



Parental Involvement in School Counselling Services and Discipline of Learners in Public Day Secondary Schools in Kiambaa Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract: *Learner indiscipline remains a persistent challenge in Kenyan public day secondary schools despite the adoption of guidance and counselling as an alternative to corporal punishment. This study examined parental involvement in school counselling services and learner discipline in public day secondary schools in Kiambaa Sub-County, Kenya. It focused on parental participation in counselling programmes, parent–teacher–counsellor communication, support for counselling interventions, and involvement in corrective processes. An embedded mixed methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires from 361 Form 3 and Form 4 students and 10 teacher-counsellors, while qualitative data were obtained through structured interviews with 8 deputy principals. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics in SPSS version 29.0.2, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings showed that formal parental participation and communication were inconsistent, with teacher-counsellor ratings generally below 3.00. However, students reported stronger home-based involvement, including discussion of counselling advice and behavioural follow-up. Home reinforcement of counselling recommendations and participation in correction plans were comparatively low. Nevertheless, students reported high levels of rule compliance and respectful behaviour, while teacher-counsellors observed reductions in repeated disciplinary cases. Qualitative findings revealed that parental involvement was largely reactive and constrained by work commitments, economic pressures, family instability, unreliable communication channels, and limited participation opportunities. The study concludes that parental involvement contributes to improved learner discipline, although its effectiveness is limited by irregular engagement and structural barriers. Schools should strengthen communication and establish flexible, regular parental participation frameworks.*

Keywords: *Parental involvement, School counselling services, Learner discipline, Parent–school communication, Public day secondary schools, Kiambaa Sub-County*

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1. Introduction

Learner discipline is central to effective teaching and learning, yet secondary schools continue to experience truancy, absenteeism, disrespect for authority, drug and substance abuse, school unrest, and declining academic

performance. The thesis situates this problem within the adolescent stage, when learners face increasing social, emotional, and behavioural pressures. It further presents discipline as an outcome shaped not only by school rules and sanctions, but also by the quality of support and

behavioural guidance available across the home and school environments.

Parental involvement has been associated with learners' responsible behaviour, self-regulation, emotional stability, and engagement in school activities. The reviewed literature describes parental involvement as participation in school programmes, communication with teachers and counsellors, behavioural monitoring, emotional support, and reinforcement of school expectations at home (Yang et al., 2023). In school counselling, this involvement is especially important because the advice and behavioural expectations introduced at school require consistency at home if learners are to internalise them.

Evidence reviewed in the thesis indicates that school counselling programmes often devote considerable attention to behavioural and emotional difficulties but achieve limited improvement when parents remain minimally involved. Studies from Asia identified time constraints, work responsibilities, cultural expectations, and lack of awareness as barriers to sustained participation (Kim, 2024; Larran & Hein, 2024). Research from China, the Philippines, Brazil, and Mexico similarly linked family-school partnership and parental involvement with emotional regulation, respect for authority, compliance with rules, and reduced truancy or disruptive behaviour (Cao, 2026; Phuntsho, 2021; Salleh & Rosli, 2019).

Within African secondary schools, the thesis reports a comparable pattern. Weak parental supervision, prolonged parental absence, and limited participation in school counselling have been associated with truancy and behavioural misconduct (Aseefa, 2018; Munje & Jita, 2020). Studies in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Tanzania emphasised the contribution of family involvement and school-home communication to behavioural stability and discipline (De Dieu & Andala, 2021; Isabelle, 2023; Mbanga et al., 2020; Nghipandulwa, 2023; Onyinyechukwu et al., 2024). These findings support the view that counselling services are more effective when schools and families reinforce consistent behavioural expectations.

In Kenya, guidance and counselling was strengthened as an alternative disciplinary strategy after the abolition of corporal punishment. However, the thesis notes that indiscipline has continued despite the presence of counselling departments in many schools. Existing Kenyan research has largely focused on school management, counsellor practices, or guidance and counselling services generally, while giving less attention to parental involvement as a distinct component of counselling-based discipline management (Khamala et al., 2025; Ndwiga, 2023; Song'oro, 2023). Other studies have established that parental involvement and parent-school collaboration matter for learner discipline, but do not fully explain the separate contribution of counselling participation,

communication, home support, and corrective involvement (Njugia et al., 2024; Ocharo et al., 2023).

