

Testing Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counseling for Enhancing Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

Evelyn Majimbo¹ Florentina Ndunge, PhD² Dr. Tabitha A. Rangara, PhD³
^{1,2,3}(Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Catholic University of Eastern Africa)

ABSTRACT

Background: The practice of guidance and counselling in Kenyan public secondary schools has been informed by fragmented ideas from western models without due regard to contextual differences that may undergird success. This study proposed and tested a home grown framework to inform practice of school counseling with practical relevance to the Kenyan context. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counseling on students' academic performance in selected public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Materials and Methods: A pretest-posttest design with non-equivalent control group was adopted. The target population consisted of 910 students. Data was collected through pretreatment and post-treatment assessment and document analysis. The treatment group was exposed to the Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counseling over an eight-week period, and finally subjected to the same test after treatment. This was compared with a matched group of students who took the same test without being subjected to treatment. Research participants were drawn from three selected schools with a history of low academic performance. A paired sample t-test was run on the data.

Results: There was no significant change in academic performance after treatment. Post-hoc interviews with guidance and counselling masters as well as school principals revealed that the selected schools were dealing with wicked problems that made the framework appear too simplistic to be of practical value in a low-cost school context. Among these were extreme poverty, orphanage and all the related social ills characterized by underlying structural disadvantages that necessitated a re-imagining of the framework. Incidental results pointed to novel ways through which the model could be redesigned.

Conclusion: Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counselling was inconsequential to the academic performance of students of the three public secondary schools in Kenya. An Extended Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counselling that – in addition to the student, parent and guidance and counselling masters – also brings on board peer counsellors, teachers, the school principal and external resource persons into the academic performance equation, is proposed.

Key Words: Dyad, Mutuality, Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counseling, Trust

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I. Introduction

The statement; “dead people do not sit for exams” became the highlight of a press conference that Kenya's Education Cabinet Secretary attended as part of the government's regular updates in response to the fate of national exams in the wake of Covid-19 in the year 2020. As a corollary to this statement, it can be added that “psychologically dead” students do not pass exams. Hitherto relegated to the periphery for a long time in Kenya, the Covid-19 pandemic has unprecedentedly brought to the fore, the important role of psychological counseling on health, and by extension, put a spotlight on the role of guidance and counseling in a country's education system and its outcomes on children's extended staying out of school

Guidance and counseling, although a fairly recent development in theory and practice, has a long history. Bobga (2016) traces the roots of guidance and counseling way back to ancient Greek and Rome in light of the philosophical teachings of Plato and Aristotle. Cheruiot (2017) on her part recounts that the notable early developments in the guidance and counseling services in institutionalized systems dates back to the development of psychological experimental laboratories by a German known as Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig in 1879. Later, an American called Stanley Hall was behind similar experimental laboratories at John Hopkins University in 1883 (Cheruiot, 2017). The history of formal guidance and counseling, however, can be traced back to the turn of the 20th century in American schools which started a program to assist students identify and

develop their career path as well as to function effectively in the school environment and exploit their full potential (Kanga, Nyaga, Barchok & Ngari, 2015; Bobga, 2016). This has led to the claim that the United States government was the first to recognize the role of guidance and counseling in an institutional set up and took measures to fully ground guidance and counseling in the school systems and process across the country (Cheruiyot, 2017).

Formal guidance and counseling programs were introduced in Africa in the late 20th Century. For instance, it was embraced in the 1980s in Zimbabwe and 1985 in Botswana's education system (Moeti, 2016). In Namibia, guidance and counseling was introduced in 1994 (Mbongo, 2016). In countries such as Swaziland, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania, it was introduced in the 1960s (Ochola, 2015).

In Kenya, guidance and counseling was introduced in the early 1970s with the institution of a guidance and counseling unit within the Ministry of Education (Ochola, 2015; Cheruiot, 2017). The introduction of guidance and counseling in Kenya emerged from the need to address discipline issues, which has led to the association of counseling with disciplinary measures taken against students with problem behaviours (Wambu & Fisher, 2015). To emphasize the importance of guidance and counseling services, the Ministry of education published a guidance and counseling handbook in the year 1973 which was the first official handbook for guidance and counseling for secondary schools which was later revised and updated in the year 1977 (Cheruiot, 2017).

