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# Guidance and Counselling Practices in Managing Learner Discipline in Public Junior Schools in Moiben Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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**Abstract**

Effective learner discipline is essential for promoting a conducive school environment, yet guidance and counseling practices often encounter challenges. To address these issues, this study examined the nature of learner indiscipline and evaluated the implementation of guidance and counseling strategies in managing student behavior in public Junior Schools across Moiben Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. A convergent mixed-methods design was adopted involving 238 respondents drawn from 26 public Junior Schools, including Heads of Institutions, Deputy Heads, and teachers. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis and analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that learner indiscipline was prevalent in various forms. Deputy Heads identified lateness and poor time management (52.6%) and absenteeism or truancy (42.1%) as major concerns, while teachers highlighted disrespect and fighting (9.2% each), classroom disruption (8.6%), and bullying (8.0%). Guidance and counselling programmes faced significant challenges, including inadequate administrative support (54.6%), insufficient teacher preparedness and commitment (53.8%), weak programme planning and implementation (48.7%), and limited effectiveness in reducing disciplinary problems (50.0%). Despite these challenges, school records showed that counselling services were provided to learners facing classroom, attendance, peer-related, family, and social challenges. The study concludes that guidance and counselling have the potential to improve learner discipline, but their effectiveness is limited by institutional and implementation challenges. Strengthening administrative support, teacher training, counselling facilities, programme planning, record keeping, and follow-up mechanisms could enhance discipline management in public Junior Schools.

**Keywords:** Guidance and counselling, learner discipline, learner indiscipline, public Junior Schools, Competency-Based Education, Kenya

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## Introduction

Learner discipline is fundamental to maintaining a conducive school environment, promoting effective teaching and learning, and fostering responsible behaviour among learners (Welsh, 2024; Ijaz et al., 2024). It helps establish acceptable standards of conduct, encourages respect for others, and supports the development of self-control and accountability, which are key expectations under Kenya's Competency-Based Education (CBE) framework (KICD, 2019). However, schools continue to experience various forms of learner indiscipline, including absenteeism, truancy, lateness, bullying, fighting, classroom disruption, and disobedience, which interfere with learning and undermine positive teacher-learner relationships (Appleton et al., 2024; Kutywayo et al., 2024). Such behaviours are influenced by individual, family, peer, and school-related factors, highlighting the need for disciplinary approaches that address their underlying causes rather than relying solely on punitive measures (Abang et al., 2024; Appleton et al., 2024; Welsh, 2024).

Research from different parts of the world indicates that learner discipline is shaped not only by students' behaviour but also by broader school conditions. Anderson and McKenzie (2022) found that schools serving disadvantaged populations in the United States experienced challenges in implementing discipline policies, while Welsh (2024) identified teacher preparation and school leadership support as critical determinants of disciplinary effectiveness. Similarly, Appleton et al. (2024) reported that school misbehaviour was associated with negative academic experiences and poor relationships with teachers. These findings suggest that effective discipline management requires supportive school environments and strategies that focus on prevention and behavioural development.

Guidance and counselling is an important approach for promoting positive learner behaviour. Through counselling, learners can develop self-awareness, manage emotions, resolve interpersonal conflicts, and make responsible decisions. Unlike punitive disciplinary measures, counselling focuses on understanding behavioural challenges and helping learners adopt positive coping mechanisms. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of guidance and counselling depends on factors such as programme organisation, teacher preparedness, administrative support, availability of facilities and resources, and consistent follow-up. Ijaz et al. (2024), in a systematic review of disciplinary strategies, emphasized the importance of evaluating discipline interventions based on their impact on learners' behavioural and psychosocial outcomes.

Evidence from Africa further demonstrates the role of guidance and counselling in promoting discipline. In Uganda, Korugyendo et al. (2022) found a positive, though modest, relationship between guidance and counselling and student discipline in secondary schools. Similarly, Christiana et al. (2022) reported that school administrative practices, including guidance and counselling services, contributed to improved discipline among students. In Ghana, Abonyi and Salifu (2023) observed that although counselling was widely recognized as an important disciplinary tool, some teachers continued to rely on corporal punishment despite policy restrictions. Likewise, Zondo and Mncube (2024) identified challenges in the implementation of learner discipline policies in South Africa, including inadequate stakeholder involvement and weak communication structures. Collectively, these studies suggest that counselling can contribute positively to discipline but requires strong institutional support and effective implementation.