The problem is particularly relevant to public day secondary schools in Kiambaa Sub-County, a peri-urban setting characterised in the thesis by rapid social and economic change, demanding parental work schedules, changing family structures, and continuing cases of learner indiscipline. Although schools provide counselling services, parental participation is described as inconsistent, communication is often weak, and cooperation in addressing behavioural problems is uneven. The resulting gap is a lack of local empirical evidence on how specific dimensions of parental involvement in counselling services relate to learner discipline.

The study therefore sought to investigate the influence of parental involvement in school counselling services on learner discipline in public day secondary schools in Kiambaa Sub-County. It examined: (a) the extent of parental participation in counselling programmes and its relationship with learner discipline; (b) the role of parent-teacher-counsellor communication in strengthening disciplinary measures; (c) the contribution of parental support for counselling interventions to emotional regulation, respect for authority, and compliance with school rules; and (d) the contribution of corrective parental participation to the reduction of indiscipline cases.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical framework

The study was anchored in Ecological Systems Theory and Social Learning Theory. Ecological Systems Theory explains development and behaviour through interactions between individuals and interconnected environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In the study, parents, teachers, counsellors, peers, and the school constitute immediate and interacting environments that shape learners' behavioural expectations. The home-school relationship represents an important mesosystem connection: when parents and school personnel communicate and reinforce common expectations, learners receive consistent guidance across the two settings. The theory also accommodates indirect influences described in the thesis, including parental work schedules, economic pressures, community resources, education policies, family transitions, and changes in disciplinary practice.

Social Learning Theory explains behavioural acquisition through observation, modelling, imitation, and reinforcement (Bandura, 1977). Parents and teachers act as significant behavioural models, while counselling provides guidance on acceptable behaviour, emotional control, and decision-making. The effect of counselling is expected to

be stronger when parents model disciplined conduct and reinforce counselling recommendations at home. Conversely, contradictory messages, poor role-modelling, or failure to follow through may weaken behavioural change. Together, the two theories position learner discipline as both an ecological outcome of home–school interaction and a learned outcome strengthened through consistent modelling and reinforcement.

2.2 Parental participation, communication, support, and corrective involvement

The literature reviewed in the thesis consistently links family–school partnerships with improved learner behaviour. In the United States, regular parent contact with counsellors and teachers was associated with fewer suspensions and absences, while family–school partnership programmes were linked to consistent behavioural expectations across home and school (Hill & Torres, 2021; Sheridan et al., 2022). Evidence from the United Kingdom and Finland also associated active parental involvement in guidance and counselling with lower indiscipline and stronger emotional wellbeing (Harris & Goodall, 2021; Kallio & Hietanen, 2023). East African studies similarly found that participation in school meetings, disciplinary committees, consultations, and monitoring was related to improved student discipline, although counselling-specific participation was often not isolated analytically (De Dieu & Andala, 2021; Mbanga et al., 2020; Msacky et al., 2024).

Communication provides the mechanism through which parents, teachers, and counsellors exchange information about behaviour, agree on expectations, and coordinate intervention. The reviewed studies show that timely and clear communication can facilitate early identification of behavioural concerns and consistent follow-up. However, counselling communication may be weakened by irregular contact, reliance on learners to transmit messages, institutional workload, inadequate support for counsellors, and parent uncertainty about the purpose or confidentiality of counselling (Harrington-Diorio, 2024; Oldham, 2024; Perry & Vazquez, 2024). The thesis therefore treats communication not merely as a general component of parental involvement, but as a distinct process whose frequency, clarity, responsiveness, and reliability may shape disciplinary outcomes.

Parental support extends beyond attendance and communication. It includes emotional and moral support, encouragement to follow guidance, behavioural monitoring, reinforcement of counselling recommendations, and follow-up after sessions. Studies reviewed in the thesis suggest that counselling can reduce absenteeism, insubordination, classroom disruption, and

other forms of behavioural deviance, but many studies give limited attention to the home environment that sustains behavioural change (Akron, 2023; Banda, 2022; Ndwiga, 2023; Osuoha, 2024; Vipene & Haliru, 2022). Counsellors' perspectives further indicate that parental cooperation is particularly important in persistent disciplinary cases, while peer or school-based counselling alone may not account for the contribution of parental reinforcement (Baliach, 2025; Onaolapo, 2025).