In the last decade, there have been increased call for enhancing school counseling in Kenya owing to many cases of mental health problems in schools (Khasakala et al., 2013). Social unrest in schools has been on the rise with serious damages like burning of schools. Besides that compulsion for exceptional performance in national exams has also been overwhelming. Kenya has an exam oriented system that is plagued with long hours of private coaching besides the fact that an erratic practice is applied in completing the stipulated syllabus ahead of the expected time with no consideration of the psychological wellbeing of the students, all for the sake of exceptional academic performance (Okech & Kimemia 2012). Outcomes have proved counterproductive, especially in public secondary schools where the resources are highly stretched due to high numbers of students. The problem of deteriorating academic performance of public secondary school students in Kenya has been observed in various national examinations (Omolo & Simatwa, 2019; Wafula, 2017). According to a research done by Mwivanda and Kingi (2019), secondary schools in Nairobi County has been recording deteriorating performance over the last decade, more so day mixed secondary schools, with students attaining the minimum grade required to transit to higher learning institutions being much fewer than the students who attain lower grades such as D and below. The poor academic performance has been attributed in part to current approaches to guidance and counseling. According to Wambu and Fisher (2015), lack of a practical framework of development and implementation partly contributes to the poor school outcomes witnessed in Kenyan secondary schools.

In a recent publication, Majimbo (2017a) proposed a homegrown approach known as the Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counseling. The approach calls for three primary stakeholders working as a team: the student, the school counselor and the parent. Majimbo's (2017a) research adopted a descriptive design and sampled 161 students who responded to a set of closed and open-ended questions. The study found that securely attached students performed better than their insecure attached counterparts. A key finding of the study was that parents exacted too much pressure on their children to perform and this affected their mental health with suboptimal effects on academic outcomes. This led to the recommendation that guidance and counseling practice should involve the participation of parents through mutual understanding using a tripartite approach.

The output of the study by Majimbo (2017a) was a framework of guidance and counseling with four fields of engagement in successive progression. The first field (Field A) is the counselor-student dyad where the objective is to first build the trust that helps the student to open up and freely share with the counselor. The second field (Field B) entails counselor-parent dyad, where the school counselor directs her attention to the parent-child relationship based an evaluation of the condition of the relationship between the child and the parent revealed in the first field. The third field (Field C) refers to parent-child dyadic relationship. In this field, the counselor interacts with and empowers the parent to adopt a child-centered approach based on the notion that parents have a natural gravitation towards imposing their own expectations, preferences and aspirations on the children, at expense of child's mental health. The school counselor's assignment in this field is to challenge this detrimental parenting practice. In the last field – the field of mutuality and trust (Field Y) – the school counselor invites all parties to achieve a common ground and understanding of what each party expects of the others. The school counselor's goal is to ensure that education is in the interest of the mental health of the child. It is also based on the belief that it is only when the child's mental health is sound that other school outcomes such as academic performance can be realized (Majimbo, 2017a). The Tripartite framework is the road map that directs the counselor on where to start, which way to move on and where to terminate the process of counseling. The study was however undertaken in a high cost private secondary school. Therefore, public secondary schools in Kenya were not represented in the study. Furthermore, since its development, there is no known empirical

study that has tested the model within a low cost public school context. The present study sought to test the efficacy of the model for enhancing academic performance within low-cost public secondary school context.

II. Materials and Methods

This study adopted pretest-posttest design with non-equivalent control group. Typically, this design comprises of pre- and post-intervention testing of variables like comprehension or ability in a matched group of subjects whereby interventions are academic or observable in nature (Spurlock, 2018). This is where the treatment group was drawn from one stream, then exposed to the Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counseling as an intervention, and finally subjected to the same test after treatment. This was compared with a matched group of students selected from a second stream who took the same test without being subjected to treatment. In this case, the observed change and difference between the two groups was ascribed to the Tripartite Framework in a causal relationship (Marsden & Torgeson, 2012).

Like all other quasi-experiments, this chosen quantitative design has its own shortcomings, among which are; the threats of confounds and maturation (Maciejewski, 2020). However, it has survived criticism and continues to be used in many studies to-date because it resolves both the practical and ethical challenges confronting true experiments with human subjects (Knapp, 2016). The presence of a control cohort is known to greatly strengthen internal validity of quasi experiments (Maciejewski, 2020). In order to ensure similarity between the treatment group and the control group and hence enhance internal validity, research participants were drawn from schools with a history of low academic performance.

The study was undertaken in Nairobi County, Kenya. Nairobi County is host to the capital city of Kenya. According to the 2019 Kenya National Population and Housing Census, the County is a metropolitan county with over 4.3 million Kenyans from all walks of life (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The County is the most densely populated of all counties in Kenya, with one of the largest slums at its heart (Nzau & Trillo, 2020). It is a County of contrasts, with both the best and worst performing schools found in its midst: in the year 2019, the best performing public secondary school recorded a mean score of 10.467. This is contrasted to the worst performing public school which recorded a mean score more than 5 times lower (M.S.S. = 2.020).

The target population was from three students of three consenting public mixed day secondary schools in Nairobi County with a history of below average mean score in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). According to records maintained by the Ministry of Education, there were 49 public mixed day secondary schools in the County. The 49 schools were located across nine of the seventeen constituencies of Nairobi County. The constituencies fall within Urban, Peri urban and slum areas. The year 2019 KCSE results was used as the basis of selection since the year represents the most current time that students sat for KCSE examinations before the Covid-19 pandemic. As per the documented performance, the three least ranked school were from Njiru Sub County, Langata Sub County and Kibra Sub-County. Collectively, these three schools had a total population of 910 students.

