

**THE ROLE OF COUNSELLING IN MITIGATING TRUANCY
AMONG PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN THARAKA
NITHI COUNTY, KENYA**

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UNIVERSITY**

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DECLARATION

I certify that this is my original work and has not been submitted to a university or other entity for certification reasons. References sources that have been acknowledged appropriately have been included to this research project. When text, information (including spoken words), pictures, illustrations, or tables are taken from other sources, including the internet, they must be explicitly credited and the sources must be cited in compliance with anti-plagiarism laws and the current APA style.

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DEDICATION

I devote this work to my parents Jane and Albert, who have been a tremendous source of motivation. I also acknowledge this work to my wonderful spouse Ntwiga, as well as to our three children, Ronny, Prisca, and Davis. Additionally, I dedicate the project to all of my grandchildren for having faith in me.

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I want to pay my regards to my supervisor Dr. Merecia Ann Sirera. I can't forget my extended family, particularly my sisters and brothers who have always been there for me emotionally. I want to express my gratitude to all of my pals, co-workers, and unnamed individuals for their contributions to the success of this study. Ultimately, I want to express my deepest appreciation to my husband Mr. Ntwiga for his financial help as well as to our kids Davis, Dalphine, Prisca, and Ronny for their moral encouragement in helping me finish this research project. God's richest blessings to each of you.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYNONYMS

AR	: Action Research
CFT	: Common Factor Theory
ETPP	: Early Truancy Prevention Project
KCSE	: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
NACOSTI	: National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
PADS	: Peterborough Adolescent Development Study
SAT	: Situational Action Theory
TBQ	: Truancy Behaviour Questionnaire
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Absenteeism:** a condition in which a student misses school more than three times per week without justification.
- Counselling:** A process that helps individuals and in this case, student respond to challenges in life become more creative and able to see alternatives that can be used to address their problems, be competent, and contented with life. According to this study, counselling will be a procedure that aids students in addressing the issues that lead to truancy with the goal of lowering pupil truancy.
- Teacher Counsellor:** A teacher who is officially recognized in the school, and is concerned with assisting pupils cope and address their psychological and behavioural problems.
- Truancy:** Truancy is any intentional, unjustified, unauthorized and or illegal absence from school. It is the act of students' deliberately missing school without any legitimate reasons or explanations like medical complications or lack of fees.
- Indiscipline:** A circumstance in which a student transgresses and behaves inconsistently with the demands of the established regulations and standards in a learning environment, such as by failing to attend class.

ABSTRACT

Numerous psychosocial issues have been addressed with counselling, but little is known about the efficacy of counselling in mitigating truancy among primary school students in Maara Sub-County in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. This study was anchored on Common Factor Theory (CFT) and social learning theory to examine the impact of counselling in reducing truancy among public primary school students. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to establish the prevalence of truancy among pupils; to evaluate the efficacy of counselling in addressing school-environmental issues that affect truancy; to assess the effectiveness of counselling in addressing specific issues that lead primary school students; and to establish a mechanism that might be used to improve truancy counselling in Maara Sub County. This study targeted a total of 30 head teachers, 800 pupils and 497 teachers from all the primary schools in Maara Sub-County. Ten head teachers were chosen using a purposeful sampling method. Five teachers were chosen at random from each of the ten schools using the random sample technique. Simple random sampling method was used to select 8 pupils from each of the 10 sampled schools. A total of 140 respondents composed of 10 head teachers, 50 teachers and 80 pupils were selected for the study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered using questionnaires and interview guide. A pilot survey was conducted in two public primary schools in Meru County to assess the appropriateness of the study instruments. The supervisory evaluation of the tools and pilot study ensured the validity of the research tools. On the other hand, the correlation coefficient made sure that the instruments were reliable. Inferential and descriptive statistics, notably the correlation coefficient, were used to analyse quantitative data, which was then displayed in frequency tables, bar graphs, and pie charts. For qualitative data, themes were created based on the objectives of the study. From the findings (68.8%) of the students said they had never missed class without a legitimate excuse, while 21.3% said they had done so once and 5% had done so twice illustrating that there is some level of truancy in Mara Sub County of Tharaka Nithi County Kenya. Findings further revealed that counselling had increased retention and class attendance among pupils in primary school under study to a great extent at 50%, which suggests that it is an effective tool in control and management of truancy. In addition, security in school and safety of learners improved the extent at 54%, good-peer relationship to greater extent at 46%, behaviour and discipline among pupils to some extent at 52%, retention and class attendance to great extent at 50% and school attendance frequency to some extent at 52%. The test between counselling and environmental factors produced a correlation coefficient of $r=.269$ and a significant level ($p\text{-value}=.000$). As for counselling and individual factors predisposing students to truancy, the study results indicate a correlation coefficient of $r=.763$ and a significant level ($p\text{-value}=.000$) both of which were below the predetermined threshold of significance ($p\text{-value}<0.05$). Counselling on personal and environmental factors improved children's attendance in public primary schools in Maara sub-County, however, these services are challenged by safety issues, lack of parental involvement and lack of support from the head teachers. Based on the findings the study recommends that school principals develop and put into practice additional strategies and procedures, such as supporting teacher counsellors in their executive positions and mentoring initiatives. If these behaviours are not addressed, they will impede students' progress, which will be a significant setback for completion rates.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

One of the issues giving stakeholders in education problems is truancy. We have all missed class with a legitimate excuse at some point during our academic careers. Additionally, there are people we know or have heard about who skipped class for no apparent reason other than that they didn't feel like going. Truancy is defined as any wilful, unreasonable, unapproved, or unlawful absence from school. According to Maynard, Vaughn, Nelson, Salas-Wright, Heyne, and Kremer (2017), it is the act of students purposefully skipping class without providing any justifications or explanations, such as unpaid fees or medical issues.

Truancy is popularly known the crime schoolers get away with is connected to delinquent activity amidst the youth and undesirable actions when already adults (Keppens & Spruyt, 2018). In most nations, it is acknowledged as a significant behavioral issue amongst middle and high school pupils. Teachers and scientists in the social sciences may describe it differently based on the circumstances to which students may be subjected as they grow and mature (Raby 2013). Truancy results in the loss of young talent and untapped power which is the reason many education stakeholders are trying their best to curb the menace. Parents and teachers view truancy as a sign of trouble and an indicator that a child is losing the right track in life. Truants are not able to receive education and the necessary skills needed to succeed in life in addition to engaging in anti-social behaviours (Mohammed, 2018). Additionally, high truancy rates lead to

daytime burglary and vandalism. Psychological counselling has been one of the approaches that has been used to address truancy among children in schools.

Counselling is a process that tries to help individuals respond to challenges in life, become more creative, and able to see alternatives that can be used to address their problems, be competent, and be contented with life (Hanchon & Fernald, 2013). It is also an expert connection that empowers people, kins, and teams to achieve psychological well-being and information (David & Samuel, 2014). Counselling helps individuals discover ways of coping that have been proven successful previously, how they can be used to fit in the current circumstance, and how to establish other coping means (Hanchon & Fernald, 2013). Students can be empowered through psycho-education where group, peer, and individual counselling process are used. It is from this perspective that counselling has been adopted by many organizations to help address the psychosocial challenges such as truancy among students in schools.

In the United States, nonattendance levels stayed almost the same in the years 2002 (10.8%) to 2014 (11.1%). Absence was higher in elder minors, girls, and Hispanic adolescents. In all races and indigenous clusters, nonattendance was substantially linked with drinking and bhang use, aggressiveness, tendencies to engage in risky behaviours, and examination failure and low academic scores. As of 2017, the truancy rate was still approximately at 11% which can be concluded that the truancy rate in the United States stands at 11% (Maynard, et al. 2017). In the UK according to the Department of Education (2019), the overall truancy percentage transversely in government-financed

schools escalated from 4.7 percent in 2016/2017 to 4.8 in 2017/2018. Among primary school pupils, the total absenteeism level rose from 4.0 to 4.2 percent and the level in high schools escalated from 5.4 to 5.5 percent. The current study sought to add more literature within a different scope and setting by establishing the prevalence of truancy among children in a different setting

Erfantinni, Febriani, Ningrum, and Melinda (2019) looked into the effectiveness of the mental rehabilitation technique for reducing students' truant conduct at the Surabaya Pharmacy School in Indonesia. A psychological restructuring technique was used to provide counselling to the experimental group in the study, which had control and experimental subgroups as well. The results highlight a significant difference between the study group's outcomes before and after the cognitive reorganization therapy. However, Erfantinni et al.'s (2019) study did not focus on the elements that influenced truancy throughout the quasi-experimental process, leaving those elements ambiguous and implicit. The new study especially looked at school environmental and individual factors of absenteeism in public primary schools in order to be more thorough.

According to a survey by Onyeaka, Kugbey, Ayanore, and Oppong (2020) that included 8912 young schoolchildren in West Africa between the ages of 11 and 18 who participated in the Global School-based Learners Health Review from 2012 to 2017, student absence rates had been respectively 22.9%, 36.5%, and 45.9% for Benin, Ghana, and Liberia. The analysis also revealed that in the aforementioned States, male absenteeism rates were higher than those of females. This finding implies that truancy is more prevalent in most African countries as compared with developed nations. However,

because Kenya is unique in Africa and cannot be generalized to other African countries, it is important to find out if Maara sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, has similar findings on truancy.

Usman and Msheliza (2017) in Nigeria examined the variation in students who passed through group rehabilitation mechanism in lowering non-attendance and the set that did not engage in any counselling. The outcome showed that group counselling significantly reduced truant behaviours. Additionally, the study showed that learners from poor backgrounds are more absent from school than their counterparts from wealthy backgrounds, and rainy periods also encouraged absenteeism. The current study aimed to fill the vacuum left by their study, which only looked at the overall impact of counselling on truancy without considering how group counselling deals with each issue.

In Tanzania, Nziku (2017) found out that keeping in touch with students' guardians or parents and regular counselling and guidance were the main strategies of reducing truancy in many schools. Following the study's conclusions, it was suggested that effective interaction be maintained between the community, parents, the administration, and various additional interested parties in order to manage the truancy problem. Additionally, grandparents and grandmothers should actively participate in developing classroom attendance regulations and creating environments that would motivate pupils to show up for class. The current study sought to ascertain whether mechanisms for enhancing counselling for truancy in Maara sub-County are attributed to parental involvement through communication, engagement of the government and other stakeholders.

Suleman, Hussain, and Kayani, (2017) revealed that electronic media factors were the most considerable elements causing truancy in schools. Furthermore, it was discovered that factors related to students' truancy included components of their families, their personalities, peer dynamics in groups, and their educational surroundings. Nevertheless was found that educator aspects contributed little to students' lack of attendance Baier (2016) found that school factors like teacher bullying and violent schoolmates led to truancy. The results additionally indicated that low teacher control significantly increases truancy. Van Fleet (2011) in his study reported on low completion rates of youths advancing to secondary schools as a result of their delinquent behaviour and most of them were from the world's poorest nations. Mugambi, (2015) revealed that truancy among pupils is a result of different factors within the society such as parental care, domestic problems, and poor teacher-pupil relationships. These findings indicate several factors that cause truancy among school-going children. Counselling is one of the ways that has been wholly utilized in dealing with truancy among children and adolescents.

The counselling practice encompasses a reciprocal obligation between the counsellor and the individual who needs help and provides an opportunity for the client to talk about their emotions and issues with others openly without ethnic, sex, or social judgement (McCullough, 2020). According to Lenz and Watson (2023), schools use various forms of counselling in the process of addressing students' issues including truancy. The popular forms of counselling in schools include; group, peer, and individual counselling help pupils to reduce disturbing conditions by engaging pupils to express their worries, release tension, share their feelings, and when they talk in details about the problems they often have clarity effect for the person. Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge that

achieving a positive result in counselling is also aligned to selecting counselling approach that is most suitable. The current study took into consideration the counselling tools used and their individual magnitude of the roles they played in addressing both environmental factors and individual factors that predispose students to truancy.

Various school stakeholders have expectations that counselling will address different issues that affect students (De Silva et al., 2022). Those issues might result from underlying factors like family problems, alcoholism, violence, and uncooperative parents who are not supportive in ensuring their children are in schools and being in school on time and attending lessons. Stakeholders anticipate that counselling will address a variety of school-related issues, such as the attitudes of instructors, administrators, and other pupils, the school's adaptability to different student requirements, and the learning modalities employed (Geesa et al., 2022). More importantly, counselling is an assistance that may assist students gain the understanding as well as skills they need to effectively cope with the difficulties they face on a daily basis. The above studies have established that there are several factors causing truancy among school-going children and school administrators expect and hope that school counselling would reduce those factors hence reducing truancy in return. Various researchers have already evaluated the role of therapy in mitigating absenteeism in pupils and their findings are as below.

Kanga (2015) did a study in Meru County, Kenya, and the results showed that factors such as a hostile learning environment, family obligations, financial hardships, and mental health issues significantly contributed to kids skipping school. The findings also indicated that skipping school affected academic success for pupils and schools.

According to a study done in the Kenyan counties of Busia and Kirinyaga by Muyaka, Omuse, and Malenya (2023), boys' low involvement in school was brought on by their exclusion since they lacked role models to look up to. Determining if gender interventions were a component of the mechanisms that enhanced truancy counselling was the objective of the present research.