In Kenya, guidance and counselling have been widely promoted as alternatives to punitive disciplinary practices. Ajowi and Simatwa (2010) found that guidance and counselling played a role in managing learner discipline in Kisumu District secondary schools, although its utilization remained limited. Likewise, Kimotho et al. (2019) reported inadequate use of counselling services in promoting discipline in public secondary schools in the Mt. Kenya East region. More recently, Maasai et al. (2023) established a positive relationship between peer-counselling programmes and student discipline in public secondary schools in Kiambu County. While these studies provide evidence of the potential contribution of counselling to discipline management, they mainly focus on secondary schools and offer limited insights into Junior Schools operating under the CBE framework.

The transition to Junior School under the Competency-Based Education system places increased emphasis on nurturing learners' values, attitudes, social responsibility, and behavioural competencies alongside academic achievement (KICD, 2019). Learners at this level are also undergoing significant social and developmental changes that may expose them to behavioural challenges requiring appropriate guidance and support. Consequently, effective discipline management and functional guidance and counselling programmes are critical for supporting learners' holistic development and successful adjustment within the school environment.

Despite the growing recognition of guidance and counselling as a disciplinary strategy, there remains limited evidence on the nature of indiscipline cases experienced in public Junior Schools and the effectiveness of counselling programmes in addressing them. Most existing studies in Kenya have concentrated on secondary schools, leaving a gap in understanding how counselling services operate within Junior Schools and the institutional factors that influence their effectiveness. In Moiben Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County, there is limited empirical evidence regarding the forms of learner indiscipline, the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programmes, and the extent to which factors such as teacher preparedness, administrative support, resource availability, programme planning, record keeping, and follow-up influence discipline management. This study therefore examined the presence of learner indiscipline and guidance and counselling practices in managing learners' discipline in public Junior

Schools in Moiben Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

## Literature Review

**Learner Indiscipline in Schools**

Learner indiscipline remains a major concern because it disrupts teaching and learning, strains teacher-learner relationships, and weakens the school environment. Common forms include absenteeism, truancy, lateness, bullying, fighting, classroom disruption, substance abuse, destruction of property, and non-compliance with school rules. However, the occurrence and management of these behaviours vary depending on learner experiences, school contexts, and disciplinary practices (Appleton et al., 2024; Kutywayo et al., 2024; Rodriguez & Welsh, 2022).

International studies show that learner indiscipline is influenced by both individual behaviour and school conditions. Appleton et al. (2024) found that negative academic experiences and poor teacher-learner relationships were associated with school misbehaviour among ninth-grade learners in the United States. Rodriguez and Welsh (2022) emphasized the importance of examining disciplinary outcomes through empirical evidence rather than perceptions alone. Similarly, Anderson and McKenzie (2022) reported that discipline policy implementation differed across school contexts, while Welsh (2024) identified staff preparation and school leadership as important determinants of disciplinary practices. These findings suggest that learner behaviour is closely linked to the quality of the school environment and disciplinary systems.

Studies from Africa reveal similar concerns. In South Africa, Tshatshu et al. (2022) found gaps between truancy-management policies and their implementation, while Zondo and Mncube (2024) reported challenges such as inadequate communication and limited stakeholder involvement in enforcing learner codes of conduct. Kutywayo et al. (2024) also documented bullying, aggression, and violence among learners in township schools. In Nigeria, Abang et al. (2024) found that learner behaviour was influenced by family behavioural control and religiosity. These studies demonstrate that learner indiscipline is shaped by school, family, and peer-related factors.

In Kenya, several studies have documented disciplinary challenges in schools. M'muyuri et al. (2021) examined student participation in school leadership and discipline in Meru County secondary schools. Kasau et al. (2022) identified drug and substance abuse, bullying, and property destruction among common disciplinary concerns in Kitui County. Nthama et al. (2022) linked substance abuse with absenteeism, truancy, lateness, and insubordination in Machakos County secondary schools. More recently, Omwaka and Gabriel (2025) found that learner indiscipline negatively affected academic performance in public boarding secondary schools in Makueni County. While these studies were conducted in secondary schools, they highlight the need to identify disciplinary concerns within specific educational contexts.

The reviewed literature underscores the importance of examining the forms of indiscipline experienced by learners in public Junior Schools rather than assuming that findings from primary or secondary schools apply directly. This study therefore investigated the types of indiscipline present among learners in public Junior Schools in Moiben Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County.