Corrective involvement concerns parental participation after a behavioural problem has been identified. It includes involvement in behaviour correction plans, follow-up on agreed actions, behavioural reporting from home, and participation in disciplinary decision-making. The thesis distinguishes corrective involvement from general participation because parents may respond to a disciplinary incident without becoming consistently involved in planned counselling. This distinction is important in contexts where participation is predominantly reactive, as reported by Msacky et al. (2024), and where schools may obtain disciplinary benefits from parental contact without establishing durable involvement structures.

The reviewed literature also identifies interrelated barriers. These include limited awareness of counselling, demanding work schedules, economic strain, family instability, institutional workload, poor communication systems, cultural expectations, mistrust, and weakly inclusive school practices (Harrington-Diorio, 2024; Kim, 2024; Perry & Vazquez, 2024; Sulistyaningrum et al., 2025). The thesis argues that these barriers should not be reduced to parental unwillingness because institutional and socio-economic conditions may determine whether parents receive messages, attend meetings, or implement recommendations at home.

2.3 Research gap and conceptual framework

The research gap identified in the thesis is contextual, conceptual, and methodological. Much of the available evidence examines parental involvement broadly in relation to academic performance, psychosocial adjustment, attendance, or school governance. Communication is commonly treated as a subsidiary element rather than an independent behavioural coordination process, while parental support is rarely separated into encouragement, emotional support, reinforcement, and follow-up. In addition, many studies rely on school personnel and cross-sectional self-reports, and evidence specific to Kenyan public day secondary schools remains limited. The study addressed these gaps by examining four dimensions of parental involvement and integrating learner, teacher-counsellor, and deputy principal perspectives in Kiambaa Sub-County.

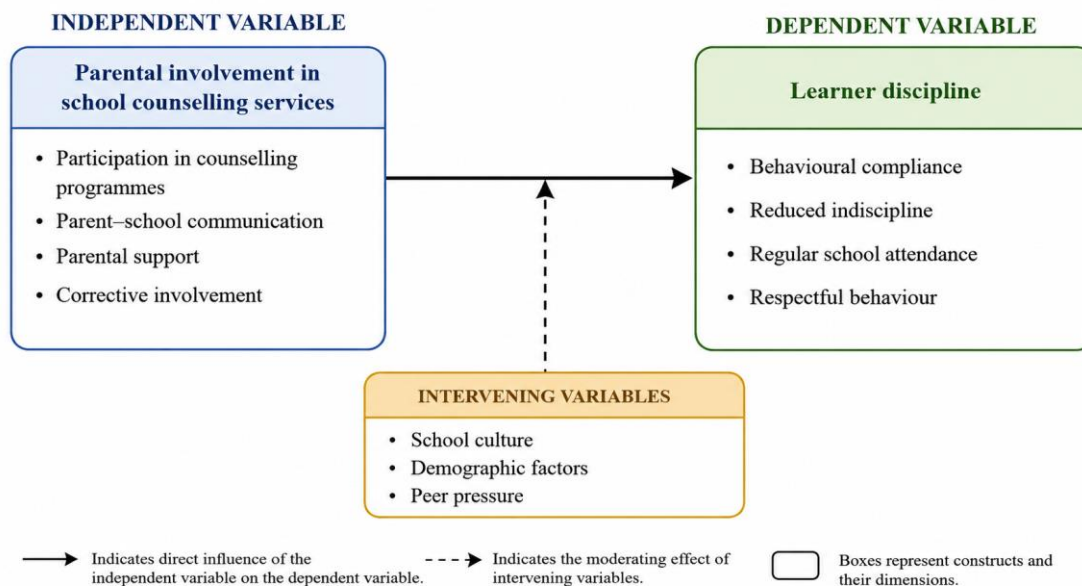


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

The framework proposes that parental participation, communication, support, and corrective involvement contribute to learner discipline, while school culture, demographic factors, and peer pressure may strengthen or weaken the relationship.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design and study setting

The study used an embedded mixed methods design. Quantitative evidence formed the primary strand, while qualitative interviews were embedded to explain, enrich, and contextualise the numerical patterns. Integration occurred during interpretation and discussion. The study was conducted in public day secondary schools in Kiambaa Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya. The area was selected because the thesis describes it as a peri-urban setting undergoing rapid social and economic transformation that affects parental availability, family

structures, and learner behaviour, while schools continue to report indiscipline despite the presence of guidance and counselling services.