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula. The sample comprised of 100 students randomly sampled from form three. This was proportionately distributed between the three schools. The inclusion criteria for the treatment group was students from one stream who volunteer to take the treatment. Students in another stream who took the test but did not participate in the tripartite program was used as the control group. Although secondary school students comprise of learners from Form 1 to Form 4, Form 1 to Form 2 students were not eligible for testing of the tripartite framework. This is because Form 1 students are still new to secondary school environment while Form 2 students are not sufficiently grounded on the secondary school syllabus enough and therefore, may not provide depth of insights into the issues underpinning academic performance in a secondary school. On the other hand, Form 4 students were excluded from the study because they were preparing for national examinations, thus were not ideal for inclusion into the sample.

To assess change in academic performance, a standardized test on compulsory subjects (English, Math and Kiswahili) was used. The tests was specially set, administered and marked by the respective subject teachers at baseline and at end-line after administration of the tripartite framework on the students. Reliability and validity aspects of the research was concerned with the quantitative elements, which in this study, is academic performance as measured by the students' baseline exam mean grade. The study measured academic performance based on data obtained from standardized baseline exams that were set by one of the teachers from the target population schools. As such, the study was done in the subject's natural setting, using objective tests that were independently designed. By virtue of employment in the school, the teachers are considered competent as experts in the subject areas they were examining. Therefore, validity of the end-term exams was implied.

The tripartite framework was tested over a period of one end-term break that lasted for eight weeks. Students and their parents were given an opportunity to participate in the study at intake at the guidance and counseling room. Volunteering parents of the students who participated in this study were offered free individual therapy. Each participating student and their parents experienced at least 4 weekly therapy sessions

over the eight week period. Each session lasted between 30 minutes to 1 hour. The sequencing of the therapy sessions were alternated between participating students and their parents.

During counselor-student dyad, the researcher exposed the participants to therapy processes that enabled the student to open up to the issues they could not freely tell others. The counselor also guided the student through exploration of options, coping with change, building healthy relationship with the self and others, coming up with educational goals and aims, dealing with social pressure, increasing the participants' self-understanding, enhancing their social and emotional skills, and helping them develop problem-solving and decision making skills (Majimbo, 2017b). This first session enabled the counselor to diagnose the problems that underpin poor academic performance of the students and identify issues that are within the counselor's professional expertise to be addressed, and, with respect to issues that are beyond the scope of counseling, refer the students to the relevant help within and without the school (Majimbo, 2017b). In all the sessions, the counselor instilled hope in the students' potential to achieve set objectives.

During the counselor-parent dyad, the therapy process equipped and empowered the participating parents with the skills to develop a child-centered engagement with their children. The ultimate goal of these sessions was to enable the parent create an environment where the child can develop their capacity for self-direction, self-guidance and self-improvement by creating awareness and understanding of the issues and resources for problem solving (Majimbo, 2017b). Whenever detected, the counselor made every effort to provide free therapy to parents with emotional or behavioral difficulties. Interactions with the parents led to the contribution of valuable information about their children as the persons who have been in the life of the child most and have been involved in their education from childhood. Each day, an allowance of 3 hours was made for travelling. The researcher was accompanied by one research assistant who took notes and documented the proceedings of the sessions.

The procedure for undertaking document analysis entailed administering observation checklist. This commenced by obtaining a summary report of the sampled students' performance on the baseline test as documented in the respective report books. The mean scores were recorded as reflected in the report books for both the test group and the comparison group. This process was repeated at end line after the administration of the Tripartite Framework. All ethical protocols were observed throughout the research cycle.

The process of analyzing quantitative data was achieved through a combination of descriptive and multivariate statistical analysis. Quantitative data was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for processing and analysis. The distribution of the dataset was ascertained through computation of mean and standard deviation scores. To test the study hypotheses, a paired sample t-test was run on data obtained on the treatment group to establish whether a statistically significant difference exists between the students' pre-test and post-test mean scores. For testing the statistical significance of the exam mean scores for compulsory subjects between the treatment group and the control group, an independent-samples t-test was run. The tests were conducted at $p < .05$ level of significance.

Post-hoc interviews were held with guidance and counselling masters as well as the principals of the selected public secondary schools. Interview results were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis process. The findings helped enhance sense-making of hypothesis test results.

III. Results

Demographic Analysis

In terms of demographics, most of the participating students were in their teenage years (17-19 years), collectively accounting for 56.5% of the participants. There was adequate gender representation in the study as 59.8% of the students were male while female students accounted for 40.2% of the participants. Majority of the students hailed from household sizes of between 3 and 5 members, together accounting for 72.4% of the represented households. Most of the respondents attained C grade and below in their last exam, collectively accounting for 59.3% of the participants.