**Guidance and Counselling in Managing Learner Discipline**

Guidance and counselling are widely recognized as important strategies for promoting positive behaviour and managing learner discipline. Through counselling, learners are assisted to reflect on their actions, resolve personal and social challenges, develop problem-solving skills, and make responsible decisions. Its effectiveness, however, depends not only on the existence of counselling services but also on their quality, accessibility, and consistent implementation.

International studies indicate that counselling and related behavioural-support interventions can positively influence learner discipline. Yusoff and Wan Abdullah (2021) examined guidance and counselling programmes in Malaysian secondary schools, highlighting the importance of programme implementation in addressing disciplinary concerns. Similarly, Bohnenkamp et al. (2021) reported improvements in selected discipline-related outcomes following the implementation of a multilevel emotional and behavioural intervention in the United States. Ijaz et al. (2024) further emphasized the need to evaluate disciplinary approaches based on their behavioural and psychosocial outcomes rather than assuming they are universally effective.

Evidence from Africa provides more direct support for the role of counselling in discipline management. In Uganda, Korugyendo et al. (2022) reported a positive but weak relationship between guidance and counselling and student discipline in secondary schools ($r=.159$, $p=.024$). In Ghana, Adu and Srivastava (2024) examined the contribution of guidance and counselling to student discipline in public senior high schools. Similarly, Banda (2022) and Chisanga (2020) identified counselling as an important disciplinary strategy while noting implementation challenges related to training and resource availability. These studies suggest that counselling can contribute to discipline improvement when adequately supported.

In Kenya, several studies have examined counselling as a school-based disciplinary strategy. Ajowi and Simatwa (2010) investigated its role in promoting student discipline in Kisumu District secondary schools, while Kesui et al. (2017) examined guidance and counselling programmes in Bureti Sub-County. Vuleza (2021) also explored the role of counselling in managing discipline in Busia County secondary schools. More recently, Maasai et al. (2023) reported a positive and significant relationship between peer-counselling interventions and student discipline in Kiambu County ($r=.476$, $p<.05$). Kimotho et al. (2019) similarly examined the role of counsellors in managing discipline in public secondary schools.

Overall, the literature suggests that guidance and counselling have the potential to improve learner discipline. However, their effectiveness depends on accessibility, quality of implementation, and the extent to which learners perceive them as helpful in addressing behavioural concerns. Evidence from Junior Schools remains limited, necessitating further investigation in the current study context.

**Institutional Support and Implementation of Counselling Programmes**

The effectiveness of guidance and counselling depends largely on institutional support. Key aspects include administrative commitment, teacher preparedness, programme planning, availability of resources, and regular monitoring. Welsh (2024) identified staff preparation and leadership support as important influences on school discipline,

while Anderson and McKenzie (2022) showed that discipline policy implementation varies across school contexts. These findings highlight the need to examine the institutional environment in which counselling programmes operate.

Zondo and Mncube (2024) reported challenges related to inadequate communication and limited stakeholder involvement in implementing learner discipline policies. Similarly, Abonyi and Salifu (2023) found differences between positive-discipline policies and actual disciplinary practices in Ghanaian schools, suggesting that policy availability does not guarantee effective implementation.

Teacher preparedness is particularly important because teachers often balance instructional and counselling responsibilities. Effective counselling requires time for listening, documentation, intervention, and follow-up. Where teachers face heavy workloads, counselling services may become less effective. Studies by Banda (2022) and Chisanga (2020) identified inadequate training, limited resources, and poor programme organization as key barriers to counselling effectiveness.

Record keeping is another critical component because it enables schools to document interventions, track behavioural trends, and monitor progress. However, counselling records may include emotional, family, social, and health-related issues in addition to disciplinary cases. Consequently, schools should maintain accurate records while ensuring learner confidentiality.

**Research Gap**

The reviewed literature shows that learner indiscipline includes truancy, lateness, bullying, classroom disruption, substance abuse, and non-compliance with school rules (Nthama et al., 2022; Kasau et al., 2022; Kutywayo et al., 2024). Previous studies have also examined the relationship between guidance and counselling and learner discipline in Uganda and Kenya (Ajowi & Simatwa, 2010; Korugyendo et al., 2022; Maasai et al., 2023). However, findings on the effectiveness of counselling remain mixed, and some studies focus on broader behavioural interventions rather than counselling specifically.