3.2 Population, sampling, and sample

The target population comprised 6,234 respondents: 38 deputy principals, 76 teacher-counsellors, and 6,120 Form 3 and Form 4 students. The two student cohorts were selected because of their longer exposure to school counselling and disciplinary practices. Public day secondary schools, deputy principals, and teacher-counsellors were selected purposively. Students were stratified by class level and then selected through simple random sampling. The planned sample was 381 participants, consisting of 10 deputy principals, 10 teacher-counsellors, and 361 students. The student sample was determined using the Kathuri and Pals (1993) sample-size table. The results chapter reports completed questionnaires from 361 students and 10 teacher-counsellors and completed interviews with 8 deputy principals.

Table .: Target population and planned sample

Category	Target population	Planned sample	Sampling approach
Deputy principals	38	10	Purposive
Teacher-counsellors	76	10	Purposive
Form 3 and Form 4 students	6,120	361	Stratified and simple random; Kathuri and Pals table
Total	6,234	381	—

3.3 Data collection instruments and quality assurance

Quantitative data were collected using self-administered questionnaires for teacher-counsellors and students. The teacher-counsellor questionnaire covered parental participation, parent-school communication, parental support, corrective involvement, and learner discipline through Likert-scale and open-ended items. The student questionnaire collected demographic information and perceptions of parental involvement and personal discipline practices. Structured interview guides were used with deputy principals to obtain in-depth accounts of parental involvement, communication, cooperation in corrective counselling, barriers, and observed discipline outcomes. The use of several instruments supported triangulation.

Pilot testing was conducted in schools excluded from the main study to assess clarity, reliability, and validity. The thesis states that approximately 10% of the proposed sample was to be used for the pilot. Internal consistency was to be assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with 0.70 and above considered acceptable (Hajjar, 2018; Izah et al., 2023). Face, content, and construct validity were addressed through review by university supervisors and revision of the instruments. The thesis does not report the achieved pilot sample or the resulting alpha coefficients.

3.4 Data analysis and ethical considerations

Completed questionnaires and interview responses were checked for completeness, consistency, and accuracy. Quantitative data were coded, cleaned, and analysed in SPSS version 29.0.2. Frequencies and percentages

described demographic characteristics and response distributions, while means and standard deviations summarised perceptions of parental involvement and learner discipline. The methodology states that descriptive statistics were appropriate because the study sought to describe patterns rather than establish cause-and-effect relationships. Interview data were transcribed, coded, grouped into categories, and organised into themes aligned with the research objectives. Quantitative and qualitative evidence was integrated during interpretation.

The ethical approval was through institutional review body, NACOSTI, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior and National Administration and the university before data collection. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, respondents could withdraw without penalty, and personally identifying information was not collected. Data were anonymised and stored in controlled-access repositories.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Respondent characteristics

The student sample comprised 361 respondents. Most were aged 17 years (48.8%), followed by 18 years (39.1%) and 16 years (12.2%). Female students represented 55.7% and male students 44.3%. Form 3 students constituted 51.8% of the sample and Form 4 students 48.2%. Among the 10 teacher-counsellors, 40.0% had 10–15 years of teaching experience, 40.0% had 15–20 years, and 20.0% had more than 20 years. The class and gender distributions were sufficiently balanced to capture varied learner perspectives, while the teacher-counsellor sample reflected substantial professional experience.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Respondent group	Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Students (n = 361)	Age: 16 years	44	12.2
	Age: 17 years	176	48.8
	Age: 18 years	141	39.1
	Male	160	44.3
	Female	201	55.7
	Form 3	187	51.8
	Form 4	174	48.2
Teacher-counsellors (n = 10)	10–15 years' experience	4	40.0
	15–20 years' experience	4	40.0
	Above 20 years' experience	2	20.0

Note. Percentages are reproduced from the thesis tables.