Inferential Analysis

The research hypothesis for the study was as follows:

H₀ Tripartite framework of guidance and counseling has no significant effect on academic performance of students in a public secondary school in Kenya.

H₁ Tripartite framework of guidance and counseling has a significant effect on academic performance of students in a public secondary school in Kenya.

The null hypothesis was tested using paired samples t-test to compare the aggregate mean score between pretest and posttest conditions with statistical significance accepted at $p < .05$. Table 1 displays the results. The table shows that there was no significant difference in the pretest (M=22.62, SD=9.514) and posttest (M=21.53, SD=9.982) scores; $t=1.809$, $p=.074$.

Table 1: Paired Samples t-test

		Paired Samples Statistics							
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean				
Pair 1	Aggregate Pretest	22.62	97	9.514	.966				
	Aggregate Posttest	21.53	97	9.982	1.014				
		Paired Samples Correlations							
		N	Correlation					Sig.	
Pair 1	Aggregate Pretest&Aggregate Posttest	97	.817					.000	
		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig.	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			(2-tailed)	
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Aggregate Pretest - Aggregate Posttest	1.086	5.911	.600	-.105	2.277	1.809	96	.074

Post-hoc Qualitative Analysis

There were two primary themes and four sub-themes emanating from the interview with counsellors. The most salient theme from the expressions of all participating counsellors was the existence of a complex web of challenges experienced by students at the home environment. Of the challenges, poverty was the most prevalent, with the implication that their realities are characterized by difficult living arrangements, absence of proper guardianship, and lack of basic needs. Some are orphans while others are living in very hostile conditions exposed to various forms of vulnerability including use of drugs and sexual exploitation. The following verbatim excerpts are reflective of these challenges:

“Most of these students have challenges from home. Even some do not live with parents, they have no one. They are living with friends. Others are just living with some people who are charity givers. You find that they have so many challenges. Maybe these students can maybe have somebody to help them, to assist them so they can be able to be referred.... this one is financially down, doesn't have a shoe. Has been chased out because of shoes several times and is not able to get one. So maybe we can have some assistance that we can refer to these people” (Counsellor 01).

Further corroboration of the foregoing nuances was noted in the perspective of Counsellor 03 who expressed thus: “Even when you go to class like the form ones you find them from the village they are here living with their relatives. They begin to have issues. I am being verbally abused, am being made a house worker. That's quite scary compared to when you're staying with your parents”.

The theme of constraints at school also emerged from the qualitative analysis of interview data from school counsellors. On this front, time constraint and lack of counselling facilities were observed by all respondents as a major barriers to the tripartite model of guidance and counselling. The participants expressed that syllabus-based activities take priority over any other competing program. This was reflected in the following verbatim excerpt;

It's tricky because of time. Actually, we don't have a room, like right now we are inside a lab. I don't have a room. Sometimes we meet outside. Sometimes I say, come closer to me. But quality time no. I wouldn't lie. Because I'll do it at four. This child has a family. So, I do my job. Still, we are running for practical's... I always squeeze time. You know, 40 minutes, maybe 15 minutes. We talk. You'll come next time, 15 minutes, all (Counsellor 02).

The foregoing finding showed that aside from time constraint, lack of counselling room was highlighted during the interviews, and this means lack of privacy or a conducive atmosphere to effectively implement the tripartite model or any other professional counselling practice for that matter. The lack of privacy potentially discourage initiatives that the school counselor would have taken to respond to the many counseling issues presented by the students. This was evident in the view point of counsellor 02 who confessed thus; “Actually, we don't have a room, like right now we are inside a lab. I don't have a room. Sometimes we meet outside”. Respondents also noted that in addition to this, the schools lack adequate teaching and learning facilities. This means that the tripartite model would have limited impact if schools are inadequately facilitated on other fronts. As hitherto discussed, any guidance and counseling model, however superior in design and relevance, can never replace teaching and learning facilities as well as the basic needs that are fundamental to life. This was apparent in the following excerpts;

“This school is very beautiful from the outside. When you go to the ground. We have no text books. So as a teacher, it's a very big challenge. There are no text books in class, so you have to make notes and then produce some copies. Maybe to give them handouts. Sometimes they are sent home for school fees. And for the

food they eat. And you find that, most of them will have absenteeism. Absenteeism is a major challenge because you will send a kid home to collect something, they go home a whole week. So, what has been done that week they are out of it? We are also challenged in reading materials and that absenteeism problem. Majority of them the entry grades are very low. They don't have quality time in school. We do not have reading materials. We have challenges of--we do not have enough teachers" (Counsellor 01).