Three key gaps emerge. First, most Kenyan studies have focused on secondary schools, limiting their applicability to public Junior Schools operating under the Competency-Based Education (CBE) framework. Second, there is limited evidence on the specific forms of indiscipline experienced by learners in public Junior Schools in Moiben Sub-County. Third, although counselling programmes exist in many schools, there is inadequate evidence regarding their effectiveness and the influence of factors such as administrative support, teacher preparedness, programme planning, record keeping, and follow-up.

This study addressed these gaps by examining the presence of indiscipline cases and guidance and counselling practices in managing learner discipline in public Junior Schools in Moiben Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

**Theoretical Framework**

The study was guided by the behavioural perspective, which explains how behaviour is shaped by environmental conditions, consequences and reinforcement (Skinner, 1953). From this perspective, guidance and counselling can help learners recognise inappropriate behaviour, understand its consequences and develop more acceptable responses. Counselling may therefore contribute to discipline by supporting behavioural reflection,

positive reinforcement and the development of self-regulation.

## Methodology

### Research design

The study adopted a convergent mixed-methods research design incorporating a descriptive survey approach. The design enabled the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information on learner discipline and the implementation of guidance and counselling.

### Study area

The study was conducted in Moiben Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The area comprises rural and peri-urban settings with public Junior Schools operating under the CBE framework. The study focused on these schools because learner discipline is an important component of maintaining an effective learning environment and supporting learner development.

### Target population and sample

The target population comprised 624 respondents drawn from 26 public Junior Schools: 26 Heads of Institutions, 26 Deputy Heads of Institutions, and approximately 572 teachers.

Cochran's formula was used to determine the initial sample size at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. A finite population correction was subsequently applied, resulting in an adjusted sample of 238 respondents. The sample comprised 19 Heads of Institutions, 19 Deputy Heads of Institutions, and 200 teachers from 19 public Junior Schools across five wards.

Purposive sampling was used to select Heads and Deputy Heads of Institutions because of their administrative responsibilities and knowledge of school discipline. Simple random sampling was used to select teachers.

**Table 1. Sample distribution**

| Respondent category | Sample size |
|---|---|
| Heads of Institutions | 19 |
| Deputy Heads of Institutions | 19 |
| Teachers | 200 |
| **Total** | **238** |

*Source: Study data.*

### Data collection instruments

Three instruments were used to collect data: questionnaires, interview schedules, and a document-analysis checklist.

Questionnaires collected information on the presence of learner indiscipline and respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of guidance and counselling. The questionnaire items covered administrative support, teacher preparedness, programme planning and implementation, record keeping, and perceived behavioural outcomes.

Interview schedules were used to obtain information from Heads of Institutions concerning the implementation of guidance and counselling, the challenges experienced, and the types of disciplinary cases referred for counselling.

Document analysis involved the review of school discipline registers, guidance and counselling records, attendance records, class-teacher records, and relevant administrative reports. The records were examined to identify common categories of indiscipline and the distribution of learners receiving guidance and counselling.

### Validity and reliability

Content validity was established through expert review of the research

instruments by supervisors and lecturers in Educational Management at the University of Eldoret. Their feedback was used to improve the clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the items.

A pilot study was undertaken in public Junior Schools outside the study area to identify ambiguities and improve the instruments before the main data collection. The pilot exercise was intended to enhance the suitability of the instruments for collecting information on learner discipline and disciplinary strategies.

**Data analysis**

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. These statistics were used to summarise responses concerning the presence of indiscipline and the effectiveness of guidance and counselling.

Qualitative information from interviews was analysed thematically. The analysis focused on administrative support, availability of counselling facilities, teacher preparedness, competing teaching responsibilities, and the use of counselling for serious or persistent disciplinary cases.

Documentary data were summarised using frequencies and percentages. The results from questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis were compared to identify areas of convergence and divergence.

**Ethical considerations**

The study sought to protect participants' privacy and ensure that participation did not expose respondents to unnecessary harm. Information collected was treated confidentially and used for academic purposes. Learners' identifying information was excluded from the documentary analysis.

## Results

**Background Characteristics of Respondents**

Background information was collected to establish the characteristics of the respondents and provide context for interpreting their responses on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in promoting learner discipline in public Junior Schools. The information covered gender, age, professional experience, and highest professional qualification among Heads of Institutions (HOIs), Deputy Heads of Institutions (DHOIs), and teachers.

