

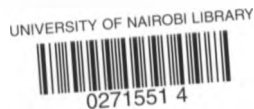
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**CONFIDENTIALITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING
INTERVENTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KIKUYU
DIVISION**

**A research project in fulfilment of the requirement for the Master of Arts degree
in sociology with specialisation in counselling**

BY

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JULY 2005

NAIROBI, KENYA

DECLARATION

This research paper is my original work and has not been submitted for examination in any other university.

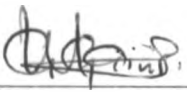
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to St. Anthony, the most caring saint who did his last confession in presence of others for the sake of eternal life and to St. JoséMaria for his encouraging words on sanctification through daily work.

I dedicate this work also to my loving parents, Leah Nyokabi and the late Thomas Ngumi, who laid the foundation of knowledge in my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My gratitude first goes to my immediate family; Ndun'gu, Njambi, Nyokabi, Kioi, Ngumi and Wairimu, who bore with my absence with a lot of patience and sacrificed their comfort to fund my scholarship.

I acknowledge Dr. G.G. Wairire and Dr. Fr. Wamugunda who diligently gave me critical evaluation and direction as my supervisors and without whom this work would not have been accomplished. I give special acknowledgement to all the professors, in the department of sociology for their guidance and knowledge given in the course of my study.

I extend my appreciation to all the respondents for the research questionnaire and participants in the focus group discussion who contributed to the research process.

Special credit goes to Tabitha for her help in caring for our children in my absence during the study period.

It may not be possible to mention each and every individual who offered assistance of any kind. I therefore express my gratitude to all who made invaluable contribution to this project. God bless.

Nonetheless, the ultimate responsibility for the content of this project lay with me, the researcher.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

MOEST- Ministry of Education Science and Technology

AIDS - Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome

BAC- British Association of Counsellors.

BC- British Columbia.

BPS- British Psychological Society.

MTS- Manitoba Teachers' Society.

ACC- Acadia Counselling Centre.

GOK - Government of Kenya.

FGD - Focus Group Discussion.

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research was to investigate confidentiality and its implication for counselling interventions in public secondary schools in Kikuyu division. The study objectives were: (i) to examine the confidentiality aspects considered by teacher counsellors in school counselling interventions. (ii) To analyse the confidentiality aspects considered by students while seeking consent in their schools. (iii) To identify the factors that hinder the teacher counsellor from observing confidentiality in school counselling interventions.

To achieve the objectives of the study both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies were used. A questionnaire comprising of open and closed questions was administered to 21 schools. Using purposive sampling, 45 questionnaires were filled by the teacher counsellors. A focus group discussion was held with the students. Simple random sampling was used to select 5 schools and 20 students were further selected from each school for the focused group discussions. This gave qualitative data which was used to provide more insight obtained from the quantitative data.

Among the major findings, confidentiality is a key element in counselling interventions. Confidentiality is necessary in establishing the degree of trust for counselling to take place. However for confidentiality to be achieved several aspects must be explored. These aspects are: Assurance, consent seeking, disclosure, referrals, and record keeping.

The study further observed that beside confidentiality aspects, there are other factors at play which also need attention for they enhance confidentiality. These factors are: school administration structure, counselling room, dual role of teacher counsellor, use of information gathered during counselling, other parties interested in knowing the confidential counselling information.

Among the major recommendations made by this study was that the specific elements of confidentiality should be studied further to understand their individual implications to maintenance of confidentiality in school counselling. Further, the study recommends that teacher counsellors be equipped with basic counselling skills. Such

training should be coordinated at divisional level to harmonise skills and encourage exchange of ideas. From the study, the dual role of teacher counsellors and supervision by non counsellor head teachers were isolated as key hindrances to maintenance of confidentiality in school counselling interventions. The study therefore recommended that teacher counsellor should not be assigned teaching roles to the same students they offer counselling services. The counselling departments should be de-linked from the overall school administration structure to facilitate maintenance of confidentiality in counselling.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

In 2000 a task force set-up by the ministry of education to look into the growing wave of students' unrest recommended the banning of canning and other forms of corporal punishment to students. This recommendation was to be harmonised with children's Act 2001. "No child shall be subjected to ill treatment or punishment, unlawful arrest or deprivation of liberty. (GoK, 2001)

Canning, which was the mode of disciplinary measure, was replaced by counselling which was to be the only means of disciplinary action. MOEST recommendation 155 states "Guidance and Counselling and pastoral care to be strengthened in order to provide a strong foundation on moral values and spiritual growth."

On 13 March 2001, a legal notice No. 56 was released to all learning institution as a directive of banning punishment and implementing counselling services with immediate effect. Therefore, every school was expected to have a counselling centre for the students, and designated teachers were assigned the school counsellor roles.

The main task of counselling teachers is to develop and articulate guidance and counselling programmes that will assist students to develop their mental abilities, aptitudes, interest and other personality dynamics. These services should also assist the students to understand choices of action and consequently be able to modify undesirable behaviour where necessary.

Ayieko (1988) justified the use of counselling as a method of solving discipline problems by pointing out that counselling makes student feel closer to the teacher thereby establishing a friendly relationship. It enables the teacher to get to the root of the problem and therefore it has a long lasting effect and the student has the freedom to talk and realise the consequences of his/her behaviour.

However, Tinsely and Brown (1982) postulated that the students' help-seeking preference depends on the nature of the problems and the characteristics of the helper.

Wotuku (2002) pointed out that students typically seek somehow different help depending on whether their concerns are career or personal in nature. Gitonga (1999) established that students were generally unwilling to admit that they had problems. Students had a wrong notion of what counselling is all about. The students were afraid of being seen with the counselling teacher in the counselling room. The findings are in agreement with Kombo(1998), who in his study found that the students were not free to consult their teachers. As a result of these findings the respondents were asked to cite reasons for the hindrance of seeking counselling services. Among the cited reasons was lack of confidentiality among the students to approach teachers.

Corey (1998) defines confidentiality as trust largely measured by the degree to which client feels assured that what they share will be kept confidential. Nelson(2000) defines confidentiality as keeping trust with others by not divulging personal information about them unless granted permission. Bond(2000) observes that confidentiality combines both the imparting of secrets and trusting someone with them. He further argues that "all counselling is totally confidential". Therefore confidentiality refers to a professional promise or contract to respect clients' privacy by not disclosing anything revealed during counselling except under agreed upon condition.

In a UN conference (2003), there was an observation that, though consensus exists concerning contracting confidentiality, there was no agreement amongst counsellors as to the limits and boundaries of confidentiality. In some states like California as cited by H. Norman (1991), the courts have determined that "if an individual intends to take harmful, dangerous or criminal action against himself, it is the counsellors duty to warn appropriate individual of such intentions." In such a situation the counsellor is aware of the confidential boundaries and that the law offers her/him protection if need be.

Mary A. Hermann (2002) in a review of research on school counselling services observes that school counsellors are encountering many legal issues. The dilemma faced by school counsellors in observance of confidentiality in counselling are discussed below, and do actually form part of the problem statement.

1.2 Problem Statement

In Kenya, counselling in secondary school is done by the teacher-counsellor who is designated the duty by the head teacher from among the other teachers. However as Ndirangu (1999) observed "not every one can be a teacher counsellor contrary to a common assumption. Some reduce it (counselling), in their thinking to be a mere pious advice to the youth." Such lack of awareness among teacher counsellors will inevitably contribute negatively to observance of confidentiality as a key principle of counselling.

The issue of confidentiality demonstrates conflict between parent's rights, child's rights and the school administration requirement to maintain discipline. From professional experience there is always a dilemma in observing confidentiality based on these two usually conflicting rights. Most of the problems encountered by the student require parental or guardian involvement due to the fact that they are dependants. Consequently, any issue which requires payment such as medical treatment and referral to a private counsellor must involve the parent or guardian. On the other hand the teenage child as a client has due demands on counselling confidentiality, and out of fear of reprimand from the parent, usually may object disclosure of any information from the counselling intervention. This hinders the ability to meet the student's counselling needs and give the necessary help.

Many parents naturally want to know what their teenage children are sharing with the teacher counsellor. They feel that the teacher counsellor should bridge the communication gap between them and their child. This demand has the effect of reducing the counsellor's role from that of a helper to that of an informer with negative consequences on his or her effectiveness in offering counselling help.

The teacher counsellor's role is usually designated to ordinary teachers by the school's head teacher. The teacher counsellor is usually not trained specifically as a counsellor and the designation is more often based on teaching experience. The resulting general lack of awareness of basic confidentiality needs among unskilled teacher counsellors may hinder the observance of principle of confidentiality with likelihood of negatively affecting effectiveness of the school based counselling.

The dual role of teacher counsellor where he or she is a teacher, a disciplinarian, as well as a counsellor at the same time may make it uniquely difficult to observe confidentiality in school counselling. It poses a dilemma to the teacher counsellor on what should remain confidential between him or her and the student (as a client) and what should be openly discouraged through discipline and public reprimand.

Some of the cases shared with teacher counsellor by the students are at times beyond his or her ability to solve and requires that the teacher counsellor consult colleagues especially the class teachers for exchange of ideas. Being in an open office, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed among the teaching staff. Moreover, many times student with counselling needs may need special assistance or exemptions from school regulations. For example, specific cases of children who have the burden of nursing their ailing HIV/AIDS single mothers. The students usually request to be allowed to report late in school or leave early after school. This kind of assistance has to be discussed (or at least shared) with other staff members before request is granted. Yet the issue is too sensitive to the student to the extent that the student may prefer to stop schooling rather than have his or her family problems known beyond the teacher counsellor.

Students who are caught by the administration with indiscipline cases are referred to the counselling desk for counselling. The administration will have already tried other methods, which disregards confidentiality, to contain the indiscipline. The worst is to give a speech to the entire school assembly regarding the student's in-discipline case. This does a lot of harm on the student's ego and eventually he or she blocks any communication with the counsellor resulting in no service delivered to the student.

Given that state of affairs, it becomes necessary to isolate the problem of confidentiality among the students and relate it to the teacher counsellors who are the determinant factor in building confidentiality in counselling among the students. The broad objective of this research is therefore to find out the implications of confidentiality in counselling services in the public schools.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What confidentiality aspects do teacher counsellors take into account in school counselling interventions?
2. What confidentiality aspects do students take into account before they seek counselling services in their schools?
3. What factors hinder the teacher counsellor from observing confidentiality in counselling interventions?

1.4 The specific objectives

1. To examine the confidentiality aspects considered by teacher counsellors in school counselling interventions.
2. To analyse the confidentiality aspects considered by students while seeking counselling interventions in their schools.
3. To identify factors that hinder the teacher counsellor from observing confidentiality in school counselling intervention.

1.5 Justification of the study

Several researches have been done in the field of counselling in secondary schools. Kombo(1998), did a study on 'correlates of students' deviant behaviour in selected secondary schools in Nairobi' and Wotuku(2002) studied the status of guidance and counselling in secondary schools in Laikipia district. Another study by Gitonga(1999) examined the attitude of secondary school head teachers toward guidance and counselling. While these studies cite lack of confidentiality as one of the factors hindering students from seeking counselling services in schools, none has explored on the implications of confidentiality in counselling interventions. This study hopes to build on the available literature by exploring the elements of confidentiality in counselling.

Maintaining confidentiality in school counselling can be a thorny and difficult issue. The concept of confidentiality can clearly mean different things to different school counsellors. The misunderstanding of the concept of the confidentiality is expected in our school counselling interventions where no national policy on confidentiality in school counselling exists. The findings of this study will be relevant to the policy makers to evaluate the implementation and handicap of the policy and make the necessary guidelines on confidentiality.

School counsellors are the most visible and accessible sources of help for the students. Therefore the school counsellor becomes a critical starting point of intervention for the students. The findings of this study will be an eye opener to the teacher counsellor on how to handle the information shared by the students during counselling interventions.

School administration deals with firsthand with teacher counsellor, students and parents. The findings of the study will be useful to the administration for it will improve the collaboration of the three parties in favour of the student who is the client.

The information gained from this research can be used by the school community in general to understand and appreciate the aspects of confidentiality in school counselling interventions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Corely (1998), observes that counselling relationship is built on trust. If client do not trust their helper, it is likely that they will not engage in significant self-disclosure and exploration. This trust is largely measured by degree that clients feel assured that what they share will be kept confidential.

School counsellors are expected to adhere to the moral principle of non-maleficence when trying to make decisions about communicating confidential information. If counsellors break their promise of confidentiality or disclose information without clients' consent, clients may feel betrayed. As a result, they may lose trust in their counsellors and hold back other personal information or they may prematurely terminate the counselling relationship. These actions could cause harm to clients. The moral principle of beneficence raises interesting issues for school counsellors. If students who would benefit from counselling learn that the school counsellor shared information without client consent, they may not seek the very services they need. Likewise, community support for the school and school counselling may be diminished if parents believe school counsellors withhold information vital to proper exercise of their parental duties (Glossoff & Pate, 2002).

In school based counselling there are some specific factors that are perceived to hinder observance of confidentiality while posing no challenge to non-institution based counselling. Such factors include the dual role of the teacher- counsellor, supervision through school administration, etc. These factors are discussed in detail later in the literature review.

When discussing confidentiality in counselling services it is important to view it on the perspectives of the communication between a counsellor and the client. In school based counselling services it is therefore important to look into the common problems that may be subject of counselling session and their specific need for confidentiality.