4.2 Parental participation in counselling programmes

Table 3. Parental participation in counselling programmes

Respondent group	Statement	SD/D/N/A/SA (%)	M (SD)
Teacher-counsellors	Parents regularly attend scheduled counselling meetings	10.0/20.0/40.0/30.0/0.0	2.90 (0.994)
	Parents actively engage in counselling discussions	10.0/40.0/20.0/30.0/0.0	2.70 (1.059)
	Collaboration between parents and teacher-counsellors is consistent	0.0/50.0/10.0/40.0/0.0	2.90 (0.994)
Students	Parents attend school meetings related to counselling	6.9/6.4/18.3/23.5/44.9	3.93 (1.228)
	Parents discuss counselling advice at home	5.0/3.3/12.7/28.5/50.4	4.16 (1.091)
	Parents follow up behaviour after counselling sessions	10.0/3.3/13.0/32.7/41.0	3.91 (1.252)

Note. Response order is strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA).

Teacher-counsellors described formal participation as inconsistent, with active engagement in counselling discussions recording the lowest mean ($M = 2.70$). Students reported substantially stronger involvement, especially discussion of counselling advice at home ($M = 4.16$) and behavioural follow-up after counselling ($M = 3.91$). Deputy principals explained the difference by describing participation as mainly reactive: parents generally became involved when summoned after a disciplinary concern rather than approaching counsellors

voluntarily. One deputy principal nevertheless described a school where parents voluntarily referred learners for counselling and career guidance, indicating variation across institutional contexts. Integrated findings therefore distinguish low formal, school-based participation from stronger informal, home-based engagement experienced by students.

4.3 Parent teacher counsellor communication

Table 4. Parent–school communication and learner behaviour

Respondent group	Statement	SD/D/N/A/SA (%)	M (SD)
Teacher-counsellors	Communication regarding counselling is regular	10.0/30.0/20.0/40.0/0.0	2.90 (1.101)
	Information shared with parents is clear and adequate	10.0/20.0/40.0/30.0/0.0	2.90 (0.994)
	Parents respond promptly to counselling communication	10.0/30.0/30.0/30.0/0.0	2.80 (1.033)
Students	I try to behave well because my parents and teachers work together	16.9/6.6/6.4/28.8/41.3	3.71 (1.478)

Note. Response order is SD/D/N/A/SA.

All teacher-counsellor communication means were below 3.00, and prompt parental response was weakest ($M = 2.80$). In contrast, 70.1% of students agreed or strongly agreed that collaboration between parents and teachers motivated them to behave well ($M = 3.71$). Deputy principals attributed communication difficulties to the use of learner-carried letters that did not always reach parents,

distortion when learners acted as intermediaries, work commitments, and distance from home. The integrated evidence indicates that low responsiveness may partly reflect unreliable communication structures rather than parental disinterest alone.

4.4 Parental support for counselling interventions

Table 5. Parental support and learner discipline

Respondent group	Statement	SD/D/N/A/SA (%)	M (SD)
Teacher-counsellors	Parents encourage learners to follow counselling guidance	0.0/30.0/40.0/30.0/0.0	3.00 (0.816)
	Parents provide emotional and moral support	10.0/30.0/40.0/20.0/0.0	2.70 (0.949)
	Parents reinforce counselling recommendations at home	10.0/50.0/30.0/0.0/10.0	2.50 (1.080)
Students	Parents encourage me to follow school rules	5.0/4.4/7.8/29.9/52.9	4.21 (1.091)
	Parents support me emotionally during behavioural challenges	8.3/10.0/11.1/23.0/47.6	3.92 (1.316)
	I obey school rules and regulations	5.3/5.5/6.6/25.2/57.3	4.24 (1.132)
	I treat teachers and fellow students with respect	3.9/1.7/7.8/29.1/57.6	4.35 (0.975)

Note. Response order is SD/D/N/A/SA.

Home reinforcement of counselling recommendations was the weakest support item among teacher-counsellors ($M = 2.50$), with 60.0% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Students nevertheless reported high parental encouragement to follow school rules ($M = 4.21$), high personal compliance ($M = 4.24$), and respectful behaviour ($M = 4.35$). Deputy principals described parental support as inconsistent: some parents accepted school observations, while others became protective, denied behavioural problems, missed meetings, or failed to implement recommendations. Economic hardship,

unemployment, single parenting, large households, elderly caregivers with low literacy, and poor parental role-modelling were identified as barriers. The two strands suggest that general verbal encouragement may be more common than the consistent application of specific counselling strategies at home.