The findings in Table 1 show differences in gender distribution across the three respondent groups. Among HOIs, 14 (73.7%) were male and 5 (26.3%) were female. Similarly, 13 (68.4%) of the DHOIs were male, compared with 6 (31.6%) who were female. In contrast, female teachers constituted the majority, accounting for 136 (68.0%) of the respondents, while male teachers accounted for 64 (32.0%). These findings indicate that men were more highly represented in school leadership positions, whereas women constituted the majority of the teaching respondents.

Regarding age, most HOIs were aged 45–54 years, accounting for 9 (47.4%), followed by 8 (42.1%) aged 35–44 years. The remaining 2 (10.5%) were aged 55 years and above, and none were aged 25–34 years. Among DHOIs, 11 (57.9%) were aged 45–54 years, while 4 (21.1%) were aged 35–44 years and another 4 (21.1%) were aged 25–34 years. No DHOIs were aged 55 years and above. Teachers were predominantly younger, with 168 (84.0%) aged 25–34 years. A further 16 (8.0%) were aged 35–44 years, 9 (4.5%) were aged 45–54 years, and 7

(3.5%) were aged 55 years and above. This indicates a clear age difference between school leaders and teachers in the sampled schools.

**Table 1.** Background characteristics of respondents

| Characteristic | Category | HOIs n (%) | DHOIs n (%) | Teachers n (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 5 (26.3) | 6 (31.6) | 136 (68.0) |
| | Male | 14 (73.7) | 13 (68.4) | 64 (32.0) |
| Age | 25–34 years | 0 (0.0) | 4 (21.1) | 168 (84.0) |
| | 35–44 years | 8 (42.1) | 4 (21.1) | 16 (8.0) |
| | 45–54 years | 9 (47.4) | 11 (57.9) | 9 (4.5) |
| | 55 years and above | 2 (10.5) | 0 (0.0) | 7 (3.5) |
| Professional experience | Less than 5 years | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 114 (57.0) |
| | 5–10 years | 8 (42.1) | 8 (42.1) | 57 (28.5) |
| | 11–15 years | 0 (0.0) | 4 (21.1) | 16 (8.0) |
| | Above 15 years | 11 (57.9) | 7 (36.8) | 13 (6.5) |
| Professional qualification | Certificate | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 21 (10.5) |
| | Diploma | 2 (10.5) | 0 (0.0) | 38 (19.0) |
| | Bachelor's degree | 11 (57.9) | 15 (78.9) | 131 (65.5) |
| | Master's degree | 6 (31.6) | 4 (21.1) | 4 (2.0) |
| | Doctorate | 0 (0.0) | 0 (0.0) | 6 (3.0) |
| Total respondents | | 19 (100.0) | 19 (100.0) | 200 (100.0) |

**Note.** *HOIs = Heads of Institutions; DHOIs = Deputy Heads of Institutions*
Source: Study data.

The findings on professional experience show that HOIs and DHOIs generally had longer experience than teachers. Among HOIs, 11 (57.9%) had more than 15 years of experience, while 8 (42.1%) had 5–10 years. Among DHOIs, 8 (42.1%) had 5–10 years of experience, 7 (36.8%) had more than 15 years, and 4 (21.1%) had 11–15 years. None of the HOIs or DHOIs reported less than five years of experience. In contrast, 114 (57.0%) of the teachers had less than five years of experience, 57 (28.5%) had 5–10 years, 16 (8.0%) had 11–15 years, and 13 (6.5%) had more than 15 years. The findings suggest that most school leaders had substantial professional experience, whereas the teaching group consisted largely of respondents with fewer years of experience.

In terms of professional qualifications, bachelor's degrees were the most common qualification among all three respondent groups. Among HOIs, 11 (57.9%) held bachelor's degrees, 6 (31.6%) held master's degrees, and 2 (10.5%) held diplomas. Among DHOIs, 15 (78.9%) held bachelor's degrees and 4 (21.1%) held master's degrees. For teachers, 131 (65.5%) held bachelor's degrees, 38 (19.0%) held diplomas, 21 (10.5%) held certificates, 4 (2.0%) held master's degrees, and 6 (3.0%) held doctorates.

Hence, the findings indicate that the respondent groups differed in gender, age, professional experience, and qualifications. School leadership was predominantly male and comprised respondents with longer professional

experience, while the teaching group was predominantly female and younger. Bachelor's degrees were the most common qualification across all three groups.