WHO (1991) observes that increasingly there are many personal problems that are faced by students such as HIV Aids and family breakdowns and that such personal problems demands early intervention and high level of confidentiality. Other problems encountered by students have been discussed in this literature review.

In observing confidentiality there are several elements which are critical and should be considered. Different authors have looked into the several elements that must be taken into consideration. Wangoi (2000) emphasises the awareness of the school counsellor on his/ her role. Petrila (2000) on the other hand looks at the role of record keeping in maintaining confidentiality. The literature review discusses the elements of confidentiality in counselling from the onset of counselling session to the eventual record keeping.

2.2 Students' need for counselling

Dixon & Gilber (1984). Observes that a problem exist any time a person is in one situation, wants to be in another but does not know how to get there. For secondary school students this may be an every day occurrence from both the academic and social perspectives. Indeed for students even the normal development processes can create problems and it is therefore not only the ill of maladjusted that need help. Milner (2000) points out that there is therefore a need for specially qualified people to offer full-time counselling to students to ensure that even relatively minor needs of students are met before deterioration begins.

One of the problems of adaptation to any new situation is the search for friendship with other people which often lead to intense emotional entanglements. It is in this way that students may become emotionally charged with an intense need for close involvement with another person, usually of the opposite sex. There is need to guide the youth on how to manage their sexuality in order to combat the spread of teenager pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases. WHO (1991) recognises AIDS as a major concern affecting today's and tomorrow's youth, twenty percent of all people who have AIDS are in their twenties and a large number probably become infected during adolescence; that is, in their secondary school years. In absence of a trusted help in school most young people obtain sex information from friends, books, magazines and other usually un-trusted media (Wangoi, 1994).

Moser(1963) stresses that guidance and counselling is needed in schools in order to help every students in formulating goals, in adjusting to new situations, in solving personal social problems and in dealing with personality problems. Peter & Sheltzer (1974) observes that guidance and counselling is designed to help individual with psychological problems to voluntarily change their behaviour and to enable them make wise future decisions, clarify their ideas, perception attitude and goals.

Tattum (1986) notes that guidance and counselling aims at ensuring discipline in schools by assisting pupils with disruptive behaviour. GoK (1997) explains that a student may not work hard to realise his/her potential because he has a low concept of himself /herself, lack personal security or may be experiencing excessive pressure to succeed hence causing anxiety and tension that hinder his learning. Therefore, any problem which is an obstacle to the student is a critical one and where possible should be dealt with through guidance and counselling

Tumuti (1985) revealed in a study that the pupils experience occupational problems even at that early age. They are faced with issues of career choose since for some of them primary school education is terminal. They are not able to choose careers for lack of adequate skills and besides they are too young and confused. They find themselves having to confront the issue of lack of employment. They suffer frustration and disappointment. He observed that primary school pupils also experience psychological problems and a number of pupils are involved in drugs and more specifically cigarette smoking and taking of Alcohol. Some pupils experience hunger while in school and poverty also contributes to lack of clothing and school fees for some also contribute to student's anxiety and depression.

2.3 Confidentiality in counselling

Shartzter (1980), states that confidentiality has both "ethical and legal complications." He further explains the reasons behind it, and states that, those who seek counselling usually reveal intimate, personal, sometimes-painful details and experiences. They turn to the professional so that they can disclose their feelings of anxiety, hostility, guilt, indecision and so on, without being publicly embarrassed, hurt or punished. This is due to the fact that, such highly personal and private revelations may bring embarrassment or ridicule, they do not wish them to be disclosed openly and usually

assume that others will not have access to their consent. Therefore when one enters counselling under this assumption a confidential relationship exists, and the professional person is obligated to protect the best interest of the client by maintaining it.

According to Shertzer (1980), legal dimension of confidential relationship is that "there is no disclosure of information even though it is accurate, to individuals not entitled to it." More-over professional under certain prescribed conditions such as doctors, counsellor and clergy are not subject to arrest, or prosecution for withholding information needed by the court in its determination of truth. It can be observed that the element of confidentiality is well safeguarded for the welfare of both the counselee and the counsellor.

Sauka (2000), concludes that counselling should be sensitive to the cultural, historical, traditions and prevailing public healthy practices, social values and political differences in attitude towards the importance of treating something as private. There is a wide agreement on the key importance of confidentiality to promote the client's autonomy. Bond (1995), states that confidentiality provides the space for the client's self-determination to develop. Therefore it is a base of exploring the client's world-view, the counsellor working as much as possible to communicate within the client's frame of reference. According to Bond (1995) confidentiality is also necessary to establish the degree of trust required for counselling to take place. Trust creates openness of the client such that the client can pour out all his/her anxiety. Only by the assurance of confidentiality can clients unburden themselves in safety.

A study carried out in Latvia underscored the importance of confidentiality in HIV counselling Sauka (2000). The study was based on 13 interviews of HIV positive volunteers attending the AIDS unit at the hospital. Only those who attended follow-up counselling and general health check-ups regularly at the hospital were interviewed. During the interview notes were taken and a tape recorder was used only with the participants' approval. Four out of 13 interviewees refused to allow the use of a tape recorder for the security of their confidentiality. When the transcripts and field note were analysed, it was observed that every respondent mentioned the importance of confidentiality from different points of views. Therefore confidentiality was found to be a cornerstone for building trusting relationships between, an HIV-infected

individual and a doctor within the counselling process from the first visit to follow-up counselling.

According to Shertzer (1980), one of the external conditions influencing counselling is privacy. Privacy is an important element of physical setting. If the confidence of the counselee is to be secured, individuals desire and have a right to both auditory and visual privacy from peers, teachers, and others when they enter into a counselling relationship. Nothing can limit the relationship more quickly than knowing that others are able to hear what is being said or watch what is taking place, therefore the condition of physical facilities safeguard and encourage the development of the counselling relationship.

BC (1996), Observes that the development of trust in a helping relationship is central to social work practice. Trust can be developed only in an atmosphere which assures privacy and confidentiality. Betrayal of trust may not only cause severe damage to an already vulnerable client, but may also bring the profession into disrepute.

Mitchell et al (2002), notes that central to the role of school counsellor is the right of confidentiality. It follows that the more confidential information counsellors are compelled or choose to disclose, the less counsellors remain true to their role. As a profession, it is the duty of counsellors to protect and maintain their role within school systems. Without careful consideration of the extent to which school counsellors maintain confidentiality, there is a risk of blurring the boundaries that define counselling and of deteriorating the role. Confidentiality is the cornerstone of counselling and should be guarded at extreme costs, lest the profession redefine itself.

Research on minors' opinions regarding confidentiality has been limited. However Mitchel et al (2002) quotes one survey done on 13 to 18 year-old students on their opinions regarding the importance of confidentiality with school counsellors across a number of situations. Overall, 53% of students indicated that confidentiality was essential, and 46% indicated that it was important. There were no significant differences in opinions across 13 to 18-year-olds. Respondents generally agreed that confidentiality should be breached in cases of clear danger and favoured telling parents over police or teachers. However, there appeared to be little recognition by students of parents' rights to information. This study confirms the significance of

confidentiality in school counsellor relationships and demonstrates the importance informed-consent procedures should be given. In addition, this study amplifies the importance of considerations surrounding confidentiality breaches.

Many times parents are not aware of the existence or significance of guidelines on handling confidentiality of information exchanged between their children and their teacher counsellor. Revealing confidential information to parents is likely to make the counsellor appear to be an informer in the eyes of students and, thus, jeopardise student relationships and the role of counsellor in helping students with problems. Inappropriately assuming the role of informer may also prevent students and parents from developing necessary interpersonal skills to grow and reach successful resolutions on their own. However many parents are fearful of direct inquiry and may be desiring to use the counsellor as a means to circumvent an agonising conversation. Although counsellors can be of great help in facilitating difficult parent-child interactions, school counsellor should not become a substitute parent if it can be avoided (Mitchell et al, 2002). On the other hand it should also be remembered that a person whose confidentiality is threatened can take legal action to prevent the communication or publication of confidential information. A person, who feels that confidentiality has been breached without good reason, and who has suffered loss or harm arising from it, can sue for damages. It is likely that the counsellor may be sued to pay for the damages (Brook, 2002).

2.4 Aspects of confidentiality and ethical standards

Disclosure

All school counsellors and school counsellor trainees need to know that they are required to provide students with information about their rights in the counselling relationship, including limits to confidentiality, prior to starting any school counselling services with him or her (ASCA, 1998). Basically, this means assuring the client that all information shared by the client or gathered in relation to the client will be kept confidential, unless the social worker is legally or ethically obliged to share the information, or the client consents to the disclosure. Forthright advising of the limits to confidentiality is an important first step in building a trusting relationship. Clients should be assured that if the social worker must, for legal or

ethical reasons, share information without the client's consent, then only the minimum information required to deal with the situation at hand will be disclosed. If at any time throughout the provision of service matters arise which might relate to the limits to confidentiality, the social worker should once again ensure that the client understands the limits to confidentiality. An example is couples counselling where child custody becomes an issue. The practitioner should exercise particular caution not to take sides, and should reaffirm that the practitioner will not reveal information about joint counselling without the consent of both parties or a court order. Clarifying the meaning of confidentiality and its limits must take into consideration the age, mental ability and cultural or ethnic values of the client (BC, 1996).

Of course there are instances that may make it ethically permitted to disclose client's information without his or her consent. When a practitioner has reasonable grounds to believe that a client may do harm to others, the social worker has a duty to warn the person or persons believed to be at risk. The decision whether to advise the person at risk directly or whether to advise the police, or others, must take into consideration the safety and dignity of all parties concerned. This duty to warn, though not based on statute, is founded on case law. Confidentiality may be ethically breached when a social worker has reasonable grounds to believe that a client may do serious harm to himself during a period when a client is unable to make a decision (for instance, when a client is disabled by depression or a mental disorder). The decision whether to contact the client's friends or relatives or other professionals should be based on who can most reasonably be expected to provide safety for the client. This involves a judgement call on the part of the social worker and the law is silent upon this point (BC, 1996)

Consent

Guidelines for counsellor in British Columbia, BC (1996) highlights the need for social workers in general not to disclose information about a client or the client's family without client consent, unless legally or ethically obligated to do so. The guideline sets a minimum condition for disclosure to be a written consent by the client; verbal consents being permissible during emergency only. Further the written consent should specify the purpose and parameters of the information to be released and information should be released only within those parameters. Consent to release information for one occasion cannot be used for subsequent occasions unless clearly

specified in the consent document. Consents should be dated, and if more than a year old, a new consent should be obtained. This suggested time limit is a practice guideline. The guideline is not based upon a statute and certain employers may specify different time limits. For example, guidelines used in hospital settings require consents to be renewed every six (6) months.

In Scotland, guidance on handling personal health information Brook, (2002), suggest that the overriding principle of the code is that information should not be shared without consent except in certain circumstances. Such circumstances include where disclosure is in the public interest or is necessary to prevent serious injury or damage to a third party or is in the best interests of the service user.

BPS (2002) recommends that in settings where there is multi-disciplinary approach it is of paramount importance that the informed consent of the client is obtained before disclosing information relating to them. In these settings it is essential that the extent to which information may be shared with health and other professionals be discussed in full with the client. When clients give consent to disclosure of information about themselves it is important to ensure that they understand what will be disclosed, the reasons for disclosure and the likely consequences of that disclosure. The disclosure must ensure that the client is informed when any information about them is likely to be disclosed to others involved in their psychological care, and that they have the opportunity to withhold their permission and when exceptions apply. For example, within multi-disciplinary care settings such as substance abuse teams the use of alcohol by the client may be information that is always shared. The client must be informed of this before embarking on the programme.

Records and record keeping

BPS (2002) observes that there is increasing public and governmental concern with the quality and maintenance of competence in all fields of professional practice. Consequently it is the responsibility of each counsellor to ensure that he or she adopts a systematic and detailed method of record keeping. This can be achieved by ensuring continued competence and adhering to recognisable and acceptable standards of practice.

In general it is good practice to consider that records are an aide memoir for the counsellors. In addition, records provide evidence that due consideration has been given to the client and that the counselling Psychologist is engaging in their professional responsibilities. The purposes of record keeping include the need to improve continuity between the sessions, as well as providing a record for the use of the counsellors, and in some cases, the client. Records may also be quite to facilitate assessment, planning, and evaluation of progress and departmental audit.

Bond (2000) however notes that not all matters should be recorded during a counselling session. Matters that are rarely appropriate for recording include:

1. Emotional statements from client
2. Personal opinions
3. Information about illegal behaviour
4. Sexual practises

And other sensitive information that may embarrass or harm the client

Consideration need to be given to the influence of different theoretical models in the process of record keeping, how this might affect therapy and the relationship with the client. Anything that refers to a client such as an entry into a computer database, a scribbled note in a personal diary identifying the client by name or other means may be regarded as part of the Client Record for legal purposes. Whether in electronic form or paper, records must conform to the need to maintain confidentiality.

Many professional organisations prescribe that the information on a client should be concise, relevant, and objective. BPS (2002) recommends that entries should be entered within 48 hours of a counselling session and to ensure proper confidentiality paper on which the records are taken should be easily identifiable and bearing confidentiality marks. In the case of videos and audio recordings of client sessions (for supervision or other purposes) prior informed written consent must be obtained from the client. Issues of ownership, copying, security of recording etc. should be discussed and clarified at the outset. The signed, written consent should be stored separately from the recording in order to preserve confidentiality.