According to the studies mentioned above, interventions like counselling have been employed in a number of settings to reduce student truancy. However, research on truancy in Kenya has mainly concentrated on the causes of truancy and the impact it has on school achievement. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of counselling on absenteeism among pupils in public elementary schools. According to the aforementioned data, truancy is still highly prevalent all across the world. The high rates of truancy among students in school have been linked to a number of issues. Studies discovered that a number of variables, including those related to people, their families, their communities, and educational institutions, encourage truancy in kids of school age. Interestingly, limited research in this area have been done, so the present research set out to investigate the effectiveness of counselling in reducing absenteeism among students in public primary schools in Maara Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The number of students enrolling in elementary school in Maara Sub-County appears to be larger than the number graduating from the previous grade. Every educational institution offer counselling and guidance services, and one of their responsibilities is to deal with pupil issues that cause truancy and, ultimately, alarming dropout rates. Despite

the fact that Maara Sub-County schools offer guidance and counselling, a large proportion of students still skip class without authorization. All schools offer guidance and counselling, and one of their responsibilities is to deal with pupil issues that cause truancy and, in turn, dropout. Nonetheless, many studies have failed to clarify the most suitable approach in dealing with the issues of truancy in schools. In addition, little is known about how counselling can help with the truancy problem, a gap that this study sought to fill taking into account individual variables and education-environmental factors.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The goal of this study was to examine the role of counselling in mitigating truancy among public primary school pupils in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The research was guided by the underlying objectives:

- 1) To establish the prevalence of truancy among pupils in Maara Sub County's public primary schools.
- 2) To evaluate the efficacy of counselling in Maara Sub County in addressing school-environmental issues that affect truancy.
- 3) To assess the effectiveness of counselling in addressing specific issues that lead primary school students in Maara Sub County to truancy.
- 4) To establish a mechanism that might be used to improve truancy counselling in Maara Sub County.

1.5 Research Questions

The following questions guided this research:

1. How prevalent is truancy among Pupils in Public Primary Schools in Maara Sub County, Tharaka Nithi County?
2. What are the mechanisms that education stakeholders can employ to enhance counselling for truancy in Maara Sub County, Tharaka Nithi County?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

H₀1: Counselling is not statistically significantly effective in addressing school environment factors that influence truancy in Maara Sub County, Tharaka Nithi County

H₀2: Counselling is not statistically significantly effective in addressing individual factors that predispose primary school children to truancy in Maara Sub County

1.7 Justification and Significance of the Study

Truancy among pupils is an important and a worrying issue in our society because it results in many problems leading the society in having devastating effects on pupils, schools, homes, and the entire community for instance the county datasheet of 2019 reported very many cases of dissertation and school dropouts in Maara Sub-county which proved me to study it. One important tactic to deal with the problem has been recognized as counselling. However, it is unlikely to be successful unless it is made clear what part it is projected to have in combating truancy. The research has justification as a result of this.

The findings of the research on the function of psychological counselling in reducing student truancy may be helpful to head teachers in charge of schools and heads of the counselling unit. The findings may also be useful to the pupils on gaining more knowledge on where to seek assistance and support when they have challenges in their daily life. The Ministry of Education may find the data helpful in planning counselling programs for students in schools. The results are also going to educate families and everybody in the neighbourhood about the crucial role they play in providing for their children, which will be beneficial for everyone. The research could help close a gap by identifying more effective counselling strategies for lowering absenteeism among primary school students.

1.8 Scope and Limitations

The study was carried out at Maara Sub County primary schools that are public with the participation of principals, heads of counselling departments, students, parents, and educational officers. The study concentrated on how therapy can help students who are truant by addressing it through group, peer, and private therapy in public primary schools in Maara Sub County. The study was restricted to those who responded, including head teachers, chiefs of counselling departments, students, and education officers. The study relied on participants' self-reports of sensitive data about truancy, which could have been underreported or reported incorrectly. The respondents determined if valid and accurate data was available. The private nature of the data was protected throughout the entire research process to satisfy the study's limitations. The respondents determined if valid and accurate data was available. The confidentiality of the data was maintained

throughout the entire investigation in order to overcome the restrictions. The study's focus was solely on tardiness, absence from class, and truancy.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

Several assumptions underlie this study:

1. A particular proportion of students in Tharaka Nithi County's Maara Sub County's public primary schools are chronic absentees.
2. Guidance and Counselling help in enhancing the school environment and reduce truancy among pupils.
3. That school counsellors in Maara sub-county take truancy as a serious issue that needs their attention on a rolling basis.
4. That the school counsellors and teachers in the Maara sub-county understand factors that cause truancy among students in their care.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical overview of the literature on the prevalence of truancy, its causes, the role of counselling in truancy prevention, and strategies for reducing truancy in primary schools. The chapter also takes a critical look at the work of other researchers, both local and foreign, in the areas of counselling and truancy. Most crucially, this chapter clearly reveals the study's holes that common factor theory was used to fill in the planned study.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The common factor theory and the social control theory served as the guiding theories for the study on the effectiveness of counselling in resolving truancy.

2.2.1 Common Factor Theory

Saul Rosenzweig initially articulated the common factor theory in his paper 1936 (Laska, & Wampold, 2014). According to the hypothesis, a large portion of the efficacy of emotional treatments can be attributed to shared characteristics throughout numerous approaches and based on evidence methods of counselling. Fbehaviourt. Nelson (2015) categorised the approach into four basic elements: patients' aspects, psychotherapist's features, the procedure to transformation, and the therapeutic perspective. The patients' aspects like internal worth, goal-directedness, and capability for rehabilitation make the client the most important instrument of change. This means that the client's inner strength must be strengthened to facilitate change. The truant pupils may be weak and therefore, it

is expected that through therapy inner strength is built to enable the pupils to cope with external factors that make them avoid school. This can be done through psycho education to equip the pupils with skills and knowledge for addressing problems. Also, the students should be desensitized and build confidence to counter their fears among others.

Counsellor's feature like the unconditional positive regard, communication skills and empathy, and maturity amongst other elements enhances effective healing process. The combination of the above stated elements predicts the success of a particular model. Therefore, whatever, approach a counsellor takes together with their abilities they are likely to influence change? The ability to effectively communicate can help build trust thus making the children open up.

The counselling perspective comprises the therapy surrounding (where), the seriousness of rehabilitation (how much), the channel of delivering counselling (what kind), and the due process followed during the treatment (with whom). For counselling to occur the client needs to feel comfortable in a context that encourages collaboration. Therefore, though the primary learners are young, they need to feel comfortable with the therapist. The therapist must exercise unconditional positive regard to build a strong therapeutic alliance. The common factor theory is therefore found to be suitable to guide this study. However, the theory only focuses on the process that facilitates behaviour change. However, the main thematic areas to facilitate behaviour change are not espoused in the theory. To address this limitation, the social control theory was used for complementarity.

The therapeutic relationship and Client's characteristics: - The therapeutic trait is thought to be the main factor influencing how truant behaviour will alter for effective students. The rehabilitation pact, as used in the overall setting of the research proposal, is an expected bond that develops and is maintained among the counsellor and the truant.

Hope and Expectation of Positive Change: - Direct and indirect hope and expectations of transition are just two examples of the many dimensions and ideas that exist (Larsen & Stege, 2010). According to the suggested study's context, the idea of hope is mainly understood as motivating truants to have hopes and additionally pushing them to engage in proactive contemplating, doing, experiencing, and interacting with the objective of bringing about a constructive transformation that is meaningful to people.

Empathy/unconditional positive regard: - Sympathy is seen as a crucial component of the therapeutic relationship and a special element in its own right when it comes to hope and expectation (Elliot, Bohart, Watson, & Greenberg, 2011). Based on the proposed study, empathy is where the counsellor puts himself in the shoes of the truant to understand them better.

Placebo Effect:-The belief in this idea is that effectiveness or the failure of rehabilitation should not only be attributed to approaches, skills and techniques the professional uses but also to the primary elements that a psychoanalyst embodies irrespective of their theoretical stand. Concerning the current study context, this technique would ensure that truants must believe in the psychotherapy for them to successfully recover.

The CFT is relevant to this proposed study because it enlightens that truants are likely to heal when they feel accepted and can feel that they belong. The primary tenet of CFT is that truant treatment happens not as a result of precise theoretical administration but rather through the psychotherapist's personae, such as empathy, affection, optimism, and the expectation of constructive modification.

Accordingly, Counselling is expected to instil hope in the students who are almost giving up and make them remain in school. From an empathic perspective, counselling should facilitate understanding the problems of the students and through a focused approach guide and educate the learners and the significant others on how to address the challenges constructively. Besides through therapeutic alliance, the counsellor is in a position to offer support need to address the challenges experienced thus enabling students to remain in school. The interaction of the combination of the above elements contributes to students' good behaviour in school, increased school attendance and was examined in this current study. Figure 2.1 illustrates the Common Factor Theory (CFT).

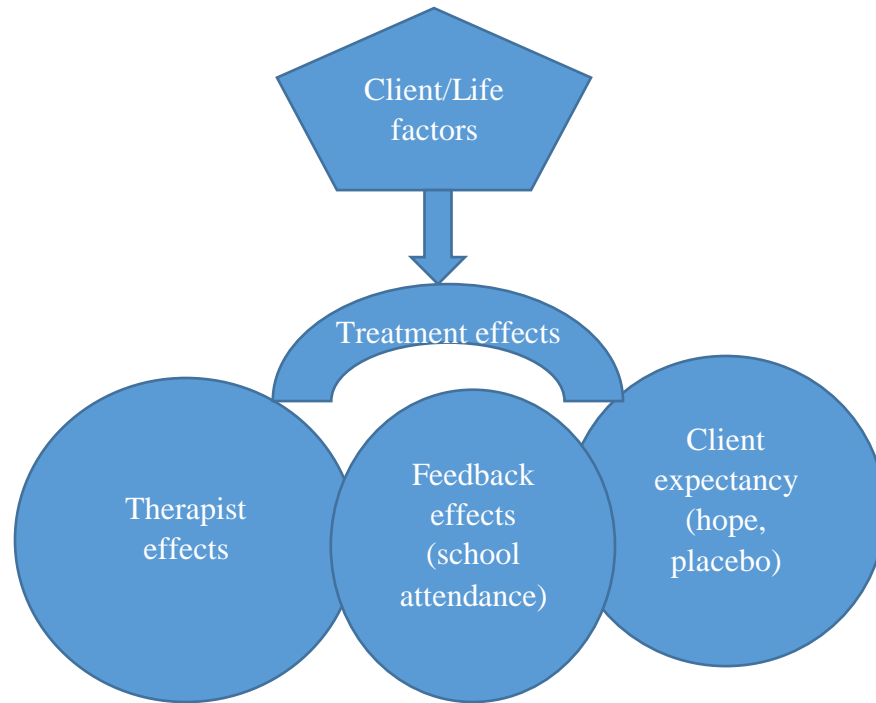


Figure 2.1: Common Factors Model

Source: Cuijpers Reijnders & Huibers (2019)

2.2.2 Social Control Theory

Hirschi put forth the social control theory in 1969 (Fegley-Villalba, 2014). According to Hirschi, the connection one has with others or organizations that uphold conventional principles, and standards are paramount Fegley-Villalba, (2014). When the connectedness is weak, the chances of one engaging in risky behaviours are high. The theory further postulates that the strength or the weakness of the attachment bond is determined by four elements: A) attaching feeling to relationships with close persons like relatives, mentors and age mate, B) the commitment to societal engagements, C) taking part in the community affairs and D) the degree to which one believes in communal norms (Laub & Costello, 2020).

The emotional connectedness to important individuals directs one's action to the wishes, and prospects of significant others. Accordingly, for the truant to change they must form an attachment with significant other. The family has the greatest responsibility to encourage good behaviour. Similar the school environment must be a place that reinforces social rules. This would be effective if the students participated in routine activities that helped them learn how to behave appropriately in society.

The theory we use is appropriate for our study since it describes how multiple elements interact when providing care for clients to better their social environments and cognitive processes. This study subject theory shows how crucial it is for the counsellors to focus on truants and develop strong interpersonal relationships with their pupils so that they are comfortable sharing their experiences. This approach better explains how important is for the counsellors to concentrate more on the client and not the techniques. The aforementioned ensured that students can overcome all social aspects that lead them into truancy and consequently reduce truancy. Figure 2.2 gives the summary of the Social Control theory.

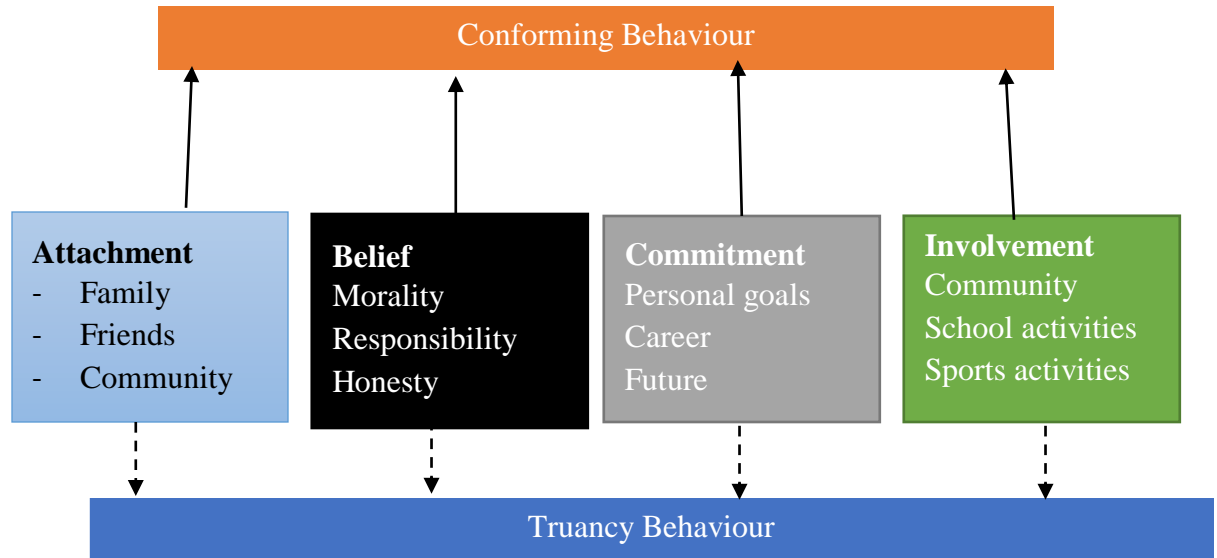


Figure 2.2: Summary of Social Control Theory

Source: Costello & Laub, (2020)

2.3 Review of Related Literature

According to the goals of the research, this section gives an assessment of similar studies.