As implied in the verbatim excerpts, the constraints to effective guidance and counselling in public secondary schools are potentially structural. The issue of low entry grades for instance point to historical challenges that probably began in primary school level or even much earlier. It means that barriers to effectiveness of guidance and counselling in public secondary schools, as measured by academic performance, is likely a function of a cascade of issues stemming from within and without the public secondary school context.

Affirming the viewpoints of guidance and counselling masters, the school principals expressed potential barriers to effective implementation of the tripartite model that also coalesce the same overarching themes, namely: facility constraints in public schools, difficult background of the children and underlying issues in society. There was a general consensus by the school principals that public schools experienced multiple facility constraints that would inhibit the effective implementation of tripartite framework of guidance and counselling in the respective schools. These ranged from lack of teachers to time pressure and lack of dedicated counselling rooms. Respondents observed that lack of teachers had adverse implications on the effectiveness of the whole learning environment, which affect performance negatively. This was especially noted in the experience of one principal who had the following to say;

"These students didn't have teachers when I came here. The students had 4 teachers teaching 11 subjects. Teaching subjects that they didn't train for. So, the first thing I did was to ensure that every teacher teaches what they trained for. So, I had to get teachers on board. They were all BoMs. So, I did that. And then we stepped further. I have been knocking doors almost every week to ensure that we have teachers. By April last year, this school had me and the deputy as the only government teachers" (Principal 01).

Respondents also noted that the tripartite framework of guidance and counselling needed adequate time which is hardly there. The issue of time was observed across the board as a constant constraint to any school guidance and counselling effectiveness because the schools run on a programmed timetable that leave no space for the kind of guidance and counselling proposed by the tripartite framework. This was most vividly expressed by one of the principals thus;

"The challenge we have is time. Because these are day scholars. They have a programmed timetable. They come in the morning and then in the evening they are leaving at five. And some of them because of the distance they just want to rush. You don't have enough time for listening" (Principal 02).

Lack of counselling room was also identified by some of the interviewees as a barrier to guidance and counselling. As a result, there is no privacy and this makes it difficult for the students with issues to open up. This was expressed in the following verbatim excerpt and recommendation;

There are students that are not able to open up if you can encourage them and create a better avenue and even confidence; that, they can approach us and we discuss their personal issues that are impacting their personal lives or their academics that would be good (Principal 2).

From the views of the respondents, it was also noteworthy that the prospective effect of tripartite framework of guidance and counselling on academic performance was also inhibited by lack of teaching and learning facilities such as text books. This was captured in an elaborate narration by principal 01 thus;

"Another major thing is books. When people ask about these results, they never ask about certain things that contribute to academic: Textbooks. You've seen the government shift of policy.... the government has made a deliberate effort to ensure that every learner has one book at a ratio of 1 to 1. Our student ratio to the books is 0 to 1. Zero book one student..." (Principal 01).

The school principals interviewed highlighted the difficult background of the students as major challenge they are grappling with. Among the complexity of challenges cited by the participants include: lack of parental cooperation, poverty, conflict and disagreements, and drug issues. For instance, limited cooperation of parents was a recurrent theme. One principal observed thus;

"There are those who will cooperate, there are those who will not. There are those who will feel you are wasting time, we have called for meeting where parents come and say we want to sign and go away because their businesses will be affected" (Principal 01).

Further synthesis of the data suggested that lack of parental cooperation was itself a symptom of an underlying issue which is lack of income security and poverty forcing some to fend for themselves. This leads to prolonged cases of absenteeism. This was vividly expressed in the following verbatim comment.

"Most of the students are coming from difficult backgrounds. Quite a number, actually, about 80%. We have children, especially those who are house helps, a number of them. So, there are challenges they go through every day... They'll not come to explain what is happening. One disappeared another time for a whole month because of challenges at home. So, you realize these students, some of them have potential, but there's very

little parental concern. Most of our parents, they do what can we call it, the daily wage earning. And so, if you tell them to come to school they feel, I'm going to miss a day's wage... So, if they miss a wage day and some of them wherever they work, if they don't report that day, automatically there is a replacement. So, you realize they would rather have issues with the school and not miss where they are going to earn their daily bread. You find that we are kind of fighting the parents because when we tell the child go bring your parents it becomes a struggle. They'll say, I can't manage. Tell the teacher to allow you to stay in the school. I'll look for time. So even if there was a very serious issue, I wanted to discuss with them, they feel they cannot disengage from their daily activities to come" (Principal 02).

Respondents in this study observed that the high levels of poverty also affected their level of cooperation with the requirements for providing educational support to the students because of inability to afford learning tools the students need to learn effectively. These difficult family backgrounds were noted to affect academic performance that potentially dwarfs the impact of guidance and counselling in schools.