All records should be kept securely locked, preferably in a fireproof cabinet or container within a secure area. Paper records should be disposed of as carefully as

they are stored. Records should be shredded or incinerated to ensure their destruction and illegibility. A person holding personal data on a client has a duty to inform them that such data is being collected and held, the purpose for which it will be used and provide them with details of how they can access the data. Counsellors are advised to make arrangements for their own sudden ill health or death so that the client's confidential records are secure and left in the care of a responsible professional colleague. The Counselling Psychologist is advised to ensure that a qualified colleague is available to protect the interests of the client at this time.

MTS (1995) requires that Schools should develop policies and procedures for the maintenance of records, including in such policies provisions for:

- Physical security of records

- Access to records

- Periods of maintenance for different types of records

- Destruction of records

- Teachers ensuring that their personal records are kept in secure locations.

The guideline further requires that schools should develop procedures to ensure that the confidentiality of material is maintained when it is being received or sent by the school. A teacher must keep the best interests of the student in mind when making decisions to divulge confidential information. A teacher shall consult with the student and attempt to obtain the consent of the student before divulging confidential information to authorised personnel or agencies directly concerned with the student's welfare. The school should develop policies and procedures for the sharing of information regarding court orders or other legal restrictions on the sharing of information about a student. Teachers should be aware of all court orders regarding custody of students in their care, and any policies regarding the rights of non-custodial parents to information and access to a child. If non-custodial parents or other individuals involved with the student request information or access, a teacher should refer questions or concerns to the school administrator. No information should be given without a documented request.

Schools should develop procedures to ensure that the confidentiality of material is

maintained when it is being received or sent by the school. Particular care should be taken when giving information by phone or by fax.

Referral

Referrals are necessary if the source of help at hand e.g. from teacher counsellor is limited or incapable of giving the necessary help. During referrals it is inevitable that a third party e.g. doctor or police have to be made aware of certain details of the student's problem. This is a challenge to maintaining counselling confidentiality.

Two things need to be considered: first, when does one refer a student to a third party? And secondly what information should be disclosed when making referral?

Aside from the signs or symptoms that may suggest the need for referral, there are other guidelines, which may help the teacher-counsellor to define the limits of his or her involvement with a particular person's problem.

ACC (2003) identifies the following guidelines that may necessitate a referral:

- a) A student presents a problem or requests information, which is outside counsellor's range of knowledge.
- b) Counsellor feels that personality differences that cannot be resolved between you and the student will interfere with your helping them.
- c) The problem is personal, and the counsellor knows the student on other than a professional basis (friend, neighbour, relative, etc.).
- d) A student is reluctant to discuss a problem with counsellor for some reason.
- e) Counsellor does not believe his or her attempt to help has been effective.

In considering confidentiality when dealing with referrals it is important to realise that referrals are not necessarily limited to other professional counselling or doctors. The teacher counsellor may refer student to other resourceful staff and outsiders who may not be necessary skilled in handling confidentiality issues but none the less can solve the students' problems. The people include, juniors and matrons, local chiefs, parents, a member of the clergy, or the chaplain, etc. For this reason, the teacher needs to weigh what to disclose during referrals (ACC, 2003).

2.5 Factors that hinder maintenance of confidentiality in school counselling

According to Norman(1991), laws concerning confidentiality and privileged information vary from state to state and even for professional counsellors. In some states, some of the courts have determined that if an individual intends to take harmful, dangerous, or criminal action against another human being or against himself, it is the counsellor's duty to warn appropriate individual of such intentions. For instance, in the state of California, there are very specific laws concerning child abuse and sexual abuse. This is in relation to those involved with children like teachers, principals, day-care workers, foster parents, medical doctors, dentists, and psychologists. The law states that any of these people who, in their professional capacity or within the scope of their employment reasonably suspect that, a child has been the victim of abuses shall report the known or suspected, to a child protective agency immediately. However if the person fails to report an instance of a child abuse, as specified by law, he or she will be guilty of a misdemeanour.

Counselling psychology (1999) clearly shows that the concepts of confidentiality can clearly mean different things to different counsellors, for instance counsellors in school setting community psychiatric nurses and psychologists have significant differences in terms of how they see and respond to issues of confidentiality. This is especially on inter-professional referral; information exchange involved is a risk to patient confidentiality. The journal further discusses the concept of confidentiality understood by counsellors as a form of interpersonal contract between client and therapist. In the struggle of establishing strong grounds for confidentiality, there is a danger that an over-emphasis on the therapeutic role of confidentiality neglects other

crucial aspects of the relationship and understates the wider responsibility of the therapist.

Supervision for counsellors

BAC (2000) notes that it is essential that counsellors have regular supervision in order to maintain proper professional counselling standards and monitor the quality of their work with clients within the school setting.

Supervision has a focus on the therapeutic work and therefore needs to be provided by a suitably qualified and experienced counsellor. This supervision is usually referred to as external consultative supervision and it differs from line management supervision.

The main objective of supervision is to ensure that the counsellor gains ethical competence and confidence in their counselling with children and young people. The supervision process enables counsellors to think creatively so that they can give the best possible service to the client.

BPS 2000) Observes that counsellor has multiple responsibilities regarding confidentiality when acting as a supervisor. These include:

- a) Responsibility to the supervisee to keep supervision sessions confidential;
- b) A responsibility to those clients discussed to keep their details confidential;
- c) A responsibility to the organisation or regulatory body of which the supervisee is a member to break confidentiality if the supervisee is acting unethically so as to prevent harm to the client.

The welfare of the client is of paramount importance. If the counsellor supervisor believes the supervisor is inappropriately placing the client at risk of harm they must act to prevent this. The counsellor supervisor should use professional judgement in assessing whether it is necessary to breach confidentiality for the purpose of resolving any immediate crisis relating to a client and ensuring whether the supervisee is competent to practice. Such a possibility should be made explicit at the beginning of a supervisory relationship. It is advisable to inform the supervisee of plans to communicate concerns to a third party and why this course of action is being followed.

In all cases, if a decision is made to disclose confidential information, the disclosure must be prepared to explain and justify that.

Room setting

BAC (2000) recommends that counselling provided by a counsellor in school takes place during the day, on the school premises, in a soundproof room where children and young people can feel safe and comfortable. Ideally the room should be furnished in a way that creates an immediate distinction between the counselling room and a classroom or teacher's office. A secure place to keep case records and access to a confidential telephone line is also required. Sometimes it is difficult to achieve in schools, a quiet and secure room which is an absolutely essential condition of offering counselling.

Dual role of the teacher counsellor

Several studies show that principals and counsellors frequently fail to reach clear agreement on the delineation of the counsellor's role, (Cole, 1991) and (Ribak-Rosenthal, 1994). Consequently, counsellors often suffer from "role ambiguity," a lack of clarity about their appropriate role in the school; and "role conflict," pressure to perform tasks they perceive as inappropriate to their roles, (Moracco et al, 1984). Many report that they are unable to perform their most important functions because extraneous responsibilities and expectations overburden them. Principals can effectively address these problems only by thinking carefully about how their own expectations relate to those that prevail in the school counselling profession.

O'Bryant (1991) describes the school counsellor's fundamental and appropriate work activities as follows:

- a) Individual counselling, in which the counsellor works privately with an individual student, usually on "problem solving, decision making, and discovering personal meaning related to learning and development"
- b) Group counselling, in which the counsellor works with a small group of students on personal or academic issues.

- c) Group guidance, in which the counsellor works with larger groups or classes on academic or life skills.
- d) Consultation, in which the counsellor assists teachers and other adults become more effective at working with students.
- e) Co-ordination, in which the counsellor manages services; parent or community meetings, for example which indirectly address the counselling needs of students.

These tasks are consistent with the guidelines set forth in the literature and in the ethical standards for school counsellors of the American schools (Cole, 1991). These tasks however much differ in what a teacher-counsellor actually does in typical Kenya public schools. The teacher-counsellor will over and above be expected to teach and maintain general discipline among the students.

Coy (1991), Perry (1995) and Stanciak (1995) observe an emergent theme in recent literature has been that counsellors need to focus their efforts on reaching all students (through group activities) rather than just a few (through time-consuming individual sessions). Referred to variously as "comprehensive," "developmental," or "preventive," counselling, this trend may cause many counsellors to direct their attention less to individual counselling and more to group counselling, group guidance, consultation, and co-ordination.

Murray (1995) observes that in keeping these tasks and priorities in mind, a principal may collaborate with the counsellor in developing a job description for the teacher counsellor. Clear role delineation may relieve stress, promote mutual understanding of priorities, and serve as the basis for occasional future discussions of how the counsellor's time is best spent. It will also provide a rational basis for evaluation of the counselling program and clarify for the principal the areas of the program most in need of support and assistance.

School administration

Given their traditional emphasis on addressing the needs of the "whole child," it is not surprising that many schools have embraced the notion of student counselling. School

counselling programs are usually conducted by teacher-counsellors who work closely with the school's faculty and administration to promote emotional well being and personal maturation among students.

Anderson (1996) Observes that school counselling programs pose a unique set of problems for all school administrators. Counsellors regularly confront the most sensitive issues in the lives of students and families, including suicide, substance abuse, sexual activity, and parent-child relationships. The manner in which these issues are handled can have profound effects on the well being of students, the school's relationships with families, the school's culture, and even the school's legal exposure. As supervisors of the counselling program, principals bear ultimate responsibility for its competence and effectiveness. When counselling is performed improperly, principals may bear legal liability, as well. The stakes in this area are high, indeed.

To fulfil their responsibilities, principals must understand the counselling program's procedures and work with the counsellor to ensure that they maximally benefit students while operating within ethical and legal guidelines. They must also consult with the counsellor about the handling of cases which present particular difficulties or which touch upon the school's interests in avoiding liability and maintaining amicable relationships with parents. Finally, principals must be able to offer strong, well-informed support for the counselling program when dealing with all school programs.

Yet most principals are poorly prepared to deal with the unusually complex and ambiguous problems which are likely to arise in connection with school counselling programs. Lacking the counsellor's formal training, principals are unlikely to offer the support and supervision the program requires.

On the other hand school-counselling programs must not be seen as an extension of the school administration. In a conference on student counselling, Conference (1973), the students cited the relationship of the counselling centre and its staff to the administration. They highlighted that counselling must not become a tool of the administration. It must not be identified with the administration in the sense that students perceive the counselling centre as an arm of the administration or spy for the administration. They argued that, professional status and independence must be

recognised by the administration as well as by the academic staff. They further argued that, it must be clear to the administration and students that confidentiality is perceived. If student confidence is violated whether under pressure or with the best of intentions, the usefulness of the counselling centre ceases, at least for a time until student confidence can be rebuilt.

2.6 Theoretical framework

The study is based on three theories which explain human behaviour. The theories seek to explain that human behaviour is learned and subjected to environmental factors. In the study of confidentiality the environment and interpersonal relationship are quite important in determining counselling outcomes. The first theory; client centred theory, explains how interpersonal relationship is determined by the level of trust between the client and the counsellor. The other two theories; operant conditioning theory and situational theory, explains how the environment in which the subjects operate or situation they find themselves in, respectively, determine their behaviour. A counselling environment that does not ensure privacy and confidentiality will cause a negative behaviour towards seeking counselling services.

Client centred theory

Client centred or person centred theory was discovered by Carl Rogers in 1940. The theory is based on the deep faith in the tendency of humans to develop in a positive and constructive manner if a climate of respect and trust is established (Corey, 1991). From his professional experience, Rogers learnt that if he was able to get to the core of an individual he found a trustworthy, positive client. He firmly believed that people were resourceful, capable of self direction and able to live effective and productive lives.

Person-centred therapy emphasises understanding and caring rather than diagnosis, advice and persuasion. Roger strongly believed that the quality of the therapist-client relationship influences the success of therapy. He felt that effective therapists must be genuine, accepting, and empathic. Rogers believed that when the client's feel unconditional positive regard from a genuine therapist and feel empathetically understood; they would be less anxious and more willing to reveal themselves and their weaknesses. By doing so client gain a better understanding of their own lives,

move toward self-acceptance, and can make progress in resolving a wide variety of personal problems.

The theory emphasises that the counsellor is to provide and create conducive atmosphere that is based on respect and trust for the client to self evolve. Therefore if the teacher counsellor facilitates the environment by ensuring that the factors which would hinder a conducive trustworthy environment are not at play, then the client will be able to do self searching leading to self actualisation.

Operant conditioning

This theory was developed by B.F Skinner in 1938, and the basic assumption of the theory is that behaviour is a function of its consequences. Skinner believed that the consequences of any behaviour will cause an increase, a decrease, or no change in the probability that the behaviour will occur again. The term operant conditioning refers the fact that the learner must operate or perform certain behaviour before receiving a reward or punishment. If a stimulus that follows a behaviour increase the probability of that behaviour occurring again, then it was a positive reinforcer or a reward. However, if an event that follows a behaviour can cause a decrease in the probability that the behaviour will occur again then it was negative reinforcer or a punishment. Therefore operant conditioning is a type of learning in which behaviour is strengthened if followed by a reward or diminished if followed by punishment.