**Presence of Learner Indiscipline in Public Junior Schools**

**Questionnaire Findings on Learner Indiscipline**

Questionnaire data were analysed to establish respondents' perceptions of learners' adherence to school rules, class attendance, time management, and the contribution of disciplinary strategies to school performance. Table 4 presents the findings.

**Table 4.** Respondents' perceptions of learner discipline in public Junior Schools

| Statement | Agree, n (%) | Undecided, n (%) | Disagree, n (%) | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learners follow school rules and regulations | 125 (52.5) | 37 (15.5) | 76 (31.9) | 2.21 | 0.90 |
| Learners attend classes regularly | 173 (72.7) | 20 (8.4) | 45 (18.9) | 2.54 | 0.79 |
| Learners observe time management | 119 (50.0) | 28 (11.8) | 91 (38.2) | 2.12 | 0.93 |
| Disciplinary strategies have improved overall school performance | 116 (48.7) | 14 (5.9) | 108 (45.4) | 2.03 | 0.97 |

Source: Research data (2026).

Class attendance received the highest agreement (72.7%), compared with adherence to school rules (52.5%) and time management (50.0%). However, 31.9% disagreed that learners followed school rules, while 38.2% disagreed that learners observed time management. Respondents were also divided on whether disciplinary strategies had improved school performance, with 48.7% agreeing and 45.4% disagreeing. These findings suggest that attendance was perceived more positively than rule compliance and time management. They are consistent with Jeruto et al. (2021), who observed that awareness of school rules does not necessarily translate into compliance, and Tshatshu et al. (2022), who reported challenges in managing learner truancy in South African public high schools. Similarly, Kasau et al. (2022) identified substance abuse, bullying and property destruction as discipline concerns in Kenyan public secondary schools.

**Document Analysis Findings on Learner Indiscipline**

Document analysis was conducted using school discipline records, attendance registers, guidance and counselling records, and other relevant documents from 19 public Junior Schools. Recorded cases were categorised into classroom behaviour, attendance and punctuality, peer relations, health-, family- and social-related concerns, and rule compliance and authority. Figure 1 presents the mean recorded frequencies and standard deviations across Grades 7, 8 and 9.

Classroom behaviour had the highest recorded mean frequencies, declining from 1,373.7 (SD = 207.2) in Grade 7 to 968.4 (SD = 231.7) in Grade 8 and 576.3 (SD = 114.1) in Grade 9. Attendance and punctuality were also

prominent, with mean frequencies of 948.2, 752.2 and 723.2 for Grades 7, 8 and 9, respectively.