4.5 Corrective parental participation and reduction of indiscipline

Table 6: Corrective parental participation and disciplinary outcomes

Respondent group	Statement	SD/D/N/A/SA (%)	M (SD)
Teacher-counsellors	Parents participate in formulation of behaviour correction plans	20.0/40.0/30.0/10.0/0.0	2.30 (0.949)
	Parents consistently follow up agreed corrective actions	0.0/50.0/40.0/10.0/0.0	2.60 (0.699)
	Parental involvement has reduced repeated disciplinary cases	10.0/40.0/0.0/30.0/20.0	3.10 (1.449)
	Cases of indiscipline have reduced in the school	0.0/20.0/20.0/60.0/0.0	3.40 (0.843)
Students	I obey school rules and regulations	5.3/5.5/6.6/25.2/57.3	4.24 (1.132)
	I attend school regularly	2.8/2.5/12.7/24.7/57.3	4.31 (0.977)
	I behave well because parents and teachers work together	16.9/6.6/6.4/28.8/41.3	3.71 (1.478)

Note. Response order is SD/D/N/A/SA.

Formal process participation was low: formulation of behaviour correction plans had the lowest mean in the study ($M = 2.30$), and follow-up on agreed corrective actions was also weak ($M = 2.60$). Outcome-oriented ratings were more positive, with $M = 3.10$ for reduced repeated cases and $M = 3.40$ for reduced indiscipline generally. Students reported strong rule compliance ($M = 4.24$) and regular attendance ($M = 4.31$). Deputy principals linked low formal participation to absentee parenting,

employment, and economic pressures. However, where parents were formally invited into disciplinary meetings, they contributed to decisions, while some provided home behaviour reports. The findings therefore indicate a continuum from informal reporting to formal decision-making, with limited participation opportunities constraining involvement.

4.6 Discussion of findings

4.6.1 Parental participation in counselling programmes

The study revealed a clear difference between institutional and learner perspectives. Teacher-counsellors experienced parental involvement mainly through formal meetings and counselling discussions and consequently rated it low or inconsistent. Deputy principals confirmed that participation was often triggered by disciplinary incidents. This pattern is consistent with Msacky et al. (2024), who found that parental involvement in Tanzanian community secondary schools was predominantly reactive. It also reflects the concern raised by Perry and Vazquez (2024) that parents may view counselling as a remedial service used during crises rather than as an ongoing developmental partnership.

Students, however, reported that parents discussed counselling advice and followed up behaviour at home. This finding adds an important distinction to studies that treat parental involvement as a single general construct. Formal attendance may be limited while informal, home-centred engagement remains active. The finding is compatible with research linking family-school partnerships and consistent behavioural expectations to positive learner behaviour (Hill & Torres, 2021; Sheridan et al., 2022). In practical terms, schools need to recognise and strengthen both forms of involvement rather than measuring participation only through physical attendance at school.

4.6.2 Communication and disciplinary coordination

The low teacher-counsellor ratings for communication show that regularity, clarity, and responsiveness were not consistently achieved. The qualitative data explain these scores through channel failure: letters carried by learners may not reach parents, and messages transmitted through learners may be altered or misunderstood. Work commitments and distance further reduce accessibility. These findings support literature identifying communication inefficiency, counsellor workload, and weak institutional support as barriers to sustained parental engagement (Harrington-Diorio, 2024; Sulistyaningrum et al., 2025).

At the same time, most students associated parent-teacher collaboration with good behaviour. This indicates that communication has disciplinary value when it occurs, even though the existing infrastructure is unreliable. The finding is consistent with studies that connect parent-school collaboration with accountability and compliance (De Dieu & Andala, 2021; Ocharo et al., 2023). The principal implication is that perceived parental non-responsiveness should not automatically be interpreted as apathy; the

design and reliability of the communication channel must first be considered.

4.6.3 Parental support and home reinforcement

The largest gap between teacher-counsellor and student perceptions concerned parental support. Students commonly experienced encouragement to follow rules and reported high respect and compliance, while teacher-counsellors rarely observed reinforcement of specific counselling recommendations. The qualitative findings reconcile this difference by showing that parents may provide general verbal support without consistently applying a behaviour plan. Parental defensiveness, denial, economic stress, single parenting, large family responsibilities, elderly caregiver arrangements, and poor role-modelling can interrupt follow-through.