In counselling intervention, if the counsellor maintains or observes confidentiality, then it is a positive reinforcement to the client. Thus the client receives help and a trustworthy relationship is established which is still reliable in future. Conversely, lack of confidentiality is a social punishment, whereby the client will be discouraged from sharing their disturbing issues with the counsellor; therefore the intended behaviour will not be achieved.

Situational approach theory

This model formulated by Thomas and Znanieck (1974) holds that human behaviour is situational determined. The human situation is governed by:

- i) Cultural factors,
- ii) Biological factors,
- iii) Psychological, and

iv) Socio-economical factors

All these singly or collectively limit and determine an individual's subsequent behaviour. In the secondary school 'society' there are factors at play that will determine the subsequent behaviour of the students' counselee and the teacher counsellor on situations where there is lack of confidentiality in school counselling programs.

The African culture does not encourage open discussions on sexual issues. Indeed, orientations to homosexuality and lesbianism are culturally intolerable. Counselling students with such problems will require total confidentiality to protect the students from the society. On the other hand students will shun seeking counselling help on such issues when there is even the slightest feeling of lack of confidentiality in the program. It is not common as well to have elder persons (teacher counsellor) discussing sexual matters with younger (student) person. These are cultural barriers that may only be overcome by assurance of confidentiality on both the counselee and the teacher counsellor.

The biological stage of most students in the secondary schools is the climax of adolescence crisis. Sexual orientations and fighting for identity dominate at this stage. A student at this age is too sensitive on matters touching on his or her ego and is always arming himself or herself with means of self defence to be seen as a hero. Sharing out personal 'weakness' such as anxiety or grief with someone else is naturally more difficult at this age. Moreover, the sex difference between the counsellor and the student counselee may hinder communication. Students may find it easier to talk to counsellors of the same sex. It calls for trusted and confidential relationship to encourage the students to seek counselling help and for the student to open up. The identity crisis of this age unless stemmed out through confidential counselling help will vent out as violent behaviour.

Students who may come for counselling help are of course psychologically hurt. In such as state the student may already have lost the ability to trust other people. He or she would therefore require not only to observe that the counselling help can be trusted but also constant assurance of confidentiality and trust to make him or her continually seek counselling help. Otherwise such emotionally hurt individuals may result in total withdrawal.

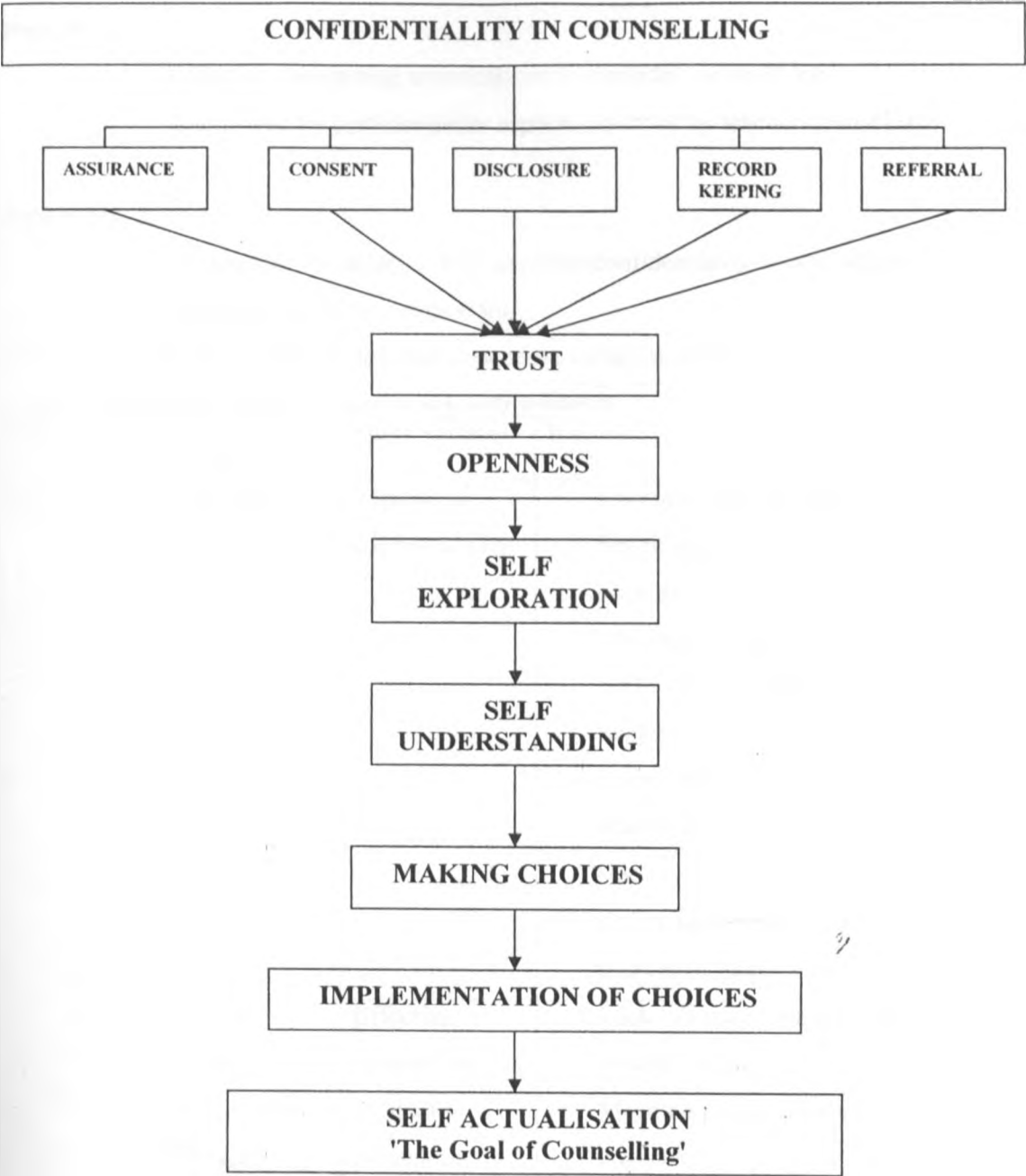
The situational approach sees the human situation as being composed of two factors: mainly the subjective facts and the objective facts.

The subjective facts are factors which exist only to the individual. They are facts as they are perceived and experienced by the individual. In school counselling therefore, the individual student internalises his or her experience in a counselling relationship. Some of the facts to be internalised are promise of confidentiality before counselling session begins, seeking consent before the release of any information, and general observation of confidentiality among other facts. If these facts are perceived as positive in relation to what is existing in reality, then the student develops confidence and trust with the teacher counsellor such that in future he or she can revisit the counsellor or can influence others to do so.

The objective facts are factors which are common to the observer and the individual for example the physical environment, the behaviour of others etc. In counselling situation, objective facts play a vital role. The physical environment which refers to the room setting, location of the room, among other demands of privacy are important to the counselee. Creating a conducive environment for counselling is very important in determining the behaviour of the student i.e. whether the student can open up or not to counsellor. The behaviour of others (especially that of counsellor), is very important to the students seeking counselling services. If the counsellor develops a trustworthy and warm relationship then the students will trust him or her with their personal problems.

The situational approach theory sees human behaviour as adjustable and human beings as always trying to come to terms with or adjust to the situations in which they find themselves in.

2.7 Conceptual framework



2.8 Hypothesis

The study will test the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:

Effective counselling interventions in secondary schools are determined by confidentiality aspects observed by teacher counsellors.

Hypothesis 2:

Students in secondary school perceive confidentiality in counselling interventions as very important.

The table below shows independent and dependent variables of the study.

Table 1: Independent, dependent variable and study indicators

Hypothesis	Type of variable	Study variable	Indicators
H1	Independent	Aspects of confidentiality	- Giving assurance always at the beginning of counselling session - Disclosure- clarifying the limits of confidentiality - Seeking consent before releasing any information - Taking notes during counselling session - Referring students to other sources of help
	Dependent variable	Effective counselling	- Lack of trust influence students to seek counselling services
H2	Independent	Student's perception on confidentiality	- Meaning of confidentiality in counselling - Assurance positively influences the students to seek counselling - Clarification of the circumstances that may lead to breaking of confidentiality - Seeking consent before

			information is released - Note taking during counselling - Accessibility of counselling records
	Dependent	Counselling intervention is important	- Referral for counselling - What prevent student from seeking counselling

2.9 Operationalisation of key terms

Counselling intervention: Refers to the process whereby a person is held to understand his or her problems in order to be able to solve or cope with them.

Teacher counsellor: refers to that particular teacher who is officially recognised and working in a secondary school concerned with assisting students with their needs and problems.

Confidentiality: Refers to a professional promise or contract to respect clients Privacy by not disclosing anything revealed during counselling except under agreed upon condition.

Aspects of confidentiality: These are the elements that are essential in observation of confidentiality in counselling. They include: disclosure, consent, referral etc

Disclosure: Assuring the student that all information shared or gathered in relation to the student will be kept confidential and informing the student the conditions under which such information may be disclosed.

Consent: Giving the teacher counsellor permission to release specific information about the client.

Referral: Finding other sources of help if the teacher counsellor is limited or incapable of giving the necessary help to the student.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Site Description

Kikuyu division is one of the seven divisions in Kiambu district of the Central province of Kenya. It has an area of 232 square kilometres and is made up of six locations namely Muguga, Karai, Kinoo, Kabete, Nyathuna and Kikuyu. The division composes a total population of 120,000. Kikuyu town is the administrative divisional headquarters of Kikuyu division. The dominant tribe is the Agikuyu, However town, being only 25 km North West of Nairobi and 1 km off the Nairobi-Nakuru highway it now hosts various ethnic groups.

At a relatively high altitude of 1800m and characterised by undulating topography, the area is well endowed with agricultural resources. It has established research organisations such as KARI (Kenya Agricultural Research Institute), KETRI (Kenya Trypanosomiasis Research Institute), and KEFRI (Kenya Forest Research Institute).

Kikuyu town is one of the oldest towns in the country. The Church of Scotland Missionaries established their mission centre in 1898. The historical Kenya- Uganda railway passed here in 1901 with the establishment of a rail station. The first school to be established was the Alliance boys in 1910. The area continued to grow and between 1950 to 1960 several education sectors were established; these are Alliance girls, University of Nairobi distance studies department and Thogoto Teachers College.

The division has really developed with education sectors evenly distributed. The division has 10 private secondary schools and 23 public secondary schools. The public schools consist of 2 National schools, 6 provincial, Schools, 8 district schools, and 7 local public schools. Of the public schools, 16 are day schools and 7 boarding.

3.2 Target population

The target population of this study was made up of all selected teacher counsellors in secondary schools of Kikuyu division. The division had 23 public secondary schools and each school was expected to have at least one teacher counsellor and an assistant teacher counsellor making a total of 46 teacher counsellors. This study also targeted

some students for focus group discussion. The table below shows the list of schools included in the study.

Table 2: Schools covered in the study

SCHOOL	TYPE OF SCHOOL
ACK Nyathuna	Mixed day
Alliance Boys	Boys boarding
Alliance Girls	Girls boarding
Kabete	Mixed day
Kahuho	Mixed day
Kanjoru	Girls day
Kanyariri	Mixed day
Karai	Mixed day
Kerwa	Mixed day
Kibichiko	Mixed day
Kikuyu Day	Mixed day and boarding
Kirangari	Boys boarding
Mai-a-hii	Mixed day
Mary Leakey	Girls boarding
Moi Girls	Girls boarding
Muguga Wagatonye	Mixed day
Muhu	Mixed day
Musa Gitau	Mixed day
Renguti	Mixed day
Rungiri	Mixed day
St. Kelvin	Mixed day
Uthiru	Girls boarding

3.3 Sample size and sampling design

According to singleton et al (1988) sampling design refers to that part of the research plan that indicates how cases are to be selected for observation. The selection of teacher counsellors in secondary schools was done through purposive sampling. The purposive sampling was used because it allowed the researcher to use the respondents with the required information. Therefore the researcher handpicked the teacher counsellors in each school. Two teacher counsellors were selected in every public

secondary school in the division. The rationale for this was the fact that the population was small and the schools are geographically clustered together.

To achieve the desired sample from various students for focus group discussions, five schools were selected using simple random sampling. 5 students from every level were then selected, making a total of 20 students from each school. This method ensures that each and every item in the population has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample and each one has the same probability of being selected.

3.4 Method of data collection

The researcher used various methods to collect the data. Primary data was collected by use of questionnaires comprising structured and unstructured questions.

The questionnaire was administered to all the teacher counsellors in Secondary schools who formed the pool of respondents needed for the study.

The researcher used Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to obtain further qualitative data to support the study. The FGD was important because the respondents showed point of agreement and disagreement covering the area of the study.

The researcher further used observation method as a tool. As the researcher administered the questionnaire, it was a good opportunity to observe the environment and assess the surrounding factors such as room setting and special features in the counselling rooms.

3.5 Unit of analysis

The selected teacher counsellors from all public secondary schools in kikuyu division were the unit of analysis.

3.6 Data analysis

After the field work the data was categorised under quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data contained information on numerical values of respondents while the qualitative data consisted of respondents view and opinions.

The quantitative data from questionnaires was manually fed into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program. This computer program gives high-speed statistical analysis of data. The qualitative data was cleaned from the questionnaire, the close ended questions were coded and entered in codebook and the same SPSS program was used to analyse the data.

Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the quantitative data. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (1999), descriptive statistics can be used to group variables and sum patterns in the responses given by the respondents. The data was checked for consistency and accuracy. Thereafter, frequency counts, percentages, mean and cross tabulation were obtained. Tables, charts and graphs were then used to present the results. The Inferential statistics helped the researcher to give true characteristics and to test the hypothesis

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Counsellors' personal details

In this study 78% of the respondents were female and 22% male. Over half of the teacher counsellors were within the age bracket of 35 to 40 years. Only 4% of the teacher counsellors were single, while the rest, 96% were married. This shows that most of the teacher counsellors were married and possibly parents; they may therefore be quite concerned about student's welfare. The table below shows the respondents' personal details.

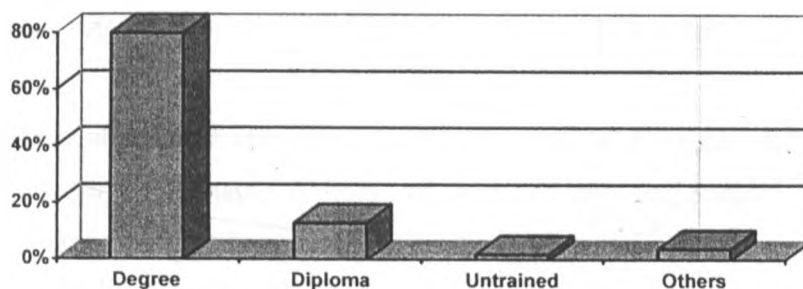
Table 3: Respondents' personal details on marital status, sex and age.

Sex		Marital Status		Age (years)		
Male	Female	Married	Single	<34	35-40	>40
22%	78%	96%	4%	22%	61%	17%

4.1.1 Teaching qualifications and experience

About 80% of the respondents had at least 10 years teaching experience. Therefore most of the respondents had been in the teaching profession for a long time. However majority of the respondents were qualified professional teacher with 80% having degree level of qualification.

Figure 1: Teaching qualifications of the respondents

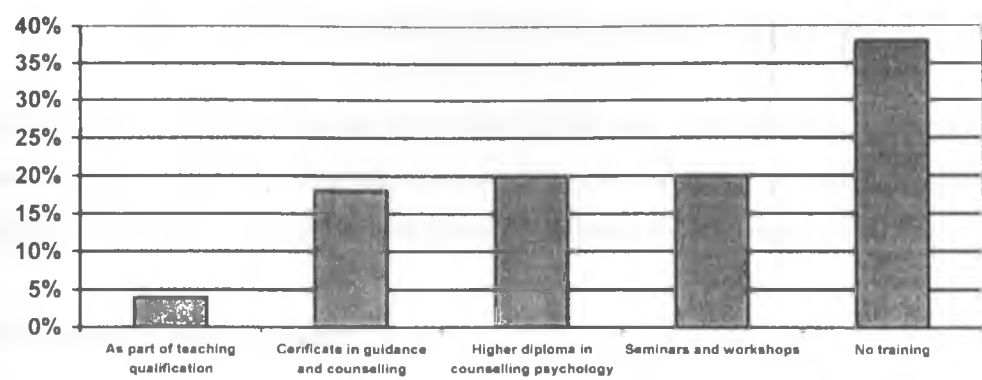


4.1.2 Counselling training and experience

Counselling like any other profession requires training so as to acquire the necessary skills. However, 20% of the respondents had only attended seminars or workshops

while 38% had certificate or diploma in counselling, 38% could not indicate the type of training they had. The chart below shows the respondents' level of counselling training.

Figure 2: Respondents' training in counselling



This shows that majority of teachers had no basic skills in counselling since seminars and workshops may not offer adequate counselling training. On experience, a total of 78% of the respondents indicated that they had at least 4 years of counselling experience. This shows that counselling as a profession is relatively new in the schools.

4.2 Importance of confidentiality

Confidentiality is a contract to respect client's privacy by not disclosing anything revealed during counselling except under agreed upon conditions. Therefore confidentiality is necessary to establish the degree of trust required for counselling to take place.

In the study all respondents agreed that the observation of confidentiality on students' issues is very important. A total of 82% of the respondents indicated that confidentiality enables the students to discuss problems freely and also creates trust, 17% indicated that it makes the students feel comfortable in school.

Even though all the respondents agreed on the importance of confidentiality, only 45% of respondents indicated that they had attempted to explain the term confidentiality in counselling to the whole school.

From the FGD, the study found that most students knew the meaning of confidentiality but not in the context of counselling. The explanations they gave were:

- a) "When told something keep it to yourself"
- b) "The art of keeping secret"
- c) "a virtue for the teacher not to spread students information"
- d) "When something is kept secret and only exposed to required party"

It was further observed that the definition of the term confidentiality was got from various sources such as: English teacher, personal enquires e.g. after seeing letters addressed as confidential, peers and friends, and lastly from teacher counsellors.

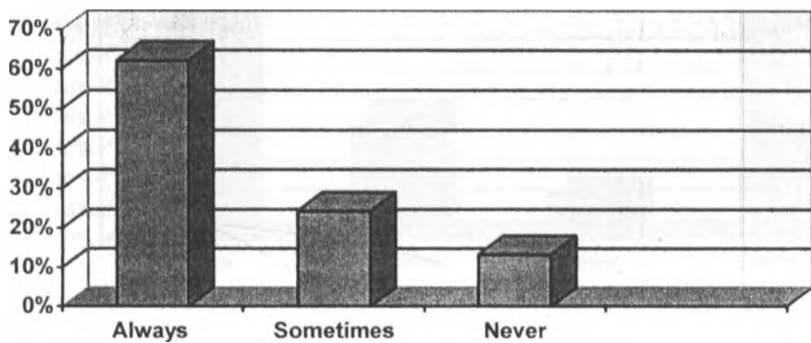
4.3 Aspects of confidentiality

These are the elements that are essential in observation of confidentiality in counselling. Both the counsellor and the counselee must concur on how to react to wards each element. These elements include assurance, disclosure, consent seeking, referral and record keeping.

4.3.1 Assurance

Assurance is promising the client that all information shared or gathered during counselling will be kept confidential. The chart below shows how often the respondents gave assurance during counselling session.

Figure 3: Respondent's frequency of giving assurance



In the study, 62% of the respondents gave assurance always before they had a counselling session; whereas 24% gave assurance only sometimes and 13% never gave it. Giving assurance makes the students feel secure, safe and therefore able to open up and share their anxiety with the teacher counsellor. Absence of consistent

assurance will make counselee close up and at the same time the counsellor has no obligation to keep the confidentiality since it was never promised to the counselee in the first place.

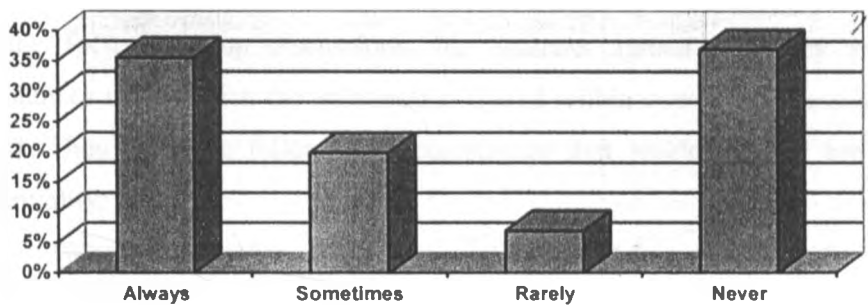
Some students from FGD affirmed that they were assured of confidentiality before the beginning of counselling while others stated they were never assured. However the answers did not vary among students in the same school. All the discussion groups were unanimous that such assurance will influence their seeking of counselling help. They gave several reasons all pointing to the feeling of being more secure and encouraging openness.

This affirms the theory of operant conditioning that if the students are positively reinforced by being assured of confidentiality during counselling sessions, then they will be encouraged to seek counselling help.

4.3.2 Disclosure

There are instances that may make it ethically permissible to reveal client's information without his or her consent. However the counsellor should clarify the limits of confidentiality at the onset of counselling session. The figure below show how often the respondents clarified the limits of confidentiality

Figure 4: Respondents' frequency of clarifying limits of confidentiality



In the study, 36% of the respondents indicated that they always clarified the limits of confidentiality before counselling sessions began, 20% clarified the limits only sometimes and 7% rarely clarified the limits. A total of 37% never clarified the limits of confidentiality during counselling. This indicates that there are many students who

enter into counselling sessions without being made aware that there are conditions under which the information they share in counselling can be released to a third party, without being asked for permission.

Reasons on the circumstances under which the confidentiality can be breached in school counselling were given. The chart below indicates the reasons respondents gave on why they may break confidentiality in counselling.

Table 4: Reasons given by teacher counsellors to warrant for breaking confidentiality

Response Code	Response Category label	Frequency Count of Responses
1	When the situation requires the attention of other people	2
2	When the situation is of discipline or riot	16
3	Use as an example in class but no names	1
4	When it affects others-danger to others	22
5	Suicide students life is in danger	20
6	Issues of health, sexual, rape, pregnancy	8
7	When more help is required from administration	13
8	Drugs	4
9	When financial assistance is required	1
10	If the student requests Disclosure	2

The teacher counsellor is obliged to clarify the limits of confidentiality to the clients before the counselling session begins. This is the first step in building a trusting relationship.

From the focused group discussions, the students agreed that they knew the circumstances under which the information shared within counselling session can be revealed. They gave the following circumstances that would warrant breaking of confidentiality:

- a) When the teacher counsellor wishes to help a student with a similar problem
- b) Suicidal cases. i.e. When the student want to take his or her life
- c) When students are planning a strike or riot
- d) Abortions matters i.e. when a student is pregnant and want to take abortion.
- e) When teacher counsellor want to consults other teachers

However the students were unanimous that the teacher counsellor discloses the information shared during counselling regardless of the circumstances warranting such sharing. The students gave the following list of people they believe the teacher counsellor discloses confidential information to:

- a) Other teachers
- b) Other students
- c) Head teacher
- d) Parents.

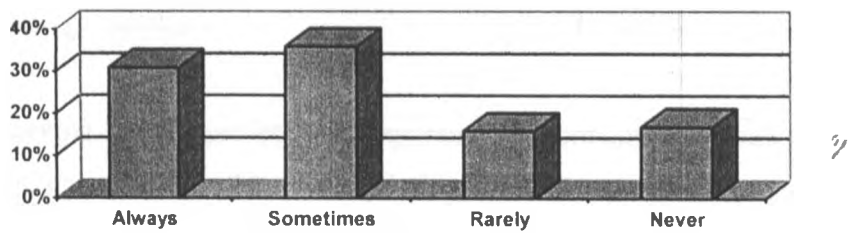
The students indicated clearly that they actually mind when other people get to know what they had shared in counselling.

This affirms the client centred theory, that there is need to establish a warm relationship that is built on trust so that the client is able to explore the self.

4.3.3 Consent seeking

The counsellor is expected to seek consent or permission from the client before disclosing any information shared during counselling. The table below shows the responses given on how frequently consent was sought from clients.

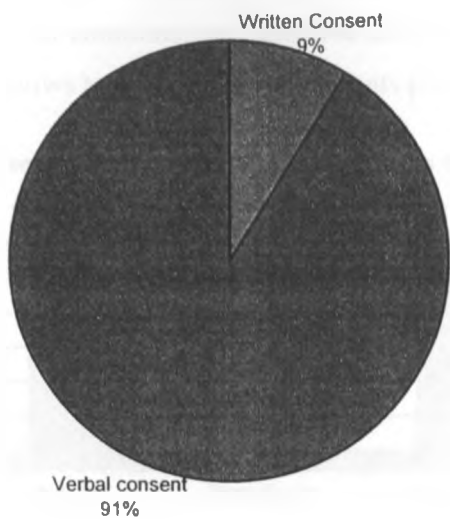
Figure 5: The respondent's frequency of consent seeking



In the study only 31% of the respondents indicated that they always seek consent from students before releasing any information shared during counselling. However 36% sought sometimes, 16% rarely and 17% never. This shows that the majority of the respondents often release information without first obtaining consent from the student.

The consent given must be written. However, verbal consent is permitted during emergencies only. The pie chart below shows which form of consent the respondents sought from student.counselee.

Figure 6: Form of consent sought by teacher counsellors



In the study, of those respondents who seek consent, only 9% indicated that they seek written consent and the rest 91% seek only verbal consent. Verbal consent may be given out of fear or to show respect to the teacher counsellor and not as a result of clear understanding of the implications of giving consent.

The students in the focus group discussions were all in agreement that they have never been asked for such consent. All the students indicate that they would prefer to give verbal consent.

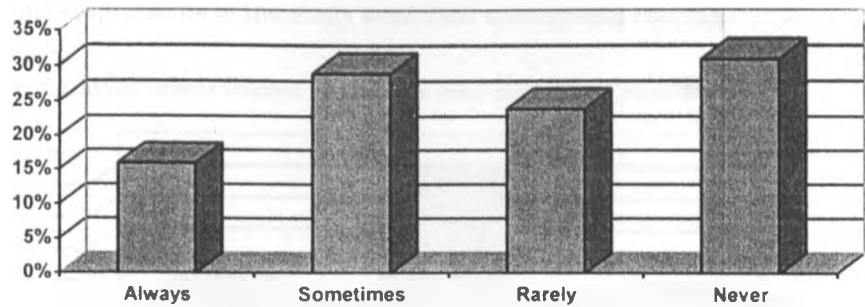
Consent seeking is a key professional requirement before any disclosure of counselee information unless under ethical or legal obligation. The practise of consent seeking facilitates counselling by keeping the client in control of what can be released and what should not. When consent is not sought, the counselee is left in doubt that he or she is any longer capable of determining what will remain confidential.