2.3.1 Prevalence of Truancy in Primary Schools

Truancy, or the frequent act of skipping school without authorization, is a significant issue that negatively impacts schools at all grade levels, from preschool to tertiary. When truancy occurs, the school ought to obtain a valid explanation from the guardians as to why the child was not in school (Harnett, 2007). However, if the absence is unexcused, it falls into three basic kinds: total failure provide a formal letter explain why the child skipped school, giving a letter that not offer a valid excuse for nonattendance, and being in school compound but refusing to appear in ongoing classes. Parrish (2015) documented that various learning institutions take excused and unexcused nonattendance different ways and take diverse excuses for absenteeism. While exempted absence affects

academic performance, scholars' belief that unexampled absence has more adverse effects on schooling.

Various statistics in studies have confirmed that nonattendance is not a regional problem but an international issue affecting States, both developed and developing. In the US, Maynard, et al. (2017) investigated correlates of truancy in different racial/ethnic groups as well as trends in truancy rates between 2002 and 2014. The study looked at; social-demographic characteristics like age, gender, socio-economic context; behavioural aspects such as drug abuse, assault, and psychological aspects like educational commitments, class scores, caregiver governance. The study used information from 209,393 young adults aged 2–17 years. The research projected truancy levels and scrutinized inclinations and correlates through regression analyses. The findings indicated that in the United States nonattendance levels stayed almost the same in the years 2002 (10.8%) to 2014 (11.1%). Absence was higher in elder minors, girls, and Hispanic adolescents. In all races and indigenous clusters, nonattendance was substantially linked with drinking and bhang use, aggressiveness, tendencies to engage in risky behaviours, and examination failure and low academic scores. Comparable to the previous study, this one aimed to determine the trend of truancy frequency among pupils attending public primary schools in Maara Sub-County according to gender and age.

The Department of Education (2019) reports that in the UK, the overall truancy rate increased from 4.7 percent in 2016–2017 to 4.8 percent in 2017–2018 across all government-financed primary, secondary, and special schools. Among primary school pupils, the non-attendance rate rose from 4.0 to 4.2 percent and the level in secondary

schools escalated from 5.4 to 5.5 percent. However, this finding was based on an international study and thus the pattern could not be generalized to other parts of the world. The current study sought to establish a similar study but in a different setting.

According to Onyeaka, Kugbey, Ayanore, and Oppong's (2020) analysis of the frequency of truancy among teenagers enrolled in school in three West African nations, Africa has a high rate of truancy. Truancy rates were 22.9%, 36.5%, and 45.9% for Benin, Ghana, and Liberia, correspondingly, in accordance with a survey that included 8912 children throughout the ages of 11 and 18 who took part in the Global School-based Student Health Review throughout 2012 and 2017. The poll also showed that men missed work more frequently than women in the three states. The results demonstrated that there was variation in truancy among school children in the three counties under study, but with an important distinction. The goal of the present investigation was to identify how the truancy rate among students varied from the typical findings for truancy in other African nations.

In Kenya, Mugambi (2015) looked into variables that linked to high rates of truancy in public schools in Maara Sub-County and discovered that dismissive school cultures, families, social-economic issues, and mental health issues all had an important effect. Therefore, a thorough assessment of the magnitude or predominance of nonattendance among students in public primary schools is still necessary. Therefore, the research suggestion aims to determine how frequently students in public primary schools in Maara Sub County are truant.

2.3.2 Efficacy of counselling in addressing School Environmental Factors that influence Truancy

According to Keppens and Spruyt, (2018) truancy is deliberately missing school with no valid reason, leaving without permission, and evading particular lessons. School atmosphere, number of pupils, mind-sets, the capacity to satisfy every pupil's requirements, and a school's absenteeism regulation are just a few of the school characteristics that may affect truant behaviour.

Donkor and Alhassan (2018) documented that learners, in big learning institutions tend to feel sequestered and so become uncomfortable, undesired, unvalued, unaccepted and or insecure in their learning surroundings and can leave school for these reasons. This implies that in the class where children are more than the required (usually a maximum of 45 students per classroom), the various necessities of schoolchildren are often not met and as result student-teacher relationship is weak.

In the Toro area of Bauchi State, Adam, Usma, and Msheliza (2017) conducted a study on the effectiveness of group therapy management in reducing absenteeism among 133 students from 6 out of 62 public high school students. Results of the survey indicated that the rehabilitated group reduced truant actions compared to the control group. Nevertheless, the necessity to enhance therapy management in adjusting the truancy was recommended in place of physical punishment for students. This implies that the use of corporal punishments was preferred to the employment of counselling approaches in mitigating truancy in schools. In Kenya, it is now five years since corporal punishment was abolished in public primary schools. The question is as to whether schools have

looked for a replacement of corporal punishment and how effective they have been. The goal of this study was to close this gap by finding strategies being used in public primary schools in Tharaka-Nithi County to combat the problem of absenteeism despite the elimination of corporal punishment.

Donkor and Alhassan (2018) looked at the causes and potential solutions for why students in Ghana's Savelugu West Circuit of Education frequently skipped classes.. Information was gathered through; observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Overall, the study involved ninety students and fifteen educators as the respondents of the review. The study took educators to a two days seminar on the approaches to improve learning and keep students interested in the learning processes. The findings discovered that the institutions' atmosphere, teaching techniques, punishment, and guardians' apathy in their kid's academics were significantly related to truant behaviours.

Mgonja (2016) evaluated elements that influenced absence in area high schools in Mtwara District, Tanzania. The research was descriptive and information was gathered using questionnaires, interview guides, and papers. According to the findings, poor school policies on students' nonattendance, physically punishing students, students' lack of interest in what happens in class, a lack of friends, distances between homes and schools, unreliable school transportation, an unfavorable climate, especially during the rainy season, parent separation, unclear laws to handle absenteeism in high schools, and unconcerned parents in the classroom were some of the factors found to cause nonattendance in high schools.

In lower junior learning facilities in Kenya's Masaba Sub-county, Nyamira County, Matage and Begi (2017) investigated the factors at school that contribute to student absenteeism. The outcome indicated that learners' nonattendance was a problem among in lower grades in the sub-county and most absenteeism occurred on Monday and Fridays. Various learning facility aspects that caused absenteeism among pupils in this region were: Unfavourable school atmosphere; and poor friendships with friends and instructors.

In Kenya, the student-teacher ratio has been known to be high especially in the public schools in the rural areas, following a declaration of Free and Basic Primary Education besides large classes are common in primary schools. This implies that many students could be isolated and lack attention which could make them prone to truancy. Few research, nevertheless have looked at how absenteeism rates in Kenya are affected by large class sizes. This study aimed to determine how much the student-teacher ratio contributed to the level of truancy in Tharaka-Nithi County.

As per the above studies, there is evidence from different places that demonstrate that schools lack many facilities that are important for learners. School climate factors including class size, adequacy of physical facilities, attitudes, access to school, capability of satisfying pupil's requirement, and the institution's discipline strategy are significant factors of truancy. This study looked at how counselling can help schools in Maara Sub County address environmental issues that affect truancy.

2.3.3 Efficacy of counselling in Mitigating Individual Factors that influence Truancy

Individual factors entail self-attributes of students like the principles, personae, and behaviours that lead to either attending or not attending classes. Physical considerations, mental health issues, exposure to drug and alcohol misuse, one's perspective of oneself, and disengagement from school are numerous variables that may affect truant behaviour (Gerth, 2020). Bullying causes the victim to lose interest in school and makes them more likely to stop showing up and performing well, claim Seeley, Tombari, Bennet, and Dunkle (2011). However, the function of counselling in resolving these problems has not been sufficiently studied. The objective of the current study was to determine the amount of bullying as one of the individual components and the degree to which it influences absenteeism among students in elementary schools in a local environment such as Maara Sub-County, Tharaka-Nithi County.

Using a sample size of thirty-two (32) respondents who were purposefully chosen from a sample of 2633 students, Lawal (2015) conducted research in the United States to assess the efficiency of positive encouragement counselling strategies for minimizing absenteeism among school students in the Kankia Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Kasina State. The results of the research showed that the additional counselling technique had a substantial impact on the rate of truancy reduction for the group that was not receiving therapy. In comparison to the background group, the experimental population's level of truancy was significantly lower following the application of the encouragement counselling strategy. Nevertheless, little information has been documented to ascertain the mechanisms of counselling towards curbing the issue of truancy. This current study

sought to establish both internal and external methods of counselling and their roles in addressing individual factors that predispose primary school children to truancy in Maara Sub County.

In Dortmund, Germany, Gerth (2020) investigated the connection between truancy and delinquency. The study employed Situational Action Theory (SAT) to develop a more thorough, mechanism-based explanation of the relationship between absenteeism and misbehaviour. Two different types of data from the Peterborough Adolescent Development Survey (PADS) were used in the study. The results showed only flimsy evidence of a connection amongst organizational absenteeism and recidivism. The results also showed that SAT has the ability to serve as an empirical foundation for analyzing the connection between truancy and juvenile offenders by showing that the impact of truancy on modifications to juvenile offenders is dependent on adjustments in young people tendency for juvenile offenders and their involvement in unlawful environments. The current study emulated a similar technique of correlation to scrutinize the efficacy of counselling in addressing school environmental factors that influence truancy in Maara Sub County.

In Nigeria, Eremie and Nwala (2018) did a quasi-experimental research investigating the impact of counselling on truant students in Port Harcourt region. Out of a total population of 2952 pupils, the study unitized a sample of 90 responses. The results showed that counselling had a significant impact on nonattendance; the experimental respondents significantly improved their absenteeism than the control group as a whole, but there was no significant difference between male and female truants in the experimental group. In a

conflicting situation Igwe (2013) adopted a quasi-experimental design to investigate the influence of one on one and group counselling on high school learners' truant behaviour in Abia using a sample of 80 students. Igwe's (2013) findings showed that there was no significant difference in the level of truancy and group counselling. These show contradicting results and thus the need for the current study to ascertain whether there is a similar or a contradicting finding on counselling on individual factors predisposing truancy in Maara Sub-County is a concern of this study.

In Central Division, Machakos County, Kenya, John (2017) did a study on the factors that influence high school pupils being absent and how it affects their achievement on the KCSE. The social control theory put forward by Hirschi served as the study's main guiding. Secondary school pupils from Machakos County alone made up the study's population, which used an ex-post factor research methodology. The findings showed that truancy in Machakos Central Division was influenced by factors relating to school, home environments, and students as a whole.

The results also showed that male students were more affected by residence-related factors than female students were, but female students were more affected by self - starter-related factors. The investigation also demonstrated that these factors had an impact on the academic success of students, with male students' school performance being more significantly impacted. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct a comparable study in the Maara sub-County to determine the role of counselling when dealing with the outside influences at play in schools that affect truancy.

The above studies indicate that several individual factors are leading to truancy in several places across the world. However, the majority of the above studies have been carried out in secondary school and none was carried out in Maara Sub County and therefore this study intends to cover the two gaps. The aforementioned investigations showed that while the majority of empirical research show that guidance and counselling can help decrease school absences, certain studies found little to no correlation between the two variables (counselling and truancy). To determine the effect of guidance and counselling on classroom truancy, a local survey must be conducted. Therefore, the goal of the current study was to determine how effective counselling is at reducing truancy among students attending government-run primary schools in Maara Sub County.

2.3.4 Mechanism that could be employed to enhance counselling for truancy

Different education stakeholders from different places come up with various policies and strategies for curbing truancy as per the needs of different students in different schools. Though universal strategies like counselling are used widely, there are strategies specific to the specific needs of students. Cook, Dodge, Gifford, and Schulting (2017) came with and examined a new program for reducing truancy among school children. The Early Truancy Prevention Project (ETPP) was intended to advance the turnout of primary school pupils through enhancing interactions among teachers and parents and offering educators the leading actors in handling with truants when turnout issues arise. In 2013–14, the recent model of ETPP was executed in twenty classes in five low economic governmental pre- schools, with twenty one other classes in the similar pre-schools acting as control groups. The findings from the data on the attendance illustrated that ETPP considerably decreased the occurrences of truancy while reducing burdens for teacher-

counsellors. Instructors recounted enhanced relationship among caregivers and teachers and equally reported a positive evaluation of the impacts of particular program features. The current study sought to establish whether there is truancy control programme in schools under the current study that relatively had similar impacts as the Early Truancy Prevention Project (ETPP).