This result is consistent with the theoretical combination used in the study. Social Learning Theory suggests that reinforcement and modelling are essential for maintaining behavioural change (Bandura, 1977), while Ecological Systems Theory explains how household and socio-economic conditions shape the capacity to provide that reinforcement (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The finding therefore cautions against interventions that assume all parents possess the same time, resources, literacy, stability, or confidence to implement school counselling recommendations.

4.6.4 Corrective involvement and discipline outcomes

Corrective participation displayed a process-outcome gap. Formal involvement in correction plans and follow-up was low, yet teacher-counsellors perceived some reduction in repeated cases and general indiscipline, and students reported strong attendance and rule compliance. Deputy principals indicated that parents who were given a clear opportunity to participate could contribute meaningfully to disciplinary decisions. The low process ratings may therefore reflect limited access and opportunity as well as inconsistent follow-up.

The finding extends the reactive involvement pattern reported by Msacky et al. (2024). Even incident-based participation may support discipline, but its effect is likely to remain uneven when engagement depends on school summons during working hours. Flexible and formalised participation arrangements could convert isolated corrective contacts into coordinated behaviour plans. Because the study used descriptive and cross-sectional evidence, the results indicate patterns and perceived links rather than causal effects.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Parental involvement in school counselling services was linked to positive learner discipline, but participation was largely episodic, reactive, and uneven across schools and families. Formal attendance and active discussion were rated modestly by teacher-counsellors, while students reported stronger home-based discussion and follow-up. The study therefore concludes that parental involvement operates along a continuum rather than as a simple present-or-absent condition.

Parent-teacher-counsellor communication was important for discipline but structurally weak. Reliance on learner-carried letters and learner-mediated messages reduced delivery and clarity, while work obligations and distance affected availability. Home reinforcement of counselling recommendations was the most constrained support dimension and was shaped by socio-economic stress, family instability, defensiveness, caregiving arrangements, and parental role-modelling. Corrective involvement was low in formal processes but was associated in respondents' perceptions with reduced repeated cases, better rule compliance, and attendance.

The findings support an ecological and behavioural interpretation of learner discipline. Consistent expectations across school and home, reliable communication, parental modelling, and reinforcement can strengthen counselling, but these processes depend on the institutional and household conditions surrounding the learner. The study contributes a differentiated account of participation, communication, support, and corrective involvement in a Kenyan peri-urban public day secondary school context.

5.2 Recommendations

1. School administrators and teacher-counsellors should establish calendar-based parental involvement frameworks that replace incident-only contact with regular engagement. The thesis recommends termly counselling open days, beginning-of-year orientation sessions, clearly communicated procedures for voluntary referral of learners, and incorporation of parental involvement activities into annual school work plans and Parent Teacher Association platforms.

2. Schools should strengthen direct communication by maintaining verified parent contact databases and reducing dependence on learner-carried letters. The recommended alternatives include Short Message Service communication, school-managed social media groups, and direct telephone follow-up for urgent disciplinary matters. Responsibility for parent communication should be

assigned clearly, and teacher-counsellors should receive training in multi-channel communication.

3. Parental capacity-building should address both counselling knowledge and the socio-economic and emotional barriers affecting follow-through. Parenting-skills workshops, psychosocial support groups, simplified materials for caregivers with low literacy, and inclusion of grandparents and other non-parental guardians are recommended. Sub-County education offices should coordinate with community and social support services where household stress prevents sustained participation.

4. Corrective disciplinary processes should offer flexible, low-barrier participation through evening or weekend meetings, telephone or video participation, and simple home behaviour-monitoring forms. Parent reports should be integrated into disciplinary case management. At policy level, the thesis recommends a standardised parental involvement framework within national guidance and counselling policy, adequate staffing and professional development for teacher-counsellors, stronger Parent Teacher Association involvement in counselling and disciplinary review, and cross-sectoral support for families facing acute economic stress.

5.3 Limitations and Directions for Further Research

The study was delimited to public day secondary schools in Kiambaa Sub-County and excluded boarding and private schools. It used a cross-sectional design and descriptive statistics, which do not establish causal direction. Although the study examined parental involvement, parents were not direct respondents; their experiences were represented through students, teacher-counsellors, and deputy principals. The thesis therefore recommends longitudinal research, comparisons between day and boarding schools, evaluation of communication technologies, and qualitative studies centred on parents with low literacy, elderly caregivers, and single parents.

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