This affirms the subjective facts on the situational theory. The student internalise his or her experience in relation to giving consent before the counselling information is released. This situation determines his or her behaviour in future whether to seek counselling help or not.

4.3.4 Record Keeping

The purpose of record keeping is to improve continuity between the counselling sessions. However emotional and sensitive information should never be recorded. The figure below shows how often the respondents took notes during counselling.

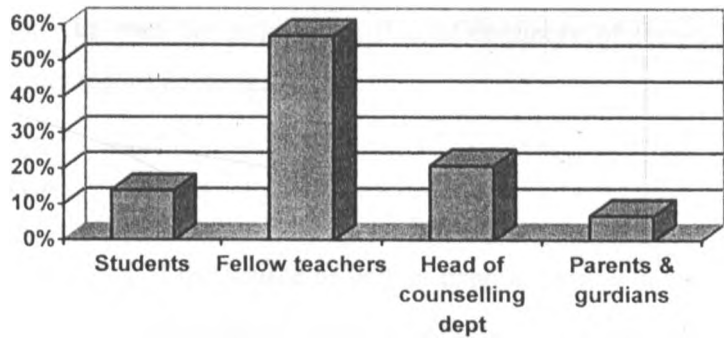
Figure 7: Frequency of teacher counsellors taking notes during a counselling session



In the study, 16% took notes always, 34% sometimes and 28% rarely took notes during counselling. Only 30% of the respondents never took notes during counselling sessions. Professionally, no notes are supposed to be taken during counselling. However, there are provisions to record any information after counselling but within 48 hours.

Proper confidentiality must be ensured on the records taken after counselling session. The records should not be accessible to third parties unless consent is granted by the client. In the study, majority of respondents indicated that they shared counselling records with other people. The graph below shows the people whom the respondents shared the records with.

Figure 8: People with whom teacher counsellors share counselling notes with

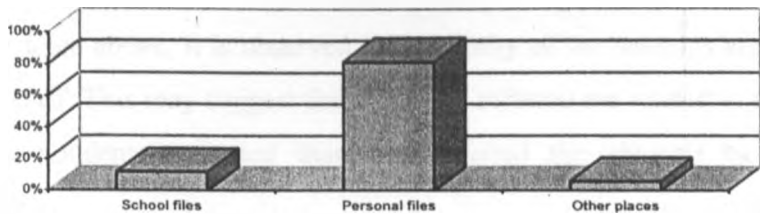


The study shows that 14% of respondent shared records with students, 7% with parents or guardians and 21% with head of counselling departments. Those who

shared records with fellow teachers were a majority of 57%. Apart from the minority who share records with heads of counselling departments, the rest erodes the adherence to counselling confidentiality.

Counselling records should be kept securely locked preferably in a fireproof cabinet or container within a secure area. The graph below shows the different locations where the respondents in the study kept their counselling records.

Figure 9: Locations where teacher counsellors keep counselling records



A majority of 82% of the respondents kept their notes in personal files. Personal files are accessible to other people thus it cannot guarantee confidentiality.

The students indicated that the teacher counsellor takes notes during counselling. However, the students indicated that they would not mind the counsellor taking notes provided the student's name is not indicated. Most students said that they do not have access to notes taken during counselling sessions.

Absence of proper record keeping exposes the student counselee to risk of breach in confidentiality especially when, as the study found, the teacher counsellors are willing to share the records with parents and guardians. On the other hand the teacher counsellors may be sued for negligence if confidentiality of the client is breached through improper record keeping.

4.3.5 Referral

Referrals are necessary if the source of help at hand is limited or incapable of giving the necessary help. The table below shows to whom the respondents referred students to seek further help.

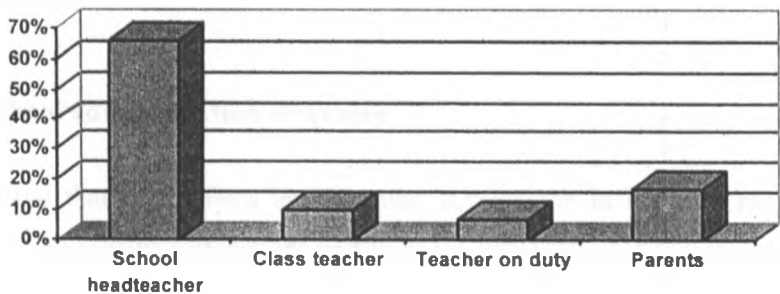
Table 5: People involved in referrals

People that students are referred to:	Percentage
Other teaching staff	45%
Priest and Pastors	32%
Parents	20%
Police	2%
Matron	2%

From the table above, it is observed that majority of the students are referred to the teaching staff. This may suggest that the cases referred are related to academic. None of the respondents indicated that they referred the students to a professional counsellor.

Since teacher counsellors work in community and do not have total authority over the counselling process they need to seek approval from others before referring students to seek further help. The chart below shows the people from whom the teacher counsellors sought approval before making referrals.

Figure 10: People from whom teacher counsellors seek approval prior to making referrals



The study shows that 66% of the respondents indicated that they seek approval from the head teacher before making the referrals. Moreover, 17% indicated that they sought approval from the parents or guardians. Seeking of approval threatens the guarantee of confidentiality since the case has to be communicated through non-counselling professionals first before referral approval is given.

Students indicated that they either decide on themselves or are referred by peer counsellors to see the teacher counsellor. However, students indicated that they would feel confident to seek counselling from any of the following people:

- a) teacher counsellor
- b) class teacher
- c) close students
- d) subject teacher
- e) parents especially the mothers
- f) Pastors.

Referrals always pose a risk of breaching confidentiality especially when the person being referred to is not a skilled counsellor capable of handling confidentiality of the client. It is therefore upon the teacher counsellor to weigh what to disclose during referral.

4.4 Factors hindering confidentiality

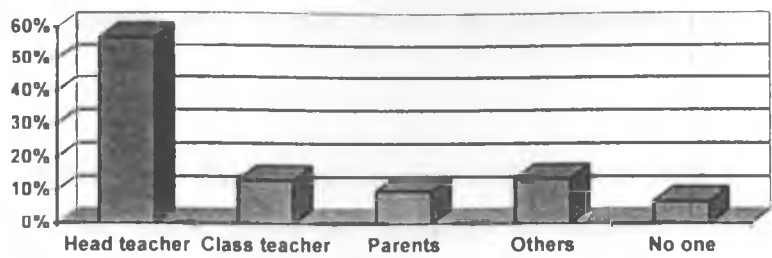
In the struggle of establishing a strong ground for confidentiality, there is a danger that an over-emphasis on one factor on the therapeutic role of confidentiality neglects other factors thus calling the need for checks and balances for all the factors that affect confidentiality.

4.4.1 School administration structure

It is essential that counsellors have regular supervision in order to maintain proper professional counselling standards and monitor the quality of their work with clients within the schools setting. In school administration setup, teacher counsellors usually work under other people with different roles other than counselling.

In the study, the respondents indicated that they reported on their day to day work to different parties and people as indicated by the bar graph below.

Figure 11: The parties to whom the teacher counsellors reports on their day to day work



More than 60% of the respondents indicated that they reported to either the head teacher or class teachers and 10% reported to parents. On the other hand, having no one to report to can create room for negligence.

To enhance counselling standards and especially the observation of confidentiality, teacher counsellors should not be supervised by non counsellors who have no obligation or skills to uphold confidentiality. Further more, when teacher counsellors report to people such as parents who are directly interested in knowing confidential information shared during counselling, this beat the whole purpose of observing confidentiality in the first place.

4.4.2 Counselling room

BAC (2000) recommends that the place for conducting counselling in a school premises must be a soundproof room that guarantees privacy and one where the counselees can feel both safe and comfortable.

In the study, 47% of the respondents indicated that they do not have any room set aside for counselling, while 53% of the respondents indicated that there is room set aside for counselling. The table below indicates the locations of counselling room within the school premises.

Table 6: Location of counselling room

Location of counselling room	Respondents
Between Class rooms	20%
Among other school offices	36%
Next to home science room or school hall	12%
Private and quiet place	4%

This shows that in most schools the rooms are not conducive especially when counselling room is next to class rooms the confidentiality may be difficult to guarantee.

The respondents gave the description of special features found in the counselling room. The table below shows the frequency of respondents' description of the counselling room.

Table 7: special features found in the counselling room

Room description	Percentage
Room is ordinary	40%
Room has special comfortable chairs	24%
Room has a desk, chair and a cupboard	16%
Room has a small library	8%
Room has privacy	8%
Room is only an open space	4%

None of the respondents indicated that the room had special features to enhance confidentiality e.g. sound proof walls, direct telephone lines etc. Counselling room should be furnished in a way that creates an immediate distinction from a standard classroom.

4.4.3 Dual role of teacher counsellor

The teacher counsellor's role is usually designated to ordinary teachers by the schools head teacher. The teacher counsellors often suffer from 'role conflict'. In the study, 96% of the respondents indicated that they have other duties in school besides counselling students. The table below indicates the other duties allocated to the respondents.

Table 8: Other duties performed by the teacher counsellors

Other duties	Percentage
Subject teacher	52%
House master/ mistress	12%

Head of Department	9%
Class teacher	9%
Club patron	4%
Pastoral/ chaplaincy	2%

The teacher counsellors are over burdened with other teaching and non-teaching responsibilities. When the teacher counsellors relate to students in other forums other than just in counselling it may be difficult to maintain confidentiality as the teacher may use examples borrowed from counselling sessions and through inductive reasoning the other students may be able to deduce that such examples came from information shared during counselling.

The respondents further indicated the time set aside for counselling. Majority of the respondents indicated that they do not have specific time for counselling. The few, who had specific time for counselling, indicated their counselling time to be as shown below.

Table 9: The time set aside for counselling

Time when counselling is done	Percentage
Counselling session after school	56%
During free time within school day	11%
During lunch hour	11%
Only twice per term	11%
During morning and evening	11%

This shows that the teacher counsellors may not have adequate time to conduct counselling and may therefore have limited time to conduct a counselling session professionally. Such hurried sessions during break times would not give adequate time to confidentiality requirements such as assurance, disclosures, and written consent. The teacher counsellors' time may also be too limited to allow for taking notes after the counselling and this may explain why they take notes during counselling at the risk of worrying their counselee.

4.4.4 Other parties interested in knowing the confidential counselling information.

Respondents were asked to indicate which parties normally show interest in knowing what has been shared by the students during counselling. The table below shows their responses.

Table 10: multiple responses on parties interested in knowing information shared during counselling

Parties Interested	Frequency count	Percentage of total responses
School Administration	26	57
Parents	16	35
Other teachers	37	82
Other students	3	7

This shows that most teachers are quite curious to know the information shared by the students during counselling sessions. This breaks confidentiality as the teachers are still more likely to use the confidentiality information much more careless than a trained teacher counsellor

4.4.5 Use of information gathered during counselling

Since teacher counsellors counsel students within the school community, it is likely that counselling information is used for other purposes within the school. In the study, 80% of the respondents indicated that they use the information gathered during counselling for other purposes other than to offer counselling services. The table below shows the respondents' use of information gathered during counselling.

Table 11: Multiple responses on the use of information gathered during counselling for other purposes

Other uses of information gathered during counselling	Frequency count	Percentage of total responses
Warning or advising other students	20	44
Referring to school administration	18	40
Informing other teachers	16	35
Taking disciplinary action	9	20

The use of information discussed during counselling for any other purposes strongly erodes the confidentiality of the counselling services. When this finding is seen in the light of the earlier finding that students view is that no consent is requested before counselling information is released, it is no wonder that the students may fear going for counselling. It is especially a grave matter to note that the counselling information is used among other things to take a disciplinary action. Whether disciplinary actions are taken against the counselee or any other student but using information from a counselling session, it is enough reason to discourage students from seeking counselling.

Other factors influencing students from seeking counselling services were sought from the teacher counsellors. The table below shows the factors indicated by the respondents.

Table 12: Teacher counsellors' views on factors making students not seek counselling

Factors that influence students from seeking counselling services	Frequency count	Percentage of total respondents
Lack of trust that counselling will be confidential	36	80
Fear of being reprimanded	27	60
Parental involvement	18	40
School administration concern	19	42
Accessibility of counselling services	8	18
Other factors	2	4

This shows that lack of trust is a major reason why students fail to seek counselling services. The trust can only be built by observation of confidentiality. In a follow-up question the respondents were asked to indicate factors that make it difficult to enhance confidentiality. The respondents indicated the factors as shown below.

Table 13: Factors that makes it difficult to enhance confidentiality in school counselling

Hindering factors	Percentage
School administration concern-interference	24
Parental concern	17
Students behaviour after counselling- resistance to change	16
Lack of counselling room	12
Lack of professional help	9
Lack of adequate training	5
Lack of resources and reference materials	5
Group counselling	3
Curiosity by other students and teachers	2
Financial factors	2
Lack of adequate time	2
Student unwilling to come for counselling	2

This study shows that there are several factors at play which makes it difficult to enhance confidentiality in school counselling. The teacher counsellor need to explain to the school community the meaning of confidentiality in counselling so as to create general awareness of the confidentiality required on the information shared during counselling session. Beside this, checks and balances are required to ensure that factors hindering confidentiality are well taken care of.