Sulaiman & Uhuegbu (2020) assessed the influence of cognitive restructuring and token economy methods in declining of levels of absence amid high school learners in Lagos Nigeria. The researchers utilized the pre-test, post-test, control group approach. The survey employed Judgmental sampling pick two from the six academic Districts in Lagos, simple random sampling chose the six schools; three from each of the two academic Districts and 170 learner out of the 216 indiscriminately picked on the basis of lesson turnout completed the survey. The Truancy Behaviour Questionnaire (TBQ) was used as the study's instrument. The two models effectively reduced truancy, according to the results of the data analysis, but the impacts of the token economy were stronger. The study entirely relied on one instrument and thus no triangulation was done. The current study sought to enhance the findings through triangulation of data from interview guides and questionnaires that involved both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Mucherah and Thomas (2017) argued that in Kenya truancy among primary school girls was caused by lack of sanitary pads. The study suggested that having the policy to provide sanitary towels to school girls will significantly reduce truancy. In their study on school girls, the results indicated that providing sanitary pads reduced truancy considerably. All participants (150) experienced equal levels of satisfaction at school,

including those who wore pads made of cloth and finished their periods as well as those who hadn't started their period yet. Comparing those who obtained the pads to those who didn't, those who had the pads had a considerably lower negative impact on their attendance and academic performance. They also acknowledged keeping their menstrual cycle a secret from relatives and close friends on a noticeably smaller scale. They also reported much greater levels of satisfaction at home and at school compared to those who did not wear pads. The last group expressed much lower levels of fear throughout their period than those without pads. This finding is attributed to the fact that the motivation and intrinsic drives are predetermined by satisfaction of needs. The current study sought to ascertain whether satisfaction of needs of students could be among among the reinforcements in enhancing counselling in truancy.

The above findings indicate that various stakeholders have come up with different measures to curb truancy among school children. However, in Kenya, there are no clear interventions on truancy among primary school children. The intervention on the menstrual cycle reducing truancy on girls does not cover truancy on boys. In the Maara sub-county of Tharaka Nithi County, this study aims to determine what policies and measurements stakeholders in education use.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a theorized plan utilized to illustrate the variables under study and show their interactions. Its aim in this research is to assist the audience to swiftly see the connection between counselling services and its influence on levels of school attendance. Figure 2.3 illustrates the interaction of the variables.

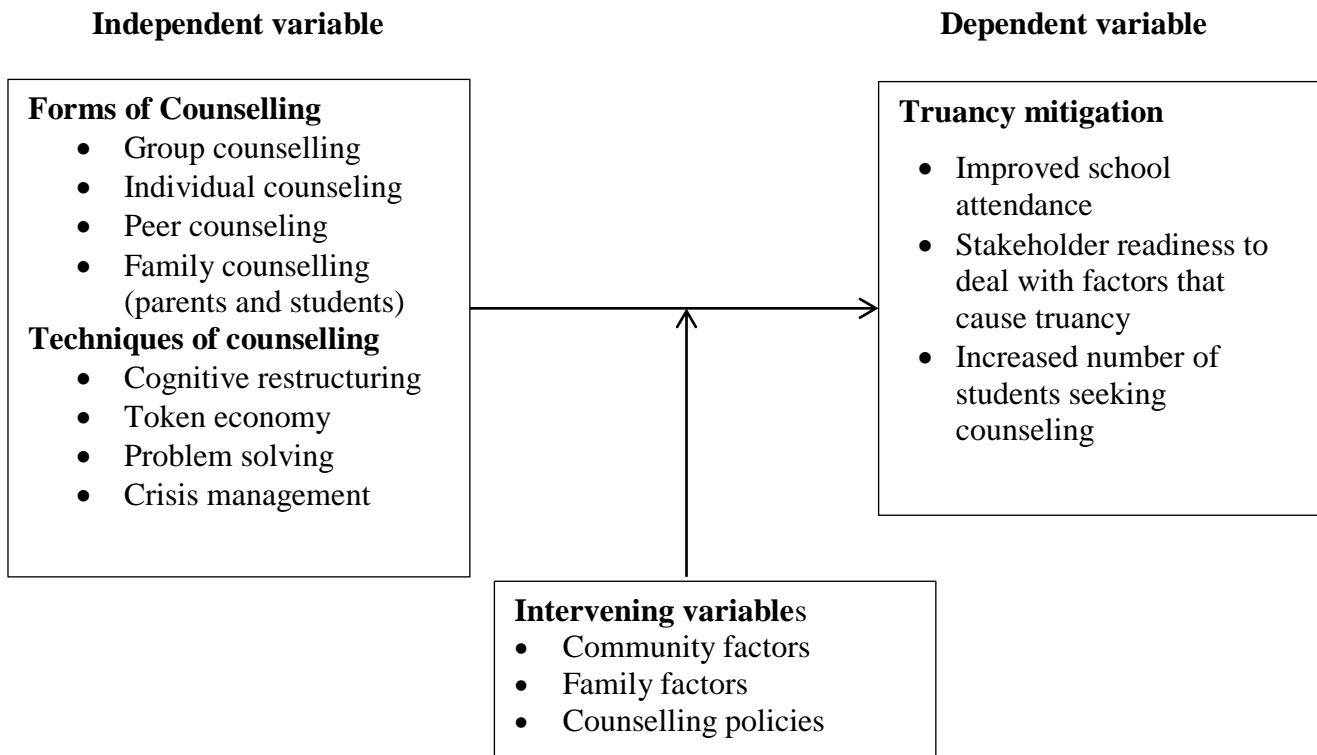


Figure 2.3 Conceptual Framework

The relationship between each of the study's factors is shown in the theoretical framework. The uncorrelated component of counselling is characterized by its many configurations (group, person in question, peer, and familial counselling), as well as its methods (cognitive restructuring, tokens economic benefits, issue resolving, and emergency managing).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section goes over the research methodology that was used. The study design, population, methods of sampling, sample size, study instruments, pilot study, validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection techniques, data analysis, and ultimately ethical and logistical issues are all covered in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design

The study's design is a strategy for conducting research that concentrates on how to gather pertinent data for the purpose of the research (Creswell, 2014). Both a survey with a descriptive approach and a design based on correlation were used in this study. A descriptive method of study describes the components of a population or subject being studied. Descriptive design handles the 'what' of the research variables rather than the 'why' of the study variables. The descriptive model collects both quantitative and qualitative data (Almalki, 2016). In this research, this model was employed in collecting both quantitative and qualitative information.

Describing the efficacy that counselling as a strategy enabled the researcher to describe the strengths of counselling in addressing issues related to truancy (Orodho, 2012). The researcher can calculate the relationship between the variations in one variable and the variation in another variable using a correlational study design (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). Without the need to change variables, a correlational study design further enables the investigator to determine the connection among variables in their natural setting

(Simon & Goes, 2011). The model also enables the researcher to draw pertinent conclusions that can be used to guide future research and policy decisions (Simon & Goes, 2011). The method of correlation is appropriate for this study because it examines how the investigated parameters are connected, and in this case, it examines the impact that counselling plays in reducing truancy.

3.3. Variables of the study

Counselling is the independent variable which indicated by forms of counselling (group, individual, peer, and family counselling) and techniques of counselling (cognitive restructuring, token economy, problem-solving, and crisis management). The dependent variable is the mitigation of truancy which was indicated by the improvement in students' school attendance, stakeholders' zeal to handle factors causing truancy, and the increased number of students seeking counselling.

3.4 Study Location

In Tharaka-Nithi County's Maara Sub County, this study was conducted in primary schools that are public. With a population of 365,330 inhabitants, Tharaka Nithi County is a county in Kenya's Eastern region and has a land area of 2,409.5 km². Three (3) sub-counties (constituencies) make up Tharaka Nithi County, and there are fifteen (15) electoral wards within each. Data from Maara Sub-County indicates that students in lower primary schools have been absent without their instructors' consent in some instances (County Data Sheet, 2019). The majority of these reports, however, go undetected, and parents rarely follow up.

3.5 Target Population

This study focused on a total of 3503 subjects from 30 primary school systems in Maara Sub-County, Tharaka-Nithi County, including 800 students, 487 teachers, and 30 headmasters. There are now 37 primary schools accredited in Maara Sub-County following the National Education Sector Plan of 2013-2018, including only seven private schools, based on the database of the Ministry of Education Office (MoE, 2019). The seven private schools weren't included in the study's target population, though, since it exclusively focuses on public institutions. This is due to the distinct surroundings of boarding institutions and public schools.

3.6 Sample and Sampling Techniques

There are five wards in Maara Sub-County: Mitheru, Muthambi, Mwimbi, Ganga, and Chogoria. Following the formation of the five clusters, ten educational facility schools—two public primary schools in each ward—were chosen at random. Five teachers were chosen at random from each of the ten schools, for a total of 50 teachers, using the random sample technique. By default, a purposive sample technique was used to select ten head teachers from the governmental elementary schools that were selected. By default, 80 students from standard 8 were chosen using purposive sampling, yielding a total of 140 respondents. Table 3.1 following provides a summary of the sample.

Table 3.1 Population and Sample Size

Category	Target (N)	Population	Sample Size (n)	Percentage
Head teachers	30		10	30
Teachers	497		50	10
Pupils	800		80	10
Total	1327		140	10.55

The data in Table 3.1 above shows that a total of 140 respondents, a representative of 10.55% was selected for the final study. This is consistent with Mugenda and Mugenda's (2012) assertion that if the target population is larger (>1000), a sample of at least 10% of the population as a whole is desirable for a study, while a population of 30% is suitable for a comparatively smaller community.

3.7 Research Instruments

3.7.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire that would be used to gather data in line with the study's objectives was thoughtfully created by the researcher. The five sections of the questionnaire corresponded to the five goals of the study. Items pertaining to demographic data were included in section one. Section two sought answers related to the prevalence of truancy among pupils, section three on causes of truancy, section four on the efficacy role of counselling in mitigating truancy, and section five on strategies used to mitigate truancy in Public Primary Schools.

3.7.2 Interview Guide

For the study, a set of open-ended interview questions was created in an effort to collect data in line with the study's goals. The utilization of interview instrument assisted the scholar to collect more in depth information, individual data as well as complementary info on the participants' features and surroundings which is of importance when analysing the data. The interview was administered orally on one on one basis. The research used pre-coded questions which quick, cheap, and easy qualitative data (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

3.8 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

3.8.1 The validity of the Study

The development of the study questionnaire and the interviewing techniques was influenced by the research goals to ensure the reliability of the study. The supervisor also went over the study materials to make sure that all parts of counselling and absenteeism prevention were included in the survey, and the interview tools and feedback were properly incorporated into the final study instruments. The results of the pilot study also aided in the validation of the research tools.

3.8.2 Reliability of the Study

Examining the consistency of the two resulting ratings allowed us to assess the validity of the study tools. The Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient was used to calculate a correlation coefficient. Mohajan (2017) argues that reliability coefficients in correlation statistics range between 0 and 0.9. A correlation of 0.78 was obtained, then thus the research tools are accepted.

3.9 Piloting

Given that they shared the same demographics as the examined schools, a pilot survey was conducted in two public primary schools in Meru County. Assessing the appropriateness of the study instruments was the purpose of the pilot testing. This aided in identifying difficulties that the individuals would run into when attempting to respond to the investigation's questions. The study tools were changed as a result to reflect the study's objectives. The supervision review and pilot study made sure that the investigation tools were reliable. The apparent value in terms of the systematic organization of items, clarity of the questions given in the questionnaire, and synchronization of the research tools was guaranteed through discussions with the academic staff concerning the goals and objectives of the study. Uncertain or unnecessary items were eliminated from the survey's content to ensure clarity and minimize overtaxing responders with inquiries. To encourage attention, the student survey was brief and simplified. However, a correlation coefficient ensured the validity of the tools. As an outcome, to appropriately reflect the study's findings, the questionnaire and interview guide were modified.

3.10 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews. The procedure were as follows:

3.10.1 Administration of questionnaires

The researcher visited the sampled schools after getting permission from the relevant management to do so in order to establish a solid connection. The researcher used this chance to explain the study's goals and the advantages of participating. Class teachers received questionnaires to complete, and students received a different survey. To give participants enough time to complete the questionnaires, the researcher utilized a drop-and-pick technique.

3.10.1 Administration of Interview Guides

The researcher conducted interviews with principals and teachers who serve as major resources for counselling. The participants, through probing the subjects by asking open questions to acquire in-depth data. The information sought from the head teachers and key resource counselling teachers' interviews were related to the level of truancy, school environment and individual factors leading to truancy (see Appendix A2 and A3). The exercise was carried out in schools and took approximately 30 minutes and occurred in teacher's offices or the staffrooms. The interviews provided extra information as per the different study objectives of the current research. The researcher wrote down the important information during the interviews.

3.11 Data Analysis

For this study, the researcher used qualitative as well as quantitative data evaluation techniques considering the two models complement one another. Descriptive statistical techniques were used for evaluating quantitative data. The data collected through surveys was coded, the categories of the variables were given labels, and the data was entered

into a computer system. Inferential as well as descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative information. The association between the independent and dependent variables was summarized using statistical tools like mean and standard deviation. Frequency tables, bar graphs, and pie charts were utilized in the investigation to illustrate the data. The data gleaned from the interview was broken down into topics and addressed in accordance with the goal of the research.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought the Graduate School for permission, and Kenyatta University utilized the permission letter to submit an application to the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) for permission to conduct research. The investigator then requested permission from the County Office, Tharaka-Nithi, to conduct the study in Maara Sub-County. Before completing the final study, the scholar attended the Maara Sub-County public primary schools and gained the head teachers' permission. The head teachers gave consent for the students to be interviewed on behalf of their parents. The research established a good relationship with the participants and assures them that all data collected with uttermost privacy. The researcher also acquired informed consent from the respondents, the head master gave consent on behalf of the students. The scholar offered the participants a chance to choose whether to take part in the study voluntarily. There was no real name of the subjects in the study papers, however the researcher used codes instead. In this case, participants' identities did not appear in reporting the study outcomes. All possibly identifiable data were discarded after the summation of the whole process.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In order to identify solutions that may be implemented to improve the services, the goal of this study was to examine the function of counselling in reducing truancy among students in public primary schools in Maara Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County. In this chapter, the conclusions as derived from the unprocessed field data are analyzed, presented, explained, and discussed. This research employed descriptive and correlational research design. The descriptive model assisted in collecting both quantitative and qualitative data for the study. In this research, this model has been employed in collecting both quantitative and qualitative information. The outcomes are displayed in accordance with the following goals:

- i) To establish the prevalence of truancy among pupils in Maara Sub County's public primary schools.
- ii) To evaluate the efficacy of counselling in Maara Sub County in addressing school-environmental issues that affect truancy.
- iii) To assess the effectiveness of counselling in addressing specific issues that lead primary school students in Maara Sub County to truancy.
- iv) To establish a mechanism that might be used to improve truancy counselling in Maara Sub County.

