area (Mean = 3.89; sd = .407).

When asked through an open-ended question as to whether there was any relationship between teenage pregnancy and school guidance and counselling, all the HODs confirmed that there was indeed a relationship by qualifying that the more the guidance and counselling in a school, the less likely are the teenage pregnancies. According to most HODs, counselling can help reduce cases of teenage pregnancies as the girls acquire information on the dangers of early sex. Equally, it equips learners with skills like decision-making, self-awareness and knowledge, which helps them to make right decisions on their sexual behaviors thus curbing teenage pregnancies.

Regarding the use of G&C as an intervention measure in curbing the rate of pregnancies in schools, the majority (65%) of HODs held that G& C is an intervention measure in their schools because learners receive counselling on the dangers of teenage sex and teenage pregnancies. The skills and information help them to make informed decisions on their sexual activities. It is also used as an empowerment tool to enable teenagers make informed decisions regarding matters to do with sexuality and sexual relations.

In regard to the question on whether there was need to strengthen G&C services in schools to curb teenage pregnancy, all the HODs agreed that there was need to strengthen G&C services in order to curb teenage pregnancies. Some of the reasons given as to why it needed to be strengthened include: reducing stigma around teenage pregnancy and creating supportive environment for pregnant and parenting teens and giving teenagers information and awareness on sexual and reproductive health as well as information on how to overcome life challenges.

4.3 Qualitative Views on School Guidance and Counselling Program (FGDs and Documentary Review)

As to whether the students have guidance and counseling sessions in schools, all of them affirmed through the FGDs that they do have guidance and counselling sessions. The main topics that were covered during those guidance and counselling sessions include: Drug and Substance Abuse, Abstinence, Assertiveness, Decision Making, Mental Health, Morality, Sex and Sexuality, Self Esteem, Stress Management, Effects of Social Media, Career Choices, Effects of Unwanted Pregnancies, Hygiene, Negotiation Skills, Truancy, HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Self Confidence and Academic Achievement. Moreover, the students averred that these topics were relevant in helping them to curb teenage pregnancies as seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Other Areas of Interest on G&C in the FGD

		Frequency	Percent
Are the topics relevant in helping you to curb teenage pregnancies	YES	35	100.0
Are there mentors and peer counsellors in your school who guide you on teenage pregnancy matters?	YES	35	100.0
In your view, is there any need to strengthen G&C services in schools to curb teenage pregnancy	YES	35	100.0

Source: Field Data (2023)

It can be observed from Table 4 that all the respondents in the FGD were in congruence through affirmation that they have mentors and peer counsellors in school who guide them on teenage pregnancy matters (100%). In addition, they affirmed of the need to strengthen G&C services in schools to curb teenage pregnancy (100%).

Analysis from the documents regarding school guidance and counselling programme, showed that all the schools have guidance and counselling session scheduled once per week. Further, the records also revealed that counselling was done on many topics but topics handling teenage pregnancy issues were not reflected. In addition, the schools did not have any programmed schedule to sensitize the learners on teenage pregnancy

4.4 Hypothesis Testing of the Relationship between School Guidance and Counselling Programs and Teenage Pregnancy

The null hypothesis (H0) for the study stated thus: There is no statistically significant relationship between school guidance and counselling programs and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County. Being a relational study, the level of association among the variables subsumed in the study was determined using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient in order to examine the hypothesis at the .05 level of significance. Further, considering that information for this research was gathered using two main instruments from two sets of respondents (Principals and HODs). It was considered prudent to present the test of hypothesis in two parts for purposes of triangulation of the findings as presented in Tables 5 and 6

Table 5: Principals correlation statistics on school guidance and counselling program and teenage pregnancy

		TENPREG	SOCIECON	SCHOLGC	PARENTINVOL	LSE
SCHOLGC	Pearson Correlation	.361**	-.040	1	.435**	.219**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.640		.000	.009
	N	133	142	142	142	142

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Data (2023)

The null hypothesis for this study stated thus: There is no statistically significant relationship between school guidance and counselling programs and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County. It is notable in Table 5 that the coefficient of correlation between school G&C programs and teenage pregnancy was positive ($r = .361$; $p \leq .01$) according to the principals. This shows that the relationship between school guidance and counselling programmes and curbing of teenage pregnancy was positive and significant. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .1301$), infers that school guidance and counselling programs can account to curbing 13.01 percent of teenage pregnancies in schools. This shows that improved guidance and counselling programmes can help in reducing cases of teenage pregnancies. The implication of this finding is that when a more robust guidance and counselling program is adopted in schools it is likely to reduce the effects associated with premarital sex such as teenage pregnancy. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which stated thus: There is no statistically significant relationship between school guidance and counselling programs and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County was renounced.