4.5 Hypothesis testing

The first hypothesis of this study was:

Hypothesis 1:

Effective counselling interventions in secondary schools are determined by confidentiality aspects observed by teacher counsellors.

The dependent variable is effectiveness of counselling. The independent variables are the aspects of confidentiality i.e. assurance, disclosure, consent seeking, record keeping and referrals. Effectiveness in this study is taken to mean existence of an environment that does not prevent students from seeking counselling services in

schools. An effective counselling intervention does indeed encourage students to seek counselling services. The table below shows the scores of independent variables as obtained from the study.

Table 14: Responses on aspects of confidentiality

Aspect of confidentiality			Frequency	Percentage
Assurance	Do you assure the student before a counselling session that all information that the student shares will be kept confidential?	Yes	36	87
		No	9	13
		Total	45	100
Disclosure	Are the limits of confidentiality in counselling clarified to the students before counselling session starts?	Yes	32	73
		No	13	27
		Total	45	100
Consent seeking	Do you request for consent from students each and every time you want to disclose their counselling information as the occasion arises?	Yes	23	51
		No	22	49
		Total	45	100
Counselling record	Do you ever share the notes you take during counselling with any other person?	Yes	15	38
		Never	30	62
		Total	45	100
Referral	Do you seek approval before referring students to other resourceful people?	Yes	34	79
		No	11	21
		Total	45	100

The dependent variable was captured through the question to teacher counsellors on whether the lack of trust in counselling services prevents students seeking counselling services. The relationship between this variable and the independent variables was sought using the Chi-square test. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 15: Trust in confidentiality makes counselling effective

	Trust that counselling information is confidential encourages students to seek counselling services.		
Effectiveness of counselling	YES	NO	TOTAL
Effective	21(53.8)	3(7.7)	24(61.5)
Not effective	10(25.7)	5(12.8)	15(38.5)
TOTAL	31(79.5)	8(20.5)	39(100)

The Pearson Chi- Square 2 sided value is 0.117 which is significant at 0.5 level of probability with one degree of freedom. As such, the H_1 that effective counselling intervention in secondary schools is determined by confidentiality aspects observed by teacher counsellors is accepted.

Hypothesis 2:

Students in secondary school perceive confidentiality in counselling interventions as very important.

There was no quantitative data collected as pertaining to this hypothesis. The data collected was qualitative and was obtained through focus group discussions with the students. This was intended to give insight on how students perceive confidentiality in counselling.

From the FGD as earlier noted, the study found that students knew the meaning of confidentiality. They gave the following explanations to the meaning of the term 'confidentiality':

- *"When told something keep it to yourself"*
- *"The art of keeping secret"*
- *"A virtue for the teacher not to spread students' information".*

The students pointed out that the assurance of confidentiality makes them feel more secure and comfortable. They were however certain that the teacher counsellors

disclose the information shared during counselling regardless of the circumstances warranting such sharing. In such circumstances it was clear to them that students' consent was not sought by the teacher counsellor.

Students were also concerned with notes taking during counselling session. They indicated that they really minded their names appearing on the notes taken by the teacher counsellor during a counselling session. The students further stated that since they feel that confidentiality is threatened, they adopt survival techniques whereby they choose where to get assistance from depending on the nature of the problem.

Student indicated that they would rather consult their teacher counsellor on academic issues and protect their ego by not attending a counselling session in which he or she feels that confidentiality is not guaranteed. Lack of assurance on confidentiality made them feel insecure and anxious. As the study found from FGD, most students preferred to share matters related to relationships or emotions with their peers and not their teacher counsellors nor parents. Most students shared their problems with the parents mostly when financial assistance was required. The students took advice of their peers regardless of whether the advice was constructive or not but merely out of trust on their confidentiality.

From this observation, we accept hypothesis 2 that students in secondary schools perceive confidentiality in counselling interventions as very important.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

The key objective of this study was to examine the confidentiality aspects considered by the teacher counsellors and the students in school counselling interventions. The study results show that confidentiality on students' issues is very important since it makes students able to discuss their problems freely and comfortably. However, the results show that despite of this fact, the aspects of confidentiality are not treated professionally and the teacher counsellors have not done much to create general awareness to the whole school on the meaning and practise of confidentiality in counselling. The necessary inputs to fill in this gap have been highlighted in this chapter in the form of recommendations and implications for policy. Recommendations for further research have also been highlighted.

5.1.1 The aspects of confidentiality considered.

The major aspects of confidentiality examined in the study are assurance, disclosure, consent, record keeping, and referral. Deductions from the analysis are as follows:

Assurance

Assurance is not consistently treated professionally by teacher counsellors, majority of them do not even attempt to give students assurance at the start of a counselling session. Further, the study found that students valued much being assured of confidentiality during counselling. However, majority of the students concur that they are never assured of confidentiality at the beginning of a counselling session. The students may therefore be lacking an encouragement to open up during counselling

Giving assurance makes the students feel secure, safe and therefore able to open up and share their anxiety with the teacher counsellor. Absence of consistent assurance will make counsellee close up and at the same time the counsellor has no obligation to keep the confidentiality since it was never promised to the counsellee in the first place.

The study observed that lack of proper consideration of assurance is one of the major hindrances to maintaining confidentiality and encouraging students to go for counselling in schools.

Disclosure

The study observed that teacher counsellors do not clarify the circumstances under which they could reveal information shared during counselling interventions. However most of them were able to articulate the conditions under which confidentiality can be breached in school counselling. They stated them as: when self or other life is endangered, when the issue involves gross indiscipline, and lastly for school administration interventions.

The students are aware of the circumstances under which their otherwise confidential counselling information may be revealed. It is surprising to note that one of the reasons that they consistently gave that may warrant a teacher counsellor to release counselling information was to help other students with similar problems. These and some of the other reasons they gave to warrant a disclosure may indicate lack of awareness of their own rights as counselling clients.

The students were unanimous that the confidential information is generally revealed regardless of the acknowledged limits of confidentiality.

Professionally, clarifying the limits of confidentiality is an important first step in building a trust relationship between counsellor and counsee. Professional practises allow for ethical breaching when the counsellor has reasonable grounds to believe that a client may do harm to him or others during a period when the client is unable to make a decision. This ethical breach, demands that a counsellor take into account the safety and dignity of all parties concerned and disclose only the minimum information to deal with the situation at hand. This study observed that the circumstances that teacher counsellor consider to allow for ethical breach include indiscipline and administration intervention needs. These two introduces grey areas that may contravene the professional conduct of counsellors. These circumstances also

highlight the difficulties of teacher counsellors arising from dual relationship with students: as a counsellor and a teacher.

This study concludes that the limits of confidentiality as understood by the teacher counsellor need to be clarified, taking into consideration the aspects of school counselling. The disclosure of these limits to the students also needs to be done consistently and uniformly.

Consent

Majority of teacher counsellors often release information shared by the students during counselling without first obtaining permission from the counselee student. Moreover, the most common form of consent is verbal.

In sharp contrast to the answers given by the teacher counsellors, the study among the students found that generally no consent is ever sought to release counselling information. An interesting finding of this study is that students would prefer to give verbal consent rather than written. It may therefore be upon the teacher counsellors to insist on written consent from the students and not the other way round.

Consent seeking is a key professional requirement before any disclosure of counselee information unless under ethical or legal obligation. The practise of consent seeking facilitates counselling by keeping the client in control of what can be released and what should not. When consent is not sought, the counselee is left in doubt that he or she is any longer capable of determining what will remain confidential. The finding of this study is in contrast with professional practise that demands that the counsellor must seek written consent from the client specifying the purpose and parameters of the information to be released. Further, consent to release information for one occasion cannot be used for subsequent occasion unless clearly specified in the consent document. Verbal consent may not be able to guarantee these requirements and is therefore only permissible during emergencies. Seeking verbal consent must be seen in the light of the different power levels between the teacher counsellor and the student counselee. The student may often be subdued out of respect or fear to give a verbal consent. Apart from guaranteeing the rights of the counselee, written consent

would also protect the counsellor from litigation arising from lack of maintaining privacy of the counselee.

In conclusion, the consent seeking aspect of confidentiality is not adequately considered in school counselling. This irregularity may erode the confidence of student counselee in counselling interventions and at the same time open teacher counsellor to possibility of legal actions.

Record Keeping

The study show that teacher counsellors take notes during counselling sessions and that the note may be shared with parents or guardians. It was further observed that the teacher counsellors keep their notes in personal files and are not therefore collectively safeguarded.

The findings among the students were that teacher counsellors generally took notes during counselling sessions. The students are never concerned per se on counsellors' taking the notes, they were however afraid that the notes could bear their names. To remove this fear, teacher counsellors may take note after the counselling session provided they do this within 48 hours that are generally allowed in the professional counselling. It is also important that the notes are taken on papers that clearly bear confidentiality marks and identifying students by their names on the records should be discouraged; instead, registration numbers or other codes could be used.

The purpose of record keeping is to improve continuity between the sessions as well as facilitate planning and evaluation of progress. Sensitive and emotional information should never be recorded and needless to say all records must be kept securely, locked preferably in a fireproof cabinet within a secure area. Disposal or paper records should as well be carefully carried out to ensure destruction and illegibility. Absence of proper record keeping exposes the student counselee to risk of breach in confidentiality especially when, as the study found, the teacher counsellors are willing to share the records with parents and guardians. On the other hand the teacher counsellors may be sued for negligence if confidentiality of the client is breached through improper record keeping.

The study concludes that in school counselling, record keeping is far below the professional expectations and there is need for training and policy guidelines on this aspect of counselling confidentiality.

Referral

Teacher counsellors do refer students to other sources of help. The students are referred to other teachers, priest or pastors and to parents. Most important, the study found that referrals were not just a matter between the teacher counsellor and the student; but that the approval to refer was always sought mainly from the head teacher of the school.

Students indicated that they are mainly referred to teacher counsellors since they do not voluntarily seek counselling. The students surprisingly indicated no specific preference for seeking counselling help from teacher counsellors. They indicated that they could equally prefer to seek counselling help from class teachers, close students, parents and pastors. This finding unfortunately concludes that the teacher counsellors have not enhanced their relationship with students to make them a preferable source of counselling help in schools.

Referrals are necessary in counselling when the source of help at hand is limited or incapable of giving the necessary help. Referrals always pose a risk of breaching confidentiality especially when the person being referred to is not a skilled counsellor capable of handling confidentiality of the client. It is therefore upon the teacher counsellor to weigh what to disclose during referral. The study identifies difficulties in maintaining confidentiality during referral due to the need for teacher counsellors to seek approval before referring students to further help. It is inevitable that the teacher counsellor may have to disclose certain aspects of the student's case to the person approving the referral. Another key finding of this study was that other teachers ranked highest among the people to whom the teacher counsellors refer students. The reasons could be that most of the problems presented to teacher counsellors are of academic nature and too specific that a general teacher (including teacher counsellor) are not able to address and have to be referred to specific subject teacher. Another reason could be that the issues that make students seek counselling help are considered not sensitive and therefore the teacher counsellors refer them to other teachers on ad hoc basis. This may be subject of further research to clearly

determine if referrals to other non-counselling teachers pose a risk of breaching confidentiality.

In conclusion, this study observes that handling of referrals in school counselling interventions poses some risks to maintenance of confidentiality due to the need to seek approval before referring and also because majority of referrals are made to fellow teachers who have no counselling skills. This was a serious implication in school counselling since the school administration system does not provide for counsellors' independence when giving referral.

5.1.2 Factors that hinder observation of confidentiality

The other objective of the study was to identify factors that hinder the teacher counsellor from observing confidentiality in school counselling interventions.

The study found that despite the general aspects of confidentiality, there are other factors at play that pose challenges to the observation of confidentiality in school counselling. These factors are:

(i) School administration structure

Majority of the teacher counsellors make their daily work reports to the school head teachers and class teacher. The class teacher and school head teacher first and foremost interact with the students on different issues other than counselling; they are the custodians of discipline and coordination of learning in schools. This finding agrees with the student counselling conference (1973) that school counselling centres are perceived by the students as a spy for the school administration. Moreover, it is important that the people to whom the teacher counsellors report to are also skilled counsellors so that they may handle confidentiality in counselling professionally. It is important that the professional status and independence of teacher counsellors be recognised by both the school administration and entire academic staff. When students' confidentiality is violated even with the best of interest, the usefulness of the counselling centre ceases until students' confidence is rebuilt.

(ii) Counselling room

The study revealed that about half of the schools do not have a specific room set aside for counselling. For the majority of those who had counselling rooms, the rooms were located in areas that were not conducive for counselling e.g. next to classrooms and the rooms had no special features to enhance confidentiality.

The location and features of a counselling room is important in enhancing confidentiality. The best practises suggest that the counselling rooms should be located in a convenient place within the school and should have special feature such as soundproof walls to enhance privacy. This would make students feel safe and comfortable. The findings of this study are in agreement with Gitonga(1999) that mostly students have counselling needs but have nowhere to go for help.

(iii) Dual role of teacher counsellors

The study findings indicate that all teacher counsellors have other duties besides counselling students. Most of them had academics duties such class teachers or subject teachers. Other duties assigned to counsellors included administration work such as house mistress and club patrons. This finding may explain earlier finding of this study that teacher counsellors usually counselled students during break, lunch, and after classes in the evening.