The chapter is structured in accordance with the study's goals. However, the response rate and demographic findings are presented first, then a descriptive and inferential analysis in accordance with the study's objectives.

4.2 Response Rate

Three groups of individuals participated in the current study: students, critical resource teachers, and head teachers. A total of 140 respondents, including 50 teachers, 80 students, and 10 principals, were sampled. The approach was successful because the head teachers helped the researcher with the distribution and collection of the equipment. The data collection was also timely and the sample size was manageable. All the 80 pupils, 50 teachers, and 10 principals participated in the study translating into 100% response rate. Table 4.1 presents the summary of the response rate.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Category	Target Sample	Final sample	Percentage %
Pupils	80	80	57%
Key Resource Teachers	50	50	36%
Principal	10	10	7%
Total	140	140	100%

Source: Field Data (2022)

From the findings in Table 4.1, the response rate for pupils was valid 57 % (n=80) and response rate for teachers was valid 36% (n=50), while response rate for Principals was 7% (n=10). Because of the relatively smaller sample size, the researcher timely arranged the collection of data and the all targeted cluster responded. The study's total return rate of 100% was deemed sufficient for presenting the targeted population in a legitimate accurate manner. The high response rate was made feasible by the investigator's application of the drop-wait-and-collect method, which involved giving the survey materials to the participants in person, giving them time to complete them, and picking them up as soon as they were finished. Additionally, this admirable percentage of

responses became a reality after the researcher personally visited the school and scheduled examinations. According to this claim, a response rate of 100% was sufficient. For statistical purposes, a response rate of 50% is deemed satisfactory and appropriate, whereas 60% and over 70% are considered excellent.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

To help the researcher learn more about the schools, instructors, students, and principals, demographic details on those who participated was requested. The brief overview of those who participated was crucial since it gave readers a clear idea of both the organizations that were included in the study and the respondents. Since the goal of the study was to collect qualitative data, Simon & Goes (2011) concur that since different people react differently to the same situation, each group has particular features that must be in qualitative terms recorded. For the benefit of the students and key resource instructors, the demographic information of the responders was gathered. The pupils' demographic characteristics included; gender, age bracket and family background. Key resource teachers' demographic characteristics included; gender, teaching experience, and highest professional qualification.

4.3.1 Gender Characteristics of Pupils

Gender characteristics or background information was important because gender construct to high extent has been found to influence truancy among pupils. Gender also can influence or moderate mitigating truancy among pupils which necessitated the study to analyses gender representation in the study. The demographic traits of the students are then shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Pupils by Gender

Gender	Percentage	Frequency
Boys	54%	44
Girls	46%	36
Total	100%	80

Source: Field Data (2022)

According to Table 4.2's findings, male enrollment was higher than female enrollment at 54% compared to 46%. The conclusion is consistent with the national data showing that male learners outnumber female students in several Kenyan regions due to a variety of factors, including gender norms, family history, poverty, and a low birth rate in the study area (Faria, 2021). More boys than girls were born, which is a factor that requires additional investigation. However, the results showed that there was gender inequality in representation in the majority of schools. The representation in the workplace, however, was deemed sufficient and will be relied upon to provide the essential facts regarding the function of counselling in reducing absenteeism among students in public primary schools in Maara Sub-County.

4.3.2 Age distribution of pupils

Teuscher and Elena Makarova (2018) contend that age has a negative correlation with school participation. Therefore, age may also have an impact on how well-liked and utilized counselling is among students in public primary schools. Since students can recount their life experiences in school and difficulties with counselling in relation to

truancy mitigation, the student's age is also a good indicator. In Table 4.3, the age distribution is examined.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Pupils by Age Bracket

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percent
10 to 12 years	3	3.8
13 to 14 years	61	76.3
Above 15 years	16	20.0
Total	80	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

According to Table 4.3, the bulk of the students (76.3%) were between the ages of 13 and 14, 20% were beyond the age of 15, and 3.8% were between the ages of 10 and 12. The study's focus on class 8 students can be explained by the fact that the bulk of the students fall into the 13–14 age range. The students in this class were thought to be in a good position to share their opinions on the need for and goals for truancy counselling. However, the age distribution showed that 96% of respondents were between the ages of 13 and 15 years. As a result, the respondents fit the age distribution and spent a significant amount of time in school, making them qualified to respond to questions on counselling and potential obstacles.

4.3.3 Family Background of Pupils

The researcher evaluated the composition of the family quality as a crucial factor in relation to behaviour construct arising from the presence or absence of some family members while examining the function of counselling in reducing truancy among students in public primary schools in Maara Sub-County. Analysis of the student body's

family makeup was important for gaining a basic understanding of family history, which may help to explain some of the factors that affect truancy. The results are analytically presented in Table 4.4. Studying family composition was also important for comprehending some of the family constraints that might cause absenteeism among students in public primary schools.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Pupils by Family Background

Family Background	Frequency	Percent
Both parents alive	70	87.5
One parent alive	8	10.0
Total orphan	2	2.5
Total	80	100.0

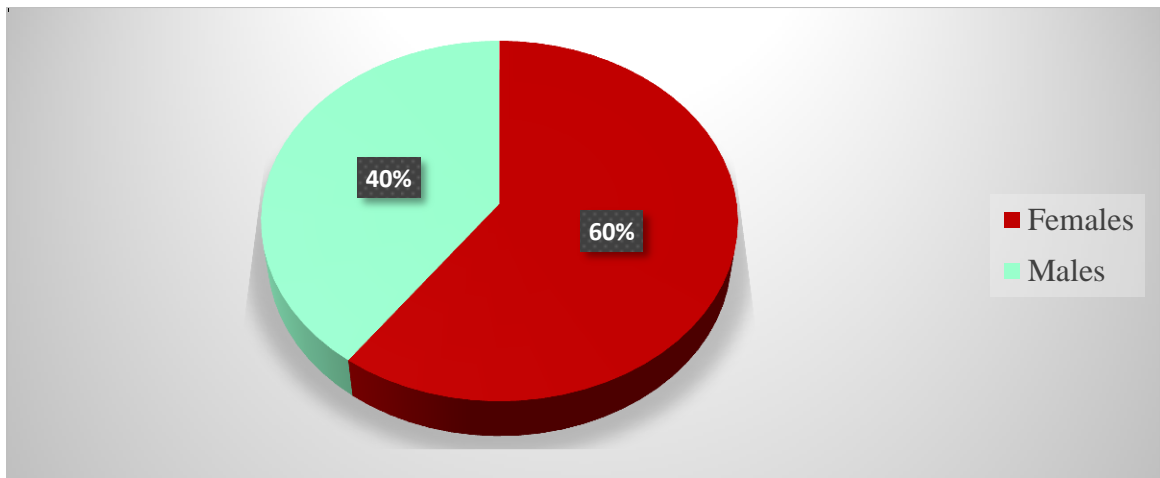
Source: Field Data (2022)

From Table 4.4, 87.5% of the pupils had both parents alive, 10% had one parent alive, while 2.5% were total orphans. Thus, with majority of pupils at 87.5% living with both parents, the study assumed that these pupils had an advantage of being taken care of in terms of behaviour and would understand the consequences of truancy. Evidently, knowing that children brought up without one biological parents face numerous disadvantages such as limited time for parent's encouragement and support in homework activities, the vice would also attribute to truancy and thus, requires counselling. The living situation has a significant impact on a variety of characteristics of a child's way of life, particularly mental, behavioral, physical, and psychological health, which can lead to truancy. Children from single-parent and intact parent homes differ very slightly from one another. The ecological systems theory developed by Bronfenbrenner in 2000 aids in understanding how much parental love and care is given to children as a basis. This is

corroborated by Machine (2014), who claims that when one or both parents are away from a family, the mesosystem becomes weak, which causes a cascade of problems in the development of the children. Children are more prone to have withdrawal syndrome owing to despair and anxiety because of this instability and unstable home. Children are more prone to experience symptoms of withdrawal owing to feelings of hopelessness and stress, which can result in truancy behaviour, as a result of this instability and unpredictable household.

4.3.4 Demographic Characteristics of Key Resource Teachers

A total of 50 key resource teachers participated in the study, their demographic characteristics are presented subsequently in Figure 4.2. Demographic factors of key resource teachers are necessary because the researcher will be in a position to know whether all pupils are taken care of as far as gender is concerned.



Source: Field Data (2022)

Figure 4.1: Distribution of Key Resource Teachers by Gender

The gender inclination of elementary schools in this study was established by counting the number of male and female instructors. This is so that students are exposed to both male and female role models, which helps create a diversified environment for learning that can affect the drive of pupils to attend school (Porter & Serra, 2020). From figure 4.2, 60% of the teachers were females, while 40% were males.

The data suggests that there was some gender parity in the study and that both male and female head teachers and educator-counsellors were concerned about the impact of counselling on absenteeism and counselling among students in public primary schools. Nevertheless, the results showed that there are more female teachers than male teachers in Maara Sub-County's schools. This may be connected to the locals' perception that educating children was the ideal career choice for women since they were placed in neighboring institutions to care for their families, a perception that the Kenyan government also took into account. The submission, however, was deemed sufficient and will be depended upon to provide the necessary details with regard to counselling on truancy in schools. The submission, however, was deemed sufficient and will be depended upon to provide the essential information with regard to counselling on truancy in schools.

Mugambi (2015) and Faria (2021), who examined data on teachers in public elementary schools from the years 2015 to 2020, concluded that female instructors outnumbered male teachers at that level of education.

4.3.5 Key Resource Teachers by Teaching Experience

For instructors and principle teachers to compare the significance of the function of counselling in reducing absenteeism among students in public primary schools, a lengthy working period is necessary. As a result, the lengthy duration of service may benefit counselling students to lessen absenteeism. The amount of experience of the respondent teachers is displayed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Key Resource Teachers by Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percent
Below 5 years	9	18.0
6 to 10 years	17	34.0
Above 10 years	24	48.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

According to Table 4.5, 48% of instructors had more than 10 years of knowledge, 34% had between 6 and 10, and 18% had experience of only 5 years or less. The results of the investigation showed that the vast majority of those surveyed had spent a significant amount of time understanding and communicating the significance of counselling in reducing absenteeism among students in public elementary schools. The amount of teaching experience also demonstrates professional maturity, which enables a teacher with more experience to recognize students who exhibit behaviors associated with truancy. Instructors with greater expertise in the classroom feel more at ease discussing their prior dealings with vices like absenteeism. This shows that the majority of teachers were in a position to provide accurate information about the importance of counselling in reducing student absenteeism. Additionally, they are able to locate data on counselling

and truancy among both boys and girls in the study area. Teachers who have worked in schools for a long period may have dealt with numerous instances of disruptive behaviour and may be in a position to understand the causes of truancy. These results show that the majority of the participants assigned the role of critical resource teachers have a lot of professional experience.

4.3.6 Key Resource Teachers Professional Qualification

Academic training was important for the study because it illustrates the degree of management and administrative knowledge, which is a key idea in the function of counselling in schools. Education level was crucial since qualified educators were knowledgeable about guidance and counselling, particularly how students' actions related to absence and dropout rates.

Table 4.6: Distribution of Key Resource Teachers by Highest Professional Qualification

Professional qualification	Frequency	Percent
P1 Certificate	20	40.0
Diploma	18	36.0
Degree	12	24.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 4.6's findings show that 40% of the teachers had a P1 certificate, 36% had a diploma, and 24% had graduated with a degree. This information suggests that the study's participants were all qualified teachers because they had the necessary training and experience. After describing the respondents' demographic details, the next section will

discuss the goals of the study. The major objective of this part is to present the results of the study's key goals. Recall that the initial goal was to determine how common truancy was among pupils attending public primary schools.

4.4 Prevalence of Truancy among Students in Public Primary Schools

The study's primary goal was to gauge the rate of truancy among pupils attending public primary schools in Maara Sub County. The primary source of information educators were asked to rate the incidence of absenteeism in the school as well as the causes of truancy, whereas pupils were asked to identify the number of times they had missed schools absent an acceptable reason.

4.4.1 Prevalence of Truancy as per Students

Students were asked to list how many times they have failed the attendance test without authorization since the term's beginning using an online survey. The purpose of this item was to determine how frequently students missed school from them. The results are displayed in the following Tables 4.7.

Table 4.7: Prevalence of Truancy by Students

Prevalence of Truancy	Frequency	Percent
Once	17	21.3
Twice	4	5.0
Thrice	3	3.8
More than thrice	1	1.3
Never	55	68.8
Total	80	100.0

Source: Researcher (2022)

According to Table 4.7, the majority of students (68.8%) said they had never missed class without a legitimate excuse, while 21.3% said they had done so once and 5% had done so twice. These results suggest that the majority of the students never skipped a class. Given how many kids are concerned with their education, this is not surprising. However, it is clear that some of the students in Tharaka Nithi's Mara Sub County primary schools are truant. The total proportion in Tharaka Nithi is 31.2, indicating that there is truancy. These results were in line with those of Ngure (2019), who found that dropout rates among students in Murang'a East Sub-County were quite high. Many students in public primary schools exhibit increased absenteeism, which eventually results in dropout.