Then the poverty levels amongst our parents are quite high. So there are some things that you require that the parents support a child with sometimes you say a revision book. Sometimes you say they need some, maybe a geometrical set. Sometimes these items would come in handy in good time. And you find that the students have some limitations. No calculator. So, the family, because of the life of the family that will not be a priority. So, there are family issues (Principal 01).

Related to poverty are other social evils such as emotional trauma that some of the students undergo at home. Respondents noted that a number of the students are raised by single mothers in single rooms where there is lack of privacy. As a result, the students witness parents engaged in sex with multiple partners, which leave them emotionally disturbed. This was reported by one respondent who expressed thus;

"When you bring another man to the house and the children are big, this is not their father. It affects them. You need to discuss. The parents get to know that because some of them are in single rooms. It's a curtain. You're having sex, the child is there. Because boys have told us here, we get troubled. There is a boy who said my mum brings different men every time. The noise is too much. They get to know. We tell them openly, we discuss these things openly" (Principal 03).

Respondents also observed that poverty levels at home drove some students to engage in thievery. This was narrated by one of the respondents as follows;

Some of these students also steal from one another. If you have your notes, you're preparing for your exams, then tomorrow will come and they are all gone. It will affect your performance. So, in a few days' time there will be cameras so that we limit that. And even the things we buy for the teachers when the students borrow them others steal them to go to sell out here. They don't steal to read. They steal to go and sell. We know even the places they sell. Go to the police and the police just say we know them. They don't arrest them. In fact we had a case where a student had stolen a book from another student. And when we reported, it was so ironical, they are sold at the gate of the DC" (Principal 01).

Peer guidance and counselling was the most recurrent sub-theme identified throughout the interviews held with stakeholders. Peer counselors served as trusted confidants. This was implied in the expression of principal 02 who said; "We have peer counselors in the school, those that are able to talk amongst one another; to talk between themselves and also the guidance counselling department. It helps us a lot and it is a team". Peer counsellors also serve the role of confidential information intermediaries. This was revealed in the disclosure by principal 03: "In the school, we have peer counselors per class. They have been trained well. And they also can help the students and they do help with things the child might tell the teacher". The results revealed that peer counsellors further served other multiple functions including accountability partners, emotional relief outlets and authentic voice of authority. This was evident in the following verbatim excerpt from one of the stakeholders;

"We have come up with peer teaching. We have the peer guidance. We have come up with peer leaders where you can have time to discuss your own issues. They can discuss maybe their problems they are facing as a group, and then they can be able to open up to one another because they understand one another. What are we going to do? Because If I tell them don't be like this; they'll say you don't know what am feeling. But if advised by my fellow students, they tell me to stop a certain habit. They share a common predicament and they share how they are handling it, it will make more sense to these students, when it come from the peer than from a person who is not the same age" (Counsellor 01).

The findings suggests that peers are a latent resource that could contribute more effectively to the educative aims and goals of school guidance and counselling, especially in school contexts characterized by capacity constraints. The results are consistent with Kanga et al. (2015) whose empirical study established that majority of students preferred either to go for counseling to a colleague or not go for it at all. This means that peers serve as trusted confidants because of the closer connection and shared predicaments that they experience in their learning and growth journey.

The sub-theme of parental figure was apparent in some of the participating schools, whereby every teacher became a father or mother figurehead to a designated group of students. Together, each group constituted a family. This was apparent in the following verbatim expression;

“We have families, every teacher has children, some have a father, some have mother. And families meet on Thursdays... Many like I have 22. One mother” (Principal 3).

Interview results also revealed that some schools took the initiative of fostering linkages with external resource persons and facilities as an additional support system for the students. For instance, a respondent discussed the experience with one case study organization thus;

There are times some students, especially the girls who have dreams. Dreams is something that helps the girls. It's an organization that sponsors some of the girls. They also receive counselling there on weekly basis (Principal 03).