The challenge of dual role of teacher counsellors in regard to confidentiality is two fold: On one end the teacher counsellors have no adequate time to conduct counselling and may therefore have limited time to conduct a counselling session professionally. Such hurried sessions during break times would not give adequate time to confidentiality requirements such as assurance, disclosures, and written consent. The teacher counsellors' time may also be too limited to allow for taking notes after the counselling and this may explain why they take notes during counselling at the risk of worrying their counselee.

The other challenge posed by dual role of teacher counsellors is that the teacher counsellors interact with the students in entirely different forums other than during counselling. During counselling the teacher counsellors are confidants to the students while during class time the teacher assumes a different role that include maintaining

discipline and order. This is truly difficult situation for both counselee and counsellor to maintain a trust relationship that will enhance confidentiality. It is trust dilemma. Professional counsellors are ethically obliged to refer client to another counsellors if there are conflicting relationships with the client. In school counselling, the duties of counsellors should not go beyond individual or group counselling and coordination of teachers, parents and community meetings.

This study concludes that the dual role of teacher counsellors is common in schools and it poses a challenge to creating trusting relationship between teacher counsellors and the students.

(iv) Other parties interested in confidential counselling information.

The findings show that other teachers, parents and school administrators are quite curious to know the information shared during counselling.

This compounds the problem of maintaining confidentiality of the counselling information due to the fact that a counsellor may not be able to deny such information to his seniors and colleagues.

A change in attitude is required especially among other teachers and school administrators towards the need for confidentiality in counselling.

(v) Use of information gathered during counselling

Majority of the teacher counsellors indicated that they use the information gathered during counselling for other purposes. They indicated that they use information for various purposes such as: Warn or advise other students, referring matter to the administration, taking disciplinary action against students, and inform other teachers.

The use of information discussed during counselling for any other purposes strongly erodes the confidentiality of the counselling services. When this finding is seen in the light of the earlier finding that students view is that no consent is requested before counselling information is released, it is no wonder that the students may fear going for counselling. It is especially a grave matter to note that the counselling information is used among other things to take a disciplinary action. Whether disciplinary actions

are taken against the counsellor or any other student but using information from a counselling session, it is enough reason to discourage students from seeking counselling.

In conclusion, the study finds that counselling confidentiality is greatly violated through usage of counselling information for other purposes in schools administration. This may have a profound effect on the well being of students and school relationship with the students and their families. It further exposes the teacher counsellors to legal liabilities from students or aggrieved families.

5.2 Limitation of the study and recommendations for further research

This study was limited in the geographical cover that was studied. While the teacher counsellors within Kikuyu division may be a fair representation of majority of all teacher counsellors in Central province, there is need to have a study comparing different provinces and between secondary and primary schools. Similarly, the study took a very wide scope of the aspects of confidentiality considered in secondary schools. It may be worthwhile to undertake studies on confidentiality based on specific aspects of confidentiality in order to understand in more details their implications on counselling confidentiality. Lastly this study was taken only four years after the formal introduction of counselling as the only behaviour corrective tool authorised in schools by the ministry of education. Many teachers have not had formal training to be counsellors. Studies at latter dates may give insight into trends of how confidentiality in counselling has changed over time and impacted by more and more training of teacher counsellors.

5.3 Implication on policy and practise

The study identified need to have guidelines on school counselling on how confidentiality within counselling should be handled. There are several situations in school counselling that pose confidentiality challenges that are otherwise not present in private counselling. Referrals are indeed challenge especially in cases where the students are required to make financial payments. In such cases it is inevitable that parents or the school head get involved. Seeking approval before referral is key item that require to be addressed by any such policy guideline. There is need to de-link

counselling from school administration thus giving teacher counsellors more autonomy in their work if counselling confidentiality has to be maintained.

The training of teacher counsellors needs to be encouraged. It is clear from the study that teachers lack appropriate counselling skills and this impact negatively on the handling of confidentiality in counselling. Sharing out of confidential counselling information and using it for other purposes such as discipline, arise mainly from lack of counselling skills. To give a balanced and similar levels of skills such training for teacher counsellors need to be coordinated at divisional level, in such level, teacher counsellor will also benefit from the exchange of ideas accruing therefrom.

The counselling centres need to be well supported with the necessary resources such as a conducive room and furniture and most importantly, well trained staff. Lack of dedicated staff in counselling services as the study found, put the teacher counsellors in dual relationship with the student counselee. All these deficiencies impact negatively on maintenance of confidentiality. Better working conditions such as adequate counselling time will allow teacher counsellors not to pay attention to details such as consent seeking, assurance and disclosure which otherwise get overlooked in scarcity of time.

There is need to create awareness on confidentiality in counselling among students. This will encourage students to avail themselves for counselling.

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APPENDIX 1: TEACHER COUNSELLORS QUESTIONNAIRE

Serial No. _____

Name _____

School _____

RESEARCH ON CONFIDENTIALITY IN SCHOOL COUNSELLING

Dear Counsellor;

I am Cecilia Nieri, a post graduate student in the department of sociology at the University of Nairobi. My subject of research is "Implication for confidentiality in school counselling". In order to understand this subject my lecturers and I feel that your input of your experience will be of great help. I am therefore humbly requesting you to assist in filling this questionnaire.

Thank you,

Cecilia

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS IN CHARGE OF COUNSELLING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

PART A:

Please indicate by putting a tick on the correct option or fill in appropriately in the blank spaces provided, whichever is applicable.

1. Sex.

(i) Female (ii) Male

2. Indicate your age? _____

3. What is your marital status?

- (i). Single
- (ii). Married
- (iii). Separated
- (iv). Divorced
- (v). Windowed

4. What are your professional qualifications?

- (i). Untrained teacher
- (ii). Diploma in education
- (iii). Graduate teacher

(iv). Others (please specify) _____

5. For how long have you been in teaching? _____
6. How long have you been in charge of counselling in this school?

7. Have you been in charge of counselling in any other schools prior to your current posting? (i) Yes, (ii) No
If yes, for how long? _____
8. Do you have any basic training in counselling?
(i) Yes, (ii) No
If yes, please specify

9. On average how many students come for individual counselling to you on weekly basis. _____

PART B SECTION I: ASPECTS OF CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Is the observation of confidentiality on student issues important?
(i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, why is it important?

2. Has the meaning of confidentiality in counselling been explained to the whole school?

(i) Yes (ii) No.

If yes, who explained it?

For what purpose was it explained?

3. Do you assure the student before a counselling session that all information that the student shares will be kept confidential? (i) Yes (ii) No
If yes, how often do you assure?

- (i). Always
(ii). Sometimes
(iii). Rarely
(iv). Never

4. Are the limits of confidentiality in counselling clarified to the students before counselling session starts? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, how often are the limits clarified?

- (i). Always
- (ii). Sometimes
- (iii). Rarely
- (iv). Never

5. Under what circumstances can you break the confidentiality of your counselling sessions? (*Please indicate*)

- (i) _____
- (ii) _____
- (iii) _____

6. How often do you seek consent from students before releasing any information they have shared with you during counselling?

- (i). Always
- (ii). Sometimes
- (iii). Rarely
- (iv). Never

7. Do you request for consent from students each and every time you want to disclose their counselling information as the occasion arises? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, in what form is the consent that student give to release information shared with you during counselling?

- (i) Written (ii) verbal (iii) No consent is sought

8. How often do you take notes during the counselling sessions with students?

- (i). Always
- (ii). Sometimes
- (iii). Rarely
- (iv). Never

9. Do you ever share the notes you take during counselling with any other person?

- (i) Yes (ii) No.

If yes, with whom do you share? _____

10. Where do you keep the notes you take during counselling sessions?

- (i). School files
- (ii). Personal files
- (iii). Other places (Please specify) _____

11. Do the students seek counselling help voluntarily? (i) Yes (ii) No.

If no, who compels them to seek counselling help? _____

12. Do you refer students to seek help from other resourceful people? (i) Yes
(ii) No.

If yes, indicate to whom you refer them

- (i). Other teaching staff
- (ii). Pastor/ priest
- (iii). Matron
- (iv). Local chief
- (v). Police
- (vi). Other people (Please specify) _____

13. Do you seek approval before referring students to other resourceful people?
(i) Yes (ii) No.

If yes, who approves?

- (i). School head teacher
- (ii). Class teachers
- (iii). Board of governors
- (iv). Teacher on duty
- (v). Others (Please specify) _____

14. Under which circumstances can you refer students to other sources of help?
Please indicate

- (i) _____
- (ii) _____
- (iii) _____

PART B SECTION II: FACTORS HINDERING CONFIDENTIALITY

15. Regarding your counselling duties, whom do you report to?

- (i). Nobody
- (ii). School head teacher
- (iii). Class teachers
- (iv). Board of governors
- (v). School inspectors
- (vi). Parents
- (vii). Others (Please specify) _____

16. Is there any special room for counselling in your school?

(i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, where is the room located? _____

17. What special feature does the counselling room have?

18. Apart from counselling, do you have other duties in school? (i) Yes (ii) No.

If yes, please specify _____

19. Do you have specific time for counselling? (i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, please specify which time _____

20. Which people have ever shown interest in knowing what the student has shared with you during counselling? Please choose all that apply.

- (i). School administrator
- (ii). Parents
- (iii). Teachers
- (iv). Other students
- (v). Others (Please specify) _____

21. Do you use the information you gather during counselling for other purposes?

(i) Yes (ii) No

If yes, please specify how you use the information (Tick where applicable)

- (i). To take disciplinary action
- (ii). To refer the matter to the administration for further action
- (iii). To warn or advice the other students
- (iv). To inform the other teachers on what is happening in the school
- (v). Other actions (Please specify) _____

22. Do you discuss with other teachers the best approach to give help to a student who need counselling help? (i) Yes (ii) No.

If yes, Please specify how often.

- (i). Always
- (ii). Sometimes

- (iii). Rarely
- (iv). Never

23. In your opinion, does confidentiality influence the number of students seeking counselling services? (i) Yes (ii) No

24. Please tick here below the factors that, in your opinion, prevent the students from seeking counselling services.

- (i). Lack of trust that counselling will be confidential
- (ii). Fear of being reprimanded
- (iii). Parental involvement
- (iv). Administration concern
- (v). Accessibility of counselling services
- (vi). Others (Please specify)

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

25. In your opinion, how do you rate the task of maintaining confidentiality in school counselling?

- (i). Easy
- (ii). Possible
- (iii). Difficultly
- (iv). Not possible

26. Which factors make it difficult to maintain confidentiality in counselling in your school? (*Please specify*)

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH STUDENTS

Serial No. _____

School _____

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH STUDENTS

1. Do you have a teacher counsellor in your school?
2. Do you know his or her name?
3. Who introduced you to her/him for the first time?
 - () Head teacher
 - () Class teacher
 - () Other students
 - () Counsellor himself / herself
4. Do you know the meaning of the word confidentiality in counselling?
 - (i) () Yes
 - (ii) () No.

If yes, what does it mean?

5. Who defined the word confidentiality to you?
 - () English teacher
 - () Teacher counsellor
 - () Class teacher
 - () Other person (*Please specify*) _____
 6. Are the students assured before counselling session that whatever they share with the teacher counsellor will be kept confidential?
 - () Yes
 - () No
 7. Can the assurance that counselling information will be kept confidential influence you in seeking counselling help? _____
If yes, how _____
 8. Do you know the circumstances under which the teacher counsellor can release information shared within the counselling session? (i) () yes (ii) () No.
If yes, please specify _____
-

9. Do you think that the teacher counsellor discloses the information students released to him or her?

(i) ☐ Yes (ii) ☐ No

If yes, whom do you think he or she discloses the information to?

☐ Head teacher

☐ Class teacher

☐ Other teachers

☐ Parents

☐ Other people (*Please specify*) _____

10. Has the teacher counsellor ever asked you for permission to release information that you shared with him or her?

11. Do you give a written or verbal consent to the teacher counsellor to disclosure information you have shared with him or her?

12. Does the teacher counsellor take notes during the counselling session?

13. If you go for counselling and teacher counsellor starts to record the information you share with him or her would you mind? (i) ☐ Yes
(ii) ☐ No

14. Do you have access to records on your counselling sessions?

15. Who refers you to the teacher counsellor?

☐ principal

☐ Class teacher

☐ My Parent/ Guardian

☐ fellow students

☐ I decide personally

16. Whom would you feel confident to seek counselling from?

☐ Class teacher

☐ Teacher counsellor

☐ Head teacher

☐ Subject teacher

☐ Other teacher

☐ fellow students

☐ Others (*Please specify*) _____

17. Whom do you think is interested in knowing what you shared with the teacher counsellor

☐ Class teacher

☐ Head teacher

☐ Parent / guardians

- ☐ fellow students
- ☐ Nobody

18. Do you really mind the above people knowing? (i) ☐ Yes (ii) ☐ No
If yes, please specify whom you mind
knowing_____

19. What would prevent you from going for counselling?

- ☐ Lack of confidence
- ☐ Do not trust the teacher
counsellor
- ☐ Do not have hope of being
assisted
- ☐ Others (*Please
specify*)_____

20. What issues do you feel NOT comfortable sharing with the teacher
counsellor?

- ☐ Personal matters
- ☐ Academic
- ☐ Relationships
- ☐ Family problems
- ☐ Others (*Please
specify*)_____