4.4.2 Prevalence of Truancy as Per Teachers

After obtaining data from students on the frequency of truancy, the findings in the county's frequency were further confirmed by consulting with teachers, who were asked to rank the frequency of truancy on a scale of 1 to 6 (Very High-6, High-5, Moderate-4, Low-3, Very Low-2, Don't Know-1). The results are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Teachers Perception on the Prevalence of Truancy among Students in Primary School

Prevalence of Truancy	Frequency	Percent
High	8	16.0
Moderate	9	18.0
Low	9	18.0
Very low	23	46.0
Don't know	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Researcher (2022)

According to table 4.8, 46% of the teachers reported that school truancy was extremely low, 18% reported that it was low at first and then moderate, and 16% reported that it was high. The opinions of the teachers support the conclusions made by the students. The opinion of truancy prevalence among teachers, however, is slightly higher than that of pupils. The distinction between teachers and students may be linked to experience, knowledge of truancy, and worry on account of their duty to look out for the students. All the same, teachers and pupils are in agreement that truancy is above 30%.

Findings indicate that 16% of teachers rated truancy as high, implying that many pupils are dropping out of school at a very young level to the detriment of their development and society at large. This is despite the fact that counselling has been formalized in schools to address developmental issues and indiscipline to enhance completion and transition rates in schools. According to the common factor theory that guided this study, truant pupils may be weak, but through therapy, their inner strengths can be triggered to enable them to cope with whatever situation they are facing. According to Drisko (2014), providing clients with different perspectives on psychological occurrences and experiences might evoke their inner strengths and help them deal with the problems that endanger their life. Based on the therapeutic alliance it is thus expected that the counsellors would be able to help the truant students overcome their challenges to enable them remain in school. It is expected that the counsellors mitigate or intervene on the rate of non-attendance to create a conducive school environment to retain students in schools. However, as revealed by the findings of this study, high percentage, which is around 31% is worrying. The finding was supported by a respondent from School A, who stated that:

“We usually experience unjustified absence from school among pupils and sometimes we try to locate the possible reasons for such behaviour by reaching their parents at home. However, upon probing, the truants would respond by faking health issues without producing any support document” (male, head teacher).

As seen from the quote, there is unjustified absence from school which supports the quantitative findings that indeed there is truancy in the county. The pupils who are truant seem to realize that it is not acceptable and therefore they try to conceal their negative school habits by faking illness. Illness is a more acceptable reason to miss school. It draws empathy.

Numerous studies have found that participation in criminal behaviour and other inappropriate conduct are strongly predicted by students' lack of affiliation to and attachment to their education. This conclusion should be more concerning because it suggests that more students are leaving institution at a young age and that the school's mobility rate is low. These results are consistent with those of Maynard, et al. (2017), who demonstrated that truancy among students with a frequency of low to moderate severity existed in the United States. According to common factor theory as forwarded by Laska and Wampold (2014), counselling has the capability of rehabilitating a client to achieve a desired outcome. Considering that counselling services are in schools, it is expected that the school counsellors should mitigate or intervene to enable pupils remain in school. School counsellors are expected to help pupils cultivate interest in school so that they are committed in school. This could mean working to create a friendlier environment that would be attractive to the learners. Nevertheless, the high rate—about 31 percent—is concerning, so it was crucial to identify the causes of truancy that seem to

make counselling difficult. The results of Kagundu (2021), which demonstrated that the majority of truant pupils, particularly those in low-income areas, did not perform effectively in their academics, lend support to the findings of the present investigation.

4.6 Efficacy of Counselling in addressing School Environment factors influencing Truancy

The study's second goal was to evaluate the effectiveness of counselling in addressing the school-environmental issues that affect truancy in Maara Sub County. To accomplish this goal, teachers were asked to rate the impact of guidance and counselling (G&C) on school attendance using a Likert scale with a maximum score of 3 (Great Extent-2, Small extent-2, Never-0). The scale was further condensed into cumulative scores, where 0 (0x6) was the lowest score and 12 (6x2) was the highest. The scale was then converted into levels, whereby scores ranging between 0 to 3 represented low efficacy, scores between 4 to 7 represented moderate efficacy, and scores ranging between 8 to 12 represented high efficacy. The summary of findings is presented subsequently in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Teacher’s responses on the extent to which counselling has addressed school environmental factors

Response	Great Extent		Some extent		Never	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Improved school policies and programs that positively impact on the school climate	20	40	16	32	14	28
In enhancing security in school and safety of learners	13	26	27	54	10	20
In improving peer-relationship	23	46	18	36	9	18
In improving behaviour and discipline among pupils	19	38	26	52	5	10
In increasing retention and class attendance	25	50	22	44	3	6
In promoting school attendance action programs	16	32	26	52	8	16

Source: Researcher (2022)

Results in Table 4.9, indicated that counselling had increased retention and class attendance among pupils in primary school under study to a great extent at 50%, security in school and safety of learners improved it to some extent at 54%, good-peer relationship to greater extent at 46%, behaviour and discipline among pupils to some extent at 52%, retention and class attendance to great extent at 50% and school attendance frequency to some extent at 52%. However, additional research showed that 28% of the teachers claimed that counselling had never improved school policies or initiatives that had a positive influence on the climate of the classroom. School policies and programs encompass leadership structure, drive for improvement, and responsibility of persons in leadership and levels of expectations that were attributed to the fact that they could not be directly influenced through counselling. The results of the study show that classroom climate and educational atmosphere can both anticipate rates of student

dropout. As a result, school emotional climate may have an impact on teachers' results, which subsequently in turn affects students' truancy behaviour.

When students feel secure, they are more likely not to miss school, while when students are either physically or emotionally threatened in school they will have a high probability to miss school for they will feel that the home environment is safer than the school environment. It is therefore, the duty of the school stakeholders to protect students physically and emotionally to reduce truancy levels.

Qualitative findings from the interviews conducted among the head teachers further reinforced the contribution of parenting as a factor leading to truancy. The primary causes of student absenteeism in their schools were to be identified by the head teachers:

“Parents have toddlers of their own who require childcare and therefore their do not have someone to watch them at home. In this case, they turn the elder siblings to take care of the infants. I think having a day care program at school would assist this situation.” (Female, head teacher).

In Maara Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County, school variables also showed up as some of the causes of truancy among students in public elementary schools. An individual from school D lamented:

“Some pupils do not feel safe at this school, learners are quick tempered, ready to fight for little or little reason. Pupils fight often in this school. Some students are more concerned about maintaining self-image with peers, will hurt/fight peers to maintain that image.” (Female Key resource teacher)

The above sentiments imply that schools under study experienced fighting among pupils as a form of indiscipline despite the existence of regulatory mechanisms in the school. It may be stated that each respondent recognized school safety as a roadblock to attending classes. There was general agreement among those taking part that peer fighting occurs frequently. Two of the attendees mentioned suspensions as an effective approach to get rid of students who interfere with studying for students who want to learn based on the topic of rules and regulations for the fighting.

Another different category mentioned was family responsibilities and parental participation. Participants emphasized the importance of parental engagement in the schooling of their kids. However, they acknowledged that there were a variety of barriers that prevented parents from being actively involved. The participants' comments about what hinders parental involvement and how it affects the performance of kids at school are summarized below:

“Parents are too busy to help their kids with school stuff because of drunkenness and marital problems. Some of their children do not get consequences for skipping school. They just yell at them and do nothing about it. The possession of mobile phones is also rampant in schools despite the fact that it is against the school rules.” (Female Key resource teacher)

Substance and alcohol abuse expose children to abuse and mistreatment that lead to trauma, stress and withdrawal from school. Studies have shown that children born to fathers addicted to either alcohol or substance are at risk of neglect, learning problems and early school behavioural issues (Kanyua, 2018; Muir et al., 2022). These results are

consistent with those of numerous earlier studies, such as Omachare (2020), who found that alcoholic parents had an adverse effect on their kids' achievement in terms of presence, academic performance, and behaviour in public secondary schools in Bungoma West Sub County. On the other end of the spectrum, Hassan (2017) discovered that issues affecting students from households with marital difficulties, such as a lack of resources for school, a lack of affection from both parents, and absenteeism, had an impact on how well they did in school.

Another respondent similarly indicated the following as a major factor leading to truancy:

'Poor discipline, substance use, poor parental care and lack of necessities can lead to absenteeism without justification because sometimes it is difficult to cultivate the parent-child relationship'

This finding implies that parents who spend a majority of their time drinking might not know whether their children went to school or not. The results also suggest that couples with marital problems experience challenges and may not have time to focus on the scholastic welfare of their kids, which would increase the rates of truancy. This implies that those pupils who are not disciplined, those who use drugs and substances, those who lack parental care, and those who lack basic needs are more likely to be truants compared to disciplined pupils who do not abuse drugs, experience parental love and have their basic needs met. These results suggest that family traits are important predictors of the occurrence of truancy amongst primary school pupils, which can promote the growth of transposition and give the truant child a sense of approval. The absent student freely investigates challenging material and traumatic events from their past, gaining understanding and resolving outstanding concerns. These results support those of Kanyua

(2018), who found that children of parents who misused alcohol and other drugs did not attend school on a regular basis. The enrollment, participation, and involvement in school of children were all strongly impacted by parental substance usage.

According to the research, students from low-income homes are more likely than their counterparts from financially secure families to engage in truancy. This is due to the 60% economic status cause of truancy. The primary reason why students miss school is because families with greater incomes can afford all the necessities that support students' education, as opposed to poor parents who cannot afford even the most basic necessity. This result suggests that counsellors should concentrate on encouraging the client (truant) to adopt a healthy lifestyle and pursue social interests. The four therapeutic process aims that the counsellor works with the client on include building a therapeutic relationship, assessing life style, gaining client understanding, and modifying behaviour. The individual changing their behaviour as a result of accepting responsibility for their actions. The counsellor is in charge of developing a strong rapport with the client, determining the primary cause of the truancy issue, gathering the necessary data, setting goals to be met, and choosing an appropriate therapy for behaviour change to achieve the desired behaviour, such as switching from absence to full attendance. These results support earlier research (Farrall et al., 2020; Matage & Begi, 2017) that found absenteeism among students was influenced by economic position.

Further the researcher conducted a parametric correlation test based on the Spearman's Correlation Coefficient on the second objective to assess the efficacy of counselling in addressing environmental factors that affect truancy in Maara Sub County. The first

hypothesis, “H₀1: *Counselling is not statistically significantly effective in addressing school environment factors that influence truancy in Maara Sub County, Tharaka Nithi County*” was tested. Firstly, the two data sets: 1) the frequency of counselling-seeking behaviour among students and 2) positive change on school environmental factors exposing students to truancy among students were checked to make sure the variables are ranked on the ordinal scale. Secondly, bivariate correlation was run on the two sets of variables and the final results was displayed on Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Correlation: Relationship between Counselling Seeking Behaviour by Students and School Environment factors

			Improvement in environment factors linked to increase in attendance	Counselling Seeking Behaviour by Students
Spearman's rho	Improvement in environment factors linked to increase in attendance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.269*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	80	80
	Counselling Seeking Behaviour by Students	Correlation Coefficient	.269*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	80	80
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

From Table 4.10, the results are presented in a matrix form such that the correlations are replicated. The test produced a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r=.269$ and a statistically significant level (p-value) of .000, both of which were less than the predetermined level of significance which was .005, or $p\text{-value}=.000$. Thus, the null hypothesis, *Counselling is not statistically significantly effective in addressing school*

environment factors that influence truancy in Maara Sub County, Tharaka Nithi County was rejected. This finding implies that counselling was effective in enhancing school attendance through positive change in environmental factors related to truancy among students.

4.7 Efficacy of counselling in addressing individual factors that predispose primary school children

The third goal of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of counselling in addressing the various variables that lead primary school students in Maara Sub County to truancy. The survey contained questions that attempted to determine the effectiveness of counselling specific issues that lead primary school students to truancy. To do this, critical resource teachers were asked to score the effectiveness of guidance and counselling on a four-point Likert scale (Strongly agree-4, Agree-3, Disagree-2, Strongly disagree-1) based on five specific student-related characteristics. The scale was further collapsed into cumulative scores, with the minimum score being 1 (1x5) and the maximum score being 20 (5x4). The measure was then translated into levels, with scores ranging from 5 to 9 signifying poor efficacy, 10 to 15 signifying moderate efficacy, and 16 to 20 signifying great efficacy. Table 4.11, which follows, presents the findings' summary.

Table 4.11: Frequencies on Efficacy of Counselling on individual factors predisposing students to truancy

Individual factors	SA		A		D		SD	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Self-esteem among pupils has improved	26	52	24	48	0	0.0	0	0.0
Pupils have shown a positive attitude in learning	27	54	23	46	0	0.0	0	0.0
Verbal abuse and threats among pupils are minimal	20	40	29	58	0	0.0	1	2.0
Laziness to classwork has reduced and the majority complete assignments	15	30	29	58	0	0.0	6	12
There is unity as many pupils have the spirit of friendship	21	42	29	58	0	0.0	0	0.0

Source: Researcher (2022)

According to Table 4.11, the majority of respondents (52%) strongly agreed that counselling has helped some students' self-esteem. Another 54% of the respondents strongly agreed that pupils have shown a positive attitude in learning, while 46% also agreed. Similarly, 58% of respondents agreed that there was little verbal abuse and threatening behaviour among students, that classwork slackness had decreased, that the majority of students completed their assignments, and that there was unity because many students had grown closer to one another as a result of individual counselling on risk factors for students. These findings imply that counselling helps students deal with diverse personal issues that contribute to truancy. In order to change behaviour that is not in the client's best interests or the interests of society, the counsellor works with the client to analyze conscious thoughts, beliefs, and rationale. In order to foster a therapeutic

connection, the client and counsellor have an equal partnership in which the counsellor shares insights, impressions, thoughts, and feelings with the client.