IV. Discussion

The results suggest that tripartite framework of guidance and counselling intervention did not yield a statistically significant change in academic performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis that tripartite framework of guidance and counseling has no significant effect on academic performance of students in a public secondary school in Kenya, was not rejected. This finding is in contrast to the perceived correlation that has been reported between guidance and counselling and improved academic performance as per extant literature (Irungu, 2019; Kiptala & Kipruto, 2021; Okita, 2014). A possible explanation for the contradictory results is that past studies have drawn conclusions based on subjective opinions of respondents rather than factual scores on exams. It is noteworthy that experimental studies are considered more rigorous than other approaches to scientific research. Another potential reason for the statistical insignificance is because the time period between the treatment and post-test evaluation was not sufficient for the treatment effect to reflect. As such, it may be too early to find a statistically significant effect size of the treatment on academic performance. The results however agree with the study by Nyanyal (2019) which found no correlation between guidance and counseling and academic performance. This may be because academic performance in the sampled public secondary schools is potentially a function of a complex set of factors without which the administration of guidance and counselling cannot be impactful. It is reasonable to argue that the purpose of guidance and counselling is to supplement, not substitute, the primary input factors necessary effective teaching and learning. The experience of school counsellors was clear evidence of the complexity of students' background issues that they bring to the guidance and counselling room that call for a rethinking of the Tripartite Majimbo's (2017b) Framework of Guidance and Counselling in its current form. This is because the framework was developed as an outcome of an empirical research from a high cost secondary schools which logically attracted students from well-endowed economic backgrounds. As a result, the framework emerges in the present study as too simplistic and thus finds itself falling short in the face of the multitude of practical issues that characterize public secondary schools that attract students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The stated finding further affirms the observation in Williams et al.'s (2015) empirical research among low income students which revealed that high school students from socio-economically less endowed backgrounds often contend with environmental pressures that make them more susceptible to poor academic performance than their peers from affluent families. For instance, interview results also showed that for some of the students, the living conditions at home are not only deplorable, they are hostile: the students face all manner of abuses including rejection by their own parents. This is a clear demonstration that students from economically deprived backgrounds are confronted with a cascade of survival challenges that exposes the inadequacies of the Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counselling as originally developed by Majimbo (2017b). The implication of this, as revealed in this study, is that they are not able to perform academically.

The post-hoc analysis affirmed the observation by Mau et al. (2016) whose investigation of the role and practices of American high school counselors in relation to ASCA framework showed that a significant aspect of school counselor's time was invested in course scheduling than on personal problems or academic development. This is at variance with Holland's (2015) view that successful counselor-student dyad necessitates interacting with the student client at a very personal and sometimes intimate level. The finding also echo the lamentations by Cheruiyot and Orodho (2015) over the state of guidance and counseling in Kenyan schools, signaling that Kenya's education system does not have a comprehensive guidance and counseling framework and facilities in place.

The deplorable state of guidance and counselling in public secondary schools depicted in the verbatim example agrees with results of Yussuf;s (2018) study which identified lack of confidentiality among the assigned school counselors which made guidance and counseling ineffective in addressing poor academic performance recorded in the schools. The findings point to a near total absence of an environment conducive for effective guidance and counselling practice. The results echo Wambu and Fisher (2015) voice on the need for drastic measures to improve guidance and counseling service provision to students

The findings suggests that the background issues that school guidance and counselling practitioners are grappling with are as economic as they are social. This agrees with Magwa and Mugari (2017) whose study of the factors affecting parental involvement in the schooling of children in a public secondary school in Zimbabwe established that there was a relationship between parents' economic status and their level of involvement and participation in their child's education.

Results of interviews held with school principals and counsellors yielded incidental findings that point to creative ways through which they managed to cope with the realities of their respective schools in light of the complex issues underlying student academic performance. This is in keeping with Otwine et al.'s (2018) assessment of current developments and challenges in schools which revealed glaring gaps in the practice of guidance and counseling and recommended the development of locally relevant guidance and counseling approaches. Accordingly, respondents in the present study highlighted various innovative intervention measures in an attempt to bridge the gaps with the overarching theme of creating a local support system. The demonstrated creativity signals a response to Wambu and Fisher's (2015) observed lack of a practical framework of development and implementation and call for sophisticated approaches to models of school counseling that entails a redefinition of the role of the school counselor, implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program and development of systemic support. In the present study for instance, there were three sub-themes emanating from the theme of local support system: peer counselling, parental figure and external resource persons.

The role of parental figurehead potentially had symbolic, even practical meaning to the students who were either orphaned, neglected or lacked a responsible parental authority to look up to. This signals pragmatism in the part of school leaders, implying their recognition of Nelson et al.'s (2015) submission with reference to ASCA that there is no single common set of core principles of counseling. This means that the school leaders appreciated the dynamic and nuanced nature of guidance and counseling that calls for open-mindedness and flexibility in the implementation of the tripartite model of guidance and counselling or any other framework for that matter. These initiatives revealed in the present study affirm the conclusion of Disassa and Into (2019) that locally developed techniques, methods and principles of counseling services could be of great benefit to the community.

The integration of external support systems into the total guidance and counselling arena as revealed in the verbatim excerpt implies appreciation of the place of communities in realizing guidance and counselling goals. External support systems included interventions that addressed other challenges to effective learning. The finding is in line with Holland's (2015) study which reported that whereas less advantaged parents and students were difficult to get in touch with and required more assistance, it was also found that less advantaged students were less likely to seek help and expected more than just information when they did ask for it; and further, that when these students did not find the assistance they needed, they stopped coming. As demonstrated in the verbatim excerpt, the corollary to this is that when more than just guidance and counselling is provided, more cooperation and support accrue from parents and students.