On the other hand, it is worth noting from the HODs (G&C) that the coefficient of correlation on school guidance and counselling programs and teenage pregnancy was positive ($r = .264$; $p \leq .01$) as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: HODs G&C correlation statistics on school guidance and counselling program and teenage pregnancy

		Tenpreg	Parentsoc	guid_cous	parentinvol	Lescurr
Guid_Cous	Pearson Correlation	.264**	-.114	1	.445**	.205*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.175		.000	.014
	N	134	143	143	143	143
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Source: Field Data (2023)

This shows that the relationship between school G&C programs and curbing of teenage pregnancy was positive and significant. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .007$), infers that school guidance and counselling programs can account to curbing 7 percent of teenage pregnancies in schools. This shows that improved guidance and counselling programs can help in reducing cases of teenage pregnancies. The implication of this finding is that when a more robust guidance and counselling program is adopted in schools is likely to reduce the effects associated with premarital sex such as teenage pregnancy. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which stated thus: There is no statistically significant relationship between school guidance and counselling programs and teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Machakos County was rebuked.

5.0 Discussion of the Study Findings

5.1 Relationship between School Guidance and Counselling Programs and Teenage Pregnancy

Data obtained from the respondents showed that all schools offered guidance and counselling services with a number of topical issues discussed. According to students, the main topics that were covered during those guidance and counselling sessions included: Drug and Substance Abuse, Abstinence, Assertiveness, Decision Making, Mental Health, Morality, Sex and Sexuality, Self Esteem, Stress Management, Effects of Social Media, Career Choices, Effects of Unwanted Pregnancies, Hygiene, Negotiation Skills, Truancy, HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Self Confidence and Academic Achievement. The documentary analysis records however showed that in spite of schools having counselling sessions at least once per week; the schools did not have any programmed schedule to sensitize the learners on teenage pregnancy. This claim is corroborated by the principals who were of the view that they do not have a structured way of sensitizing students on teenage pregnancies and sexuality (mean 2.49) as shown in Table 4.20. Of importance to note also is that according to the HODs G&C, students were not always seeking G/C services in school. In spite of the aforementioned findings however, the inferential analysis from the principals revealed the coefficient of correlation between school G&C programs and teenage pregnancy was positive and significant of $r = .361$; $p \leq .01$ as reported in Table 4.23. Similarly, the findings from the HODs G&C revealed a positive and significant relationship between school G&C programs and teenage pregnancy of $r = .264$; $p \leq .01$ as reported in Table 4.24. This implies that guidance and counselling programs have a significant role to play in curbing teenage pregnancy in schools.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A strong guidance and counselling mechanism form the basis of discipline in schools. Therefore, activating a guidance and counselling framework contributes significantly to taming indiscipline in schools, including teenage pregnancy. The outcomes of this inquiry confirm this fact in that they revealed a positive and significant relationship between guidance and counselling and the curbing of teenage pregnancy. This, therefore, implies that with a strong guidance and counselling framework, cases of teenage pregnancy will significantly reduce. Therefore, the study concludes that, with a strong guidance and counselling framework in public secondary schools, cases of teenage pregnancy will substantially reduce or be eliminated. The study recommendations that the MOE should make Guidance and counselling programmes mandatory in all schools. Further, the study recommended that Schools principals' should ensure that G/C teachers receive regular capacity building trainings to update them on current trends in learner developmental behaviors. Lastly, the study recommended that the Principals should support and properly equip guidance and counselling offices to enable the G/C teachers to offers the G/C services effectively.

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