Cognitive approach in counselling focuses on changing how students with anxiety linked to absenteeism think about themselves or their experiences. The cognitive theory presumes that all human beings are rational and can reason. It also highlights that emotions and behaviour are determined by thinking habits. As a counsellor, it is important to focus on helping clients understand how their thinking about their individual-based factors negatively influences their emotional responses towards truancy.

The study also aimed to determine what kind of support they required from the primary resource instructors in counselling counsellors. Based on difficulties that students present in counselling sessions in schools, the students were given a list of counselling needs and asked to check out all the topics for which they requested help from the key resource teachers. The various replies from the students were then used to calculate the frequencies and percentages. Table 4.12 presents the findings about the topics addressed in counselling.

Table 4.12: Counselling Issues as reported by pupils

Counselling Issue	Frequency	Percent
Study skills	62	77.5
Problem-solving	42	52.5
Esteem issues	34	42.5
Sickness	48	60.0
Emotions and Anger	53	66.3
Hunger	24	30.0
Neglect issues	23	28.8
Reading materials	52	65.0
Torture and bullying	30	37.5
N=80		

Source: Researcher (2022)

According to Table 4.12, the majority of students (77.5%) said they sought counselling services to help them with study skills, 66.3% did so because they were feeling angry or sad, 65% wanted advice on reading materials, and 60% said they did so because they were ill. These findings reveal that students go for counselling for various reasons and that students are less aware that issues related to neglect, hunger, and torture and bullying can in a greater way influence their success in school. The results lead to an assumption that when students do not seek much counselling for their psychological issues, this is likely to increase the rates of truancy because when students are not able to manage their issues well they skip school to recover. These findings reveal the need for school administrators to put more effort into implementing counselling programs and sensitizing students on the importance of utilizing the services.

The researcher asked the primary resource teacher in an interview about some of the challenges facing counselling in schools and how the school dealt with them. One of the professors remarked that it was challenging to determine:

“There are many. mmmh I think the greatest problem is lack of understanding of what counselling is. This is why most of the heads feel that the counsellors are undermining them. I think it is because the teacher counsellor has the position and the information. The students will talk to the teacher but not to anyone else, especially when there is a problem. The teacher often enjoys a good relationship with the students and this can be threatening especially when things are not so good in the school (Female Key resource teacher).

The above sentiment implies that teacher counsellors have failed to establish a good relationship with the students, a step which is essential and continuous across the counselling process. . Because the client is interpreting verbal and nonverbal cues and drawing conclusions about the counselling and the counselling situation, the first step in developing trust is fundamental. For instance, the truant receiving counselling can inquire about the counsellor's capacity for empathy. On the other hand, the counsellor (or counsellors) may respond to a query about whether the client is authentic and sincere. Teachers recognize that information received via counselling can be used to improve collaboration with the rest of the school.

The participants were asked to remark on the counselling geared toward resolving personal variables that predispose primary school students in an interview with the key resource teachers. One participant remarked:

“Counselling program has so far assisted in addressing the issue of truancy through focusing on individual factors. However, the objective achievement is quite a challenge as many of these children with deviant behaviour and truancy

hail from families using drug and alcohol. This exposes most of the learners to withdraw due to abuse and harsh experiences”

The use of alcohol is strongly linked to student absenteeism. Health issues, whether they pertain to the student's or their family's health, are recognized as a major factor in student absenteeism and prevent students from attending classes. These results support those of Keller, Widiger, and El-Sheikh (2022), who found that sons of alcoholics who either had one or both parents who had alcoholism and aggressive conduct had a significant chance of academic failure. The school is entirely responsible for making sure that participation and engagement in class are met. Children of alcoholic parents may assume parental obligations, such as young child care duties, which has a negative impact on school attendance.

The pupils who are truant seem to realize that it is not acceptable and therefore they try to conceal their negative school habits by faking illness. Illness is a more acceptable reasons to miss school. It draws empathy. The above findings show that main reason behind the truancy among pupils was attributed to individual factors that need to be scrutinized through counselling. This finding was reimbursed by another key resource teacher from school B who stated in an interview that:

“Truancy in my school is majorly contributed by student’s personal factors of delinquent behaviours, withdrawal and mostly sickness. Sometimes, a child may fail to attend school twice a week without any justification”. (Female key resource teacher)

It is clear that participants' perceptions of their own values, attitudes, and behaviours as truancy contributors are personal factors. Student health conditions and peer relationships

were the main contributing factors on an individual level. According to one student from school B:

“We have a problem with health issues in this school. There is a student with asthma in my class, and she occasionally misses class. However, because she hasn't provided a note or report from the doctor, I haven't looked into if the feeling may be contributing to her poor attendance at school.” (female Key resource teacher)

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of counselling in addressing specific characteristics that predispose primary school students in Maara Sub County to truancy, the researcher also ran a parametric correlation test based on the Spearman's Correlation Coefficient for the third aim .This was done by testing the second hypothesis, H₀₂: *“Counselling is not statistically significantly effective in addressing individual factors that predispose primary school children to truancy in Maara Sub County.”* Table 4.13 lists the results in a nutshell.

Table 4.13: Correlation: Counselling Seeking behaviour and Individual factors predisposing students to truancy

			School Environment factors	Counselling Seeking Behaviour by Students
Spearman's rho	Individual factors	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.763*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	80	80
	Counselling Seeking Behaviour by Students	Correlation Coefficient	.763*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	80	80
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

From Table 4.13, the results are presented in a matrix form such that the correlations are replicated. The test produced a correlation coefficient of $r=.763$ and a significant level (p-value) of .000, both of which were below the predetermined threshold of significance, which was .005, or $p\text{-value}=.000.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis, H_0 : Counselling is not statistically significantly effective in addressing individual factors that predispose primary school children to truancy in Maara Sub County was rejected. These findings mean that counselling helps students deal with the issues that stand in the way of their success and contribute to truancy. Past researchers concur with these findings as they found out that school counselling does help students deal with various issues. For example, Salgong, Ngumi, and Chege (2016) revealed that guidance and counselling have improved discipline and academic performance among students.

Regression analysis was also used in the study to determine the composite and relative of the three (counselling Seeking behaviour, environmental factors and Individual factors predisposing students to truancy). The mean value associated with the three variables were regressed against truancy. The multiple analysis is depicted in Tables 4.14, 4.15 and 4.16

Table 4.14: Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Standard error of the estimate
1	.845	.742	.691	.154

Predictors: (Constant) Counselling in environmental issues, Counselling in individual issues

Dependent variable: Pupils' school attendance

The multiple correlation coefficient R, which measures the relationship between the independent variable's observed values and those predicted by the multiple regression model, was shown in Table 4.14 to have a value of 0.845. This suggests that there was a significant link between observed values of children's school attendance and the predictors (counselling in environmental concerns and counselling in individual difficulties).

The proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables, or the coefficient of determination R², was found to be 0.742, indicating that 74.2% of the variance in students' attendance was impacted through counselling in both the environmental and personal issues surrounding the students who were truants. The remaining 25.8% variance might have been explained by other factors that were left out of this model. In order to assess the model's importance, the significance of the model, as indicated in Table 4.15, was determined in order to establish the analysis of variance.

Table 4.15: Multiple Regression Model Significance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	54.817	3	16.361	74.351	.001
	Residual	7.562	46	0.1259		
		62.379	49			

df*=Degree of Freedom

Results in Table 4.15 shows that the joint independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, $F(3, 46) = 74.351$ at the significance level of 5% ($p = .001 < .05$). As a result, the data and the regression model were well matched. The

relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variables was determined through additional analysis, as indicated in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Multiple Regression Model Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
		Beta	Std. error	Beta	T	Sig. value
1	(Constant)	.352	.193		4.01	.1815
	Counselling in environmental issues	.487	.134	.339	4.34	.0036
	Counselling in individual issues	.528	.175	.427	4.56	.0019

df*=Degree of Freedom

Counselling in environmental issues, Counselling in individual issues

According to Table 4.16's findings, counselling that addressed both environmental and personal factors positively reinforced students' attendance at school. If the effects of other predictors are held constant, the unstandardized Beta ((B) or coefficient values showed the individual contribution of each predictor to the model. Thus when the counselling in environmental issues changes positively by one unit, the pupils' school attendance improves by 0.487 units (B=.487) while holding the other factors constant. Correspondingly, when the level of counselling in individual issues changes positively by one unit, the school attendance of pupils in school improves by 0.528 units (B=.528) while holding the other variables constant.

On the other hand, the standardized beta values provide the number of standard deviation of pupil's attendance in school will change as a result of one standard deviation change in the predictor. Accordingly, the results indicate that counselling in individual factors ($B=.339$) had the most significant relative contribution to the prediction of school attendance followed by counselling in environmental issues ($B=.427$). These findings imply that individual factors were predominant over the environmental factors because truancy is mainly attributed to psychological barriers including internal motive, emotional feelings, emotions, fear and anxiety as these aspects come first in the hierarchy of needs. Mohamed Mohamed Bayoumy and Alsayed (2021) define motivation as the internal condition that propels a person to continue acting positively toward a goal and to do so until the goal is achieved. The desire to complete a task and reach a goal, especially in the context of learning, is an internal feeling of enthusiasm, urgency, or duty (Achtziger & Gollwitzer, 2018). The person is motivated to perform by external factors such as guardians, companions, rewards, and teachers. A key learning enhancer is motivation. It is impossible for someone who is not convinced to learn at a rate that is identical to that of other learners.

4.8 Mechanisms that could be employed to Enhance Counselling for Truancy

The study's fourth goal was to identify potential systems that may be implemented to improve truancy counselling for students in Maara Sub-County. To accomplish this goal, key resource teachers were asked to list the steps they had taken as class teachers to make sure that students showed up to class every day without an excuse. Table 4.17 lists the results in summary form.

Table 4.17: Measures that can be put in Place to Mitigate Truancy

Measures	Frequency	Percent
Reinforcement of counselling techniques	37	74
Group counselling	48	96
Mentoring	17	34
Strict laws	27	54
Peer counselling	41	82

Source: Researcher (2022)

From table 4.17, the majority of the key resource teachers (82%) noted that having student peer counsellors would help reduce truancy, while 74% indicated that reinforcement of counselling techniques would reduce truancy in schools. The above findings imply that group counselling is an effective measure in mitigating truancy among pupils. These results are further confirmed by a study on the impact of group counselling intervention in reducing truancy by Adam, Usma, and Msheliza (2017), which found that the students in the treatment group were able to lessen their truancy behaviour. In group therapy, numerous clients are being seen by one or more therapists at

once. The client would be able to pick up knowledge from both the therapists and other students. As a result, it is simpler for the clients to recognize the problem, which is familiar to them. Group therapy helps the client open up and talk about their truancy with the counsellor, and then the conduct is changed to adopt desirable behaviour for a positive adjustment to school attendance (Berg, Landreth & Fall, 2017).

School counselors' group counselling dramatically reduces participants' irritable and vindictive behaviors. Academic, social, and self-management abilities are just a few areas where students can improve their competency through group counselling interventions (Naghavi et al., 2022).

Interviews with the key resource teachers and the head teachers of the individual schools were also done to better address the objective and support the quantitative data.

The teacher gave students a copy of the counselling program, which included the planned events and served as the school's guidance and counselling program. But a teacher regretted that;

“Even though we have guidance and counselling programmes, we require a lot of support from the head teacher. For guidance to work, the school principal must provide the support and the teacher counsellor must have the initiative. Guidance and counselling works from the top not from below. You see, if you try it as a teacher without the support from the head teacher, you hit the ceiling and bounce back like a ball!” (Female teacher)

One of the head instructors provided more context for this idea by pointing out that:

“The head teacher empowers the teacher counsellor by providing the training and it is through the head that you can organize for other teachers to be trained

in counselling. By introducing a school feeding program and giving them psychosocial support and necessities e.g. sanitary towels.” (Male Head teacher)

It was confirmed that head teachers had a significant part to play in the school guidance and counselling program through their support and leadership roles in organizing training in counselling among teachers. In an interview, the researcher asked the primary resource teacher how effective counselling was in addressing the school environment affected truancy. One of the instructors clarified:

“Counselling can also be used in assisting truants to give up truancy. To this effect, when truants are identified, school counsellors should ensure that they counsel the students so far identified as truants. It is also important for the school to provide security to our learners within the school environment. Parents should also try to provide some of the basic requirements their children need at school within their meagre resources.”

The above sentiment implies that some school teachers felt that their school required more safety measures to curb the situation of vulnerability to safety issues in the school setting among the students. Moreover, parental involvement was critical through building a strong child-parent relationship. Cepada and Grepon's (2020) findings that parental involvement in schools had a strong negative link with absenteeism lend credence to this conclusion. When a pupil does not consistently and repeatedly miss school, it is considered occasional truancy. The student's level of absence from school without parental or school authority's consent is irregular or non-regular in this sort of truancy.

Further, an interview with the key respondents revealed that:

“We have a Counselling Awareness Day every year, May day. This is done during the first week of second term. It is a whole day of counselling activities from morning to evening. The purpose is to demystify counselling, to make counselling more real. There is a guest of honour invited for the occasion, usually a prominent personality. Several schools request to join us and we accept a few. The schools come to see how we do it. On this day, we have teachers, parents and students meeting as a family unit. That is, the teacher parent with the students

meets with the real parents of the students. Midmorning, we have a panel discussion where various issues raised in the morning are discussed. At this time, we have several of our old students who have excelled in various areas talk to the students about their experiences in school and outside school. In particular, we get students who benefited from counselling directly. These students had a problem when he came to the school. We had been counselling him and he was very grateful. As he talked about his life experiences, the students and parents were astonished.”