V. Conclusion

Tripartite framework of guidance and counselling was inconsequential to the academic performance of students of public secondary schools in Kenya. The case study schools were dealing with wicked problems that made the framework appear too simplistic to be of practical value in a low-cost school context. Among these were extreme poverty, orphanage and all the related social ills characterized by underlying structural disadvantages that necessitated a re-imagination of the framework. Incidental results pointed to novel ways through which the model could be redesigned. The proponents of the Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counselling should modify it so as to adjust for the socioeconomic realities of public secondary schools in low-income neighborhoods. A more sophisticated framework is necessary to have impact on academic performance of students in these schools. Accordingly, this study proposes an Extended Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counselling as shown in Figure 1.

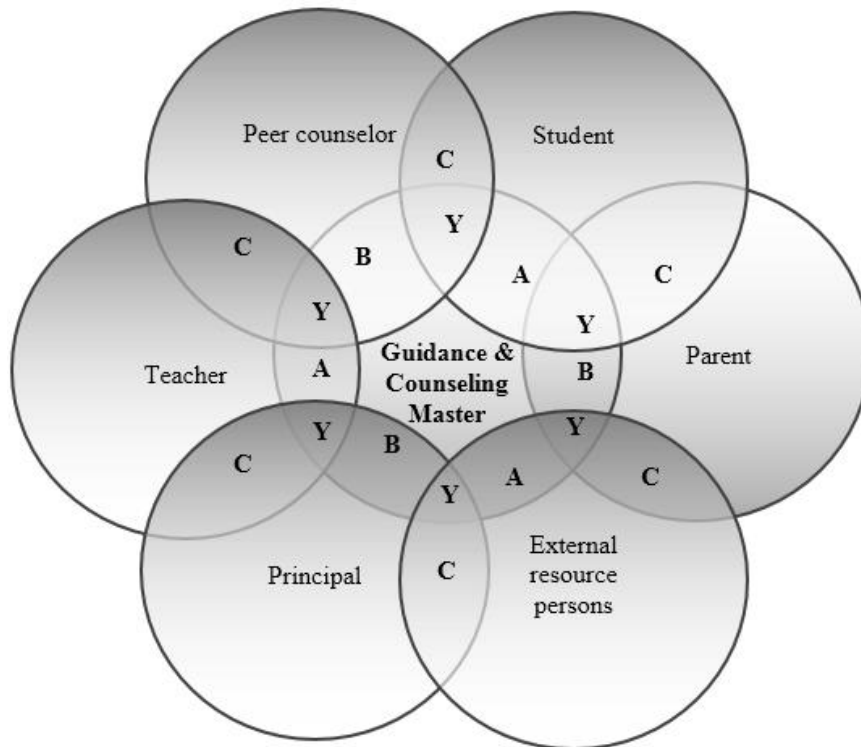


Figure 1 Extended Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counseling
Source: (Author, 2022)

The Extended Tripartite Framework of Guidance and Counseling modifies and expands Majimbo's (2017) original framework. It retains the fundamental principles of the original framework, but makes four critical modifications. The first modification is multiple dyadic relationships. Unlike the original model that had two dyadic relationships, the extended framework adds four more dyadic relationships: counselor-peer dyad, counselor-teacher dyad, counselor-principal dyad, and counselor-external resource person(s) dyad. The objective of Field A rapport and trust-building that facilitates openness and free sharing of information and concerns with the counselor.

The second modification is Field B which entails dyadic communication where the school counselor directs her attention to empowering each of the six parties: student, peer, parent, teacher, principal and external resource persons based an evaluation of the condition of the relationship and information exchange between the parties in field C.

The third modification is in Field C, which refers to dyadic relationship between the parties. In this field, the counselor interacts with and empowers the parties to adopt a student-centered approach based on the notion that individuals have a natural tendency to impose their own expectations, preferences and aspirations on the student, at expense of the student's mental health. The school counselor's assignment in this field is to challenge this counterproductive tendency.

The fourth modification is in the field of mutuality and trust (Field Y) – where the school counselor invites concerned parties to achieve a common ground and understanding of what each party expects of the others. Like in the original tripartite framework, the school counselor's goal is to ensure that any intervention is in the interest of the mental health of the student. It is also based on Majimbo's (2017a) belief that it is only when the student's mental health is sound that other school outcomes such as academic performance can be realized.

Unlike the original framework, the extended framework takes cognizance of and leverages the potential inherent in the four additional stakeholders that were found to play important roles in the guidance and counselling equation. These are: the peer counselor, the teacher, the school principal and the external resource person. All these served to bridge capacity and resource gaps. The primary role of the guidance and counselling master is to serve as an 'information clearing house' and the hub for all guidance and counseling programs including related socioeconomic and spiritual interventions. In this way, the extended framework fuses the five interactive domains proposed in Nelson et al.'s (2015) PACES model, namely: physical, affective, cognitive, economic and social domains.

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