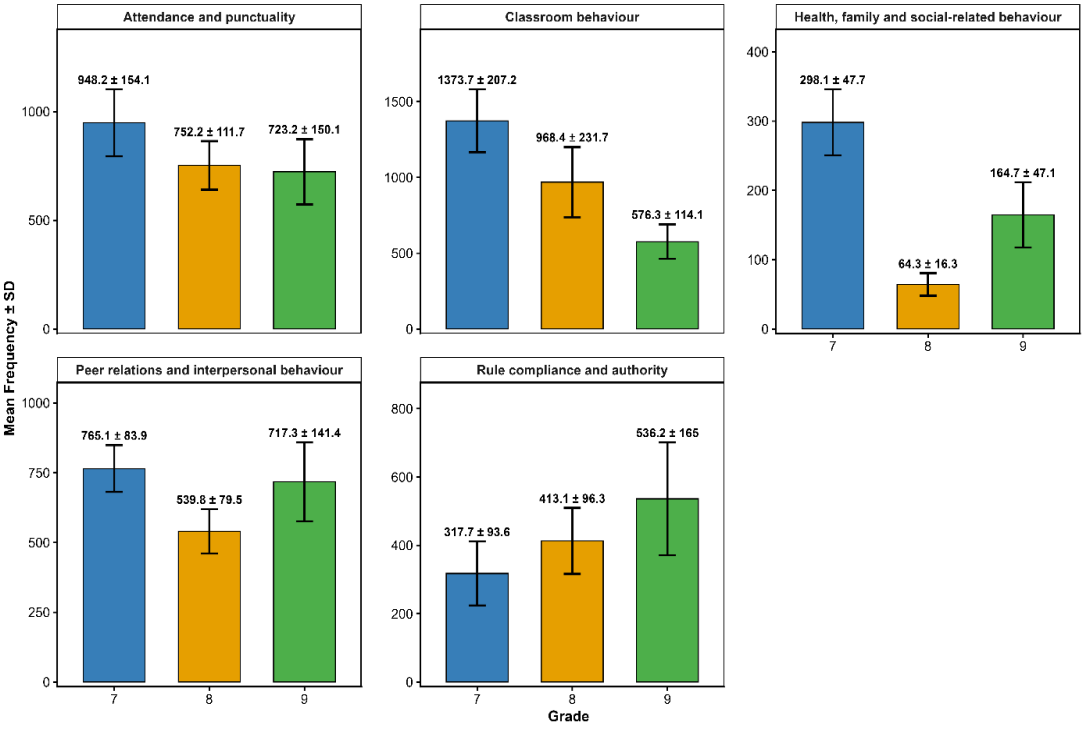



**Figure 1.** Mean frequency of learner indiscipline by grade and broad category in public Junior Schools in Moiben Sub-County.

*Bars represent mean recorded frequencies across the 19 sampled schools, with error bars showing ±1 standard deviation (SD).*

Source: Research data (2026).

Peer-related concerns varied across grades, recording means of 765.1 in Grade 7, 539.8 in Grade 8 and 717.3 in Grade 9. Health-, family- and social-related concerns recorded means of 298.1 in Grade 7 and 64.3 in Grade 8; the Grade 9 figure was unavailable. In contrast, recorded concerns relating to rule compliance and authority increased from 317.7 in Grade 7 to 413.1 in Grade 8 and 536.2 in Grade 9.

Hence, classroom behaviour and attendance-related concerns had the highest recorded frequencies, while peer relations and rule compliance also featured prominently. These findings suggest that discipline concerns vary across categories and grades. They are consistent with Appleton et al. (2024) and Welsh et al. (2024), who emphasise the importance of school context, learner experiences and school climate in understanding learner behaviour. However, these figures represent recorded cases rather than confirmed prevalence rates.

**Implementation of guidance and counselling in managing learner discipline**

The second objective examined the implementation of guidance and counselling in managing learner discipline in public Junior Schools in Moiben Sub-County. Table 5 presents respondents' perceptions of administrative support,

teacher preparedness, programme planning, record keeping and the contribution of counselling to learner discipline.

**Table 3.** Respondents' perceptions of guidance and counselling in managing learner discipline

| Statement | Agree, n (%) | Neutral, n (%) | Disagree, n (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| School administration provides adequate support for guidance and counselling | 85 (35.7) | 23 (9.7) | 130 (54.6) |
| Teachers are committed to guidance and counselling and adequately trained | 28 (11.8) | 82 (34.5) | 128 (53.8) |
| Teachers effectively plan and implement guidance and counselling programmes | 43 (18.1) | 79 (33.2) | 116 (48.7) |
| Teachers maintain adequate records of learners' behavioural and disciplinary concerns | 79 (33.2) | 71 (29.8) | 88 (37.0) |
| Guidance and counselling have helped prevent and reduce disciplinary problems | 79 (33.2) | 40 (16.8) | 119 (50.0) |

*Source: Study data.*

The findings revealed notable challenges in the implementation of guidance and counselling programmes. A majority of respondents disagreed that school administrations provided sufficient support for counselling activities (54.6%) and that teachers were adequately trained and committed to counselling services (53.8%). In addition, 48.7% felt that counselling programmes were not effectively planned or implemented. Views on record keeping were mixed, although 37.0% of respondents indicated that counselling records were inadequate.

Regarding programme outcomes, half of the respondents (50.0%) disagreed that guidance and counselling had contributed to preventing or reducing disciplinary problems, while only 33.2% agreed. These results suggest that guidance and counselling were generally perceived as inadequately supported and less effective in addressing learner discipline challenges.

The findings support the observations of Welsh (2024), who emphasized the role of teacher preparedness and school leadership in effective discipline management, and Abonyi and Salifu (2023), who reported inconsistencies between formal disciplinary policies and actual practice in Ghanaian schools. Similarly, Korugyendo et al. (2022) found a weak but significant positive relationship between guidance and counselling and learner discipline in Uganda. However, the findings differ from those of Maasai et al. (2023), who reported a stronger positive association between peer counselling and discipline among students in Kenyan public secondary schools. These differences may be attributed to variations in school contexts, implementation practices, and methods used to assess outcomes.

**Guidance and Counselling Records**

Document analysis was conducted to examine the availability and use of guidance and counselling records in the sampled schools. Of the 19