The responses indicate that involving parents in school matters of their children goes a long way in helping reduce truancy among students. These answers show how important parents are to their children's educational development. Additionally, previous studies have shown that involving parents in their children's educational matters can help to address problems that cause truancy. For example, a child whose mother refused to send them to school and kept them at home to care for younger siblings, a child absent from class for a family vacation outside of the regular school year, etc. The above qualitative findings on the involvement of parents and provision of resources further concur with a similar study conducted by Mucherah and Thomas (2017) in Kenya on truancy among primary school girls, with the results indicating that providing sanitary pads reduced truancy considerably.

The above recommendation concurs with past researchers who have suggested similar measures to curb truancy. For instance, Martin (2020) performed a survey in which participants suggested improving the collaboration between educators and parents on all fronts related to education. In order to improve the students' wellbeing, this project makes sure that all obstacles to communication between the school, parents, and the community are removed. Nobody has more power to persuade kids to go to school every day and to understand how important an excellent education is to their future than their parents.

Mutual trust and communication are essential for families and schools to collaborate on solutions to issues like absenteeism.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the results of the investigation based on the goals, conclusions, and suggestions, as well as the consequences, advantages, and disadvantages of the investigation.

5.2 Summary of the Research Findings

In order to identify solutions that can be used to improve the services, the goal of this study was to examine the effectiveness of counselling in reducing truancy among students in public primary schools in Maara Sub-County, Tharaka Nithi County. The results were summarized in accordance with the study's goals:

5.2.1 Prevalence of truancy among students in public primary schools

The study's primary goal was to gauge the rate of truancy among pupils attending public primary schools in Maara Sub County. The majority of the students (68.8%) indicated that they had never missed school without a valid reason, while 21.3% noted that they had missed school once without a valid reason, while 5% had missed school twice without a valid reason. Despite the presence of guidance and counselling programmes in most school under study, over 15% of the teachers rated truancy as high indicating that many pupils are dropping out school. The amount of unjustifiable absences among students in their schools, according to head teachers, is a concern.

5.2.2 Efficacy of counselling in addressing school environmental factors

The second objective of the study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of counselling in addressing the school-environmental issues that affect truancy in Maara Sub County. Findings revealed that counselling had increased retention and class attendance among pupils in primary school under study to a great extent at 50%, security in school and safety of learners improved it to some extent at 54%, good-peer relationship to greater extent at 46%, behaviour and discipline among pupils to some extent at 52%, retention and class attendance to great extent at 50% and school attendance frequency to some extent at 52%. Nonetheless, 28% of the teachers reported that counselling never improved school policies and programs that positively impact on the school climate. The test produced a correlation coefficient of $r=.269$ and a significant level (p-value) of .000, both of which were less than the predetermined threshold of significance, which was .005, or $p\text{-value}=.000.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis, *Counselling is not statistically significantly effective in addressing school environment factors that influence truancy in Maara Sub County, Tharaka Nithi County* was rejected. If the counselling in environmental issues changes positively by one unit, the pupils' school attendance improves by 0.487 units ($B=.487$) while holding the other factors constant.

5.2.3 Efficacy of counselling in addressing individual factors

The third goal of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of counselling in addressing the specific issues that lead primary school students in Maara Sub County to truant. The majority of participants (52%) strongly agreed, according to the results, that counselling had helped some students' self-esteem. Another 54% of respondents strongly agreed,

while 46% also agreed, that students have demonstrated a positive attitude toward learning. Similarly, 58% of respondents agreed that there was little verbal abuse and threatening behaviour among students, that classwork slackness had decreased, that the majority of students completed their assignments, and that there was unity because many students had grown closer to one another as a result of individual counselling on risk factors for students. While keeping the other variables constant, if the positive level of counselling in individual issues increases by one unit, the school attendance of students increases by 0.528 units ($=.528$).

5.2.4 Mechanism for enhancing Counselling for Truancy

The study's fourth goal was to identify potential systems that may be implemented to improve truancy counselling for students in Maara Sub-County. Findings revealed that group counselling is an effective measure in mitigating truancy among pupils. The majority of the key resource teachers (82%) noted that having student peer counsellors would help reduce truancy, while 74% indicated that reinforcement of counselling techniques would reduce truancy in schools.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

It can be said that counselling helps kids in public primary schools in the research area manage both environmental and personal factors that put them at risk for truancy. Considering the individual factors for instance, if the students feel secure, they are more likely not to miss school, while when students are either physically or emotionally threatened in school they will have a high probability to miss school for they will feel that the home environment is safer than the school environment. If both individual and

environmental factors are addressed through counselling, students are more likely to change their behaviour of being truants. However, individual factors are more predominant than the environmental factors and thus need to be a priority. The study further concludes that group counselling is an effective measure for mitigating truancy among pupils. The goal of group counselling is to assist students in becoming proficient in the intellectual, social, and self-management skills that are thought to be essential for academic achievement.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

- i. It is evident that despite having guidance and counselling implemented in schools, many pupils still miss to attend schools. The study recommends that school head teachers should implement other actions and mechanisms such as giving support to the teacher counsellors in their leadership roles and mentorship programmes.
- ii. Counselling significantly address both the individual and environmental issues that predispose students to truancy in public schools. It is recommended that school stakeholders should protect students both physically by enhancing security in school and emotionally through building strong connection with the parents to reduce truancy levels.
- iii. Findings revealed that truancy was more significantly determined by individual factors most of which are both emotional and behavioural. Therefore, Early Truancy Prevention Project (ETPP) programs should be implemented in every school in the nation, both public and private, to help address unacceptable student behavioral patterns like tardiness to class. If these behaviors are not addressed,

they will impede students' progress, which will be a significant setback for our educational advancement.

- iv. Most schools have guidance and counselling programmes yet there is still truancy among pupils. Therefore the study recommends that the Ministry of Education should enhance the effectiveness of counselling either through organizing seminars, workshop and symposium with more emphasis on reinforcement counselling technique to deal with truancy and other related problems irrespective of difference in gender and locations.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

1. The study focused on how well counselling reduced absenteeism among students in primary schools in Maara Sub-County. On the effectiveness of counselling in reducing behaviour issues other than truancy, more study has to be done.
2. Research is required to determine the best ways to lessen the detrimental effects of absenteeism on students' academic performance.

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APPENDICES

A1: Consent Letter

The purpose of this study is to explore the **ROLE OF COUNSELLING IN MITIGATING TRUANCY AMONG PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MAARA SUB COUNTY, KENYA**. The main respondents will be head teachers, key resource teachers in counselling or those appointed to do counselling, class teachers and learners. The responses will be kept private and will not be disclosed or used in any way that might be harmful to anyone. The provided details will be helpful to educational planners as they make decisions to raise the general standards of special needs education in Tharaka Nithi and the nation of Kenya.

I hereby offer my agreement to take part voluntarily in this study, the objective of which has been well described to me by the researcher, with the understanding that all applicable ethical standards will be strictly upheld. I also give consent for the pupils to be used on behalf of their parents.

Head teacher.....

Signature.....

Date.....

A2: Head Teacher’s Interview Guide

1) What do you notice regarding the level of absenteeism among students in your school?

2) How do you rate the problem of truancy in your school?

3) What are the major factors leading to truancy among Pupils in your school?

4) To what extent has guidance below, to what extent has school environmental factors conflict instructors not clear to truancy

A. School environmental factors

5) Based on the following areas using the scale below, to what extent has school environmental factors contributed to truancy?

GE=Great Extent, SE=Some Extent, N=Never

Item	GE	SE	N
Improved school policies and programs that positively impact on the school climate			
In enhancing security in school and safety of learners			
In improving peer-relationship			
In improving behaviour and discipline among pupils			
In increasing retention and class attendance			
In promoting school attendance action programs			

6) Individual factors

A) Using the scale below, how much has counselling and guidance (G&C) benefited students' attendance at school in the following areas?

Strongly Agree = SA, Agree = A, Disagree = D, Strongly Disagree = SD

Item	SA	A	D	SD
Self-esteem among pupils has improved				
Pupils have shown positive attitude in learning				
Verbal abuse and threats among pupils are minimal				
Laziness to classwork has reduced and majority complete assignments				
There is unity as many pupils have the spirit of friendship				

A) What strategies have been put in place to help truants come back to normal school attendance?

A3: Key Resource teachers in counselling Interview Guide

1) How do you rate the problem of truancy in your school?

.....

2) What are the major factors leading to truancy among Pupils in your school?

.....

3) What is your role in mitigating the problem of truancy in your school?

.....

4) What counselling techniques do you use in correcting the truancy behaviour of children in school?

.....

5) To what extent has guidance and counselling (G&C) improved school attendance based on the following areas based on the following scale?

GE=Great Extent, SE=Some Extent, N=Never

Item	GE	SE	N
Improved school policies and programs that positively impact on the school climate			
In enhancing security in school and safety of learners			
In improving peer-relationship			
In improving behaviour and discipline among pupils			
In increasing retention and class attendance			
In promoting school attendance action programs			

6) To what extent has guidance and counselling (G&C) improved school attendance based on the following areas based on the following scale?

Strongly Agree=SA, Agree=A, Disagree=D, Strongly Disagree=SD

Item	SA	A	D	SD
Self-esteem among pupils has improved				
Pupils have shown positive attitude in learning				
Verbal abuse and threats among pupils are minimal				
Laziness to classwork has reduced and majority complete assignments				

There is unity as many pupils have the spirit of friendship				
---	--	--	--	--

7) In your own opinion, what strategies have been put in place to help truants come back to normal school attendance?

.....
.....

A4: Class Teacher’s Questionnaire

This study is intended to explore the **ROLE OF COUNSELLING IN MITIGATING TRUANCY AMONG PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MAARA SUB COUNTY, THARAKA NITHI COUNTY IN KENYA.**

Section B: Prevalence of Truancy

1. What do you think about the percentage of truancy and unexcused absences among the following groups of visually impaired students in your class?
 High, Moderate, Low, or not at all for men.
 High (), Moderate (), Low (), and not at all () for females

2. How do you rate the problem of truancy in your school in general?
 Very High () High () Moderate ()
 Low () Very Low () Don’t Know ()

Truancy Prevalence tool

Cases of truants in year 2019 (class eight only).

Class /grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Cases of truants									

Section C: Factors of Truancy

3. What are the major factors leading to truancy among Pupils in your school? (tick appropriately)

Factor	Response (V)
Lack of parental care	
Bullying reasons	
Lack of feeding programs	
Poor financial status of family/household	
Lack of guidance	
Prolonged sickness	
Poor moral values and lack of discipline	

4. What other factors do you think could be leading to truancy among Pupils in your school?

.....
.....

Section D: Role of Counselling

5. Do you have teacher counsellors in your school?

Yes () No ()

If yes, what roles do they play in mitigating unexcused absenteeism among pupils in your class with respect to the following?

i) Safety of pupils

.....
.....

ii) Pupil's needs and playing rights

.....
.....

iii) Discipline and behaviour among pupils

.....
.....

iv) Teacher-pupil relationship

.....
.....

v) Pupil's interest in learning

.....
.....

vi) Friendship development among learner-peers

.....
.....

vii) Parental participation in their children's homework and assignment

.....
.....

Section E: Measures Put in Place to reduce Truancy in the school

6. A. What measures have you put in place as a class teacher to ensure that learners attend school without unexcused absenteeism? (tick appropriately)

Measure	Response (V)
Reinforcement of counselling techniques	

Group counselling	
Strict laws	
Peer counselling	

B. What other measures can be put in place to mitigate truancy among pupils in your school?

.....
.....

A5: Questionnaire for Pupils

This study is intended to investigate the **ROLE OF COUNSELLING IN MITIGATING TRUANCY AMONG PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MAARA SUB COUNTY, KENYA**. By providing as much information as you can in this questionnaire, you have been chosen to take part in the study. Please request clarification on any points you are unsure of.

Part A: Demographic Information

1. Gender (please tick one): Male () Female ()

Class

2. Age Bracket: Below 10 years
10 -12 years ()
13 – 14 years ()
Above 15 years ()

3. Family Background

Both parents alive () One parent alive () Total orphan ()

Part B: Prevalence and Causes of Truancy

4. How many times have you failed school attendance without permission since the beginning of the term?

Once () Twice () Thrice () More than Thrice () Never ()

b) If your answer in Q4 excludes ‘NEVER’, give the major reason for your absenteeism.

.....
.....
.....

5. Do you take permissions before you miss school?

Yes () No ()

6. If No, what actions were taken against such unexcused absence?

.....
.....
.....

Part C: Counselling and Truancy

7. How often to you seek assistance from the key resource teachers in counselling/counsellors to assist?

Always () Sometimes () Rarely () Never ()

8. What kind of assistance do you seek from the key resource teachers in counselling counsellors (tick appropriately)

Study skills	
Problem solving	
Esteem issues	

9. What reasons can compel you to seek assistance from the counsellors? (tick appropriately)

Sickness	
Emotion and anger	
Hunger	
Neglect issues	
Lack of reading materials	
Torture and bullying by peers	

10. According to you, what other reasons can compel you to seek assistance from the counsellors in schools?

.....

11. In your own opinion, do you think your problems are solved by the teacher counsellors?

Yes [] No []

12. If the answer to question 11 was "no," what should be done, in your opinion, to reduce student absenteeism at your school?

.....

Thank you for participating

APPENDIX A6: PERMIT FROM NACOSTI

Republic of Kenya
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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This is to Certify that Ms. HARRIET KAGENDO NTWIGA of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research in Tharaka-Nithi on the topic: ROLE OF COUNSELLING IN MITIGATING TRUANCY AMONG PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA. for the period ending : 23/August/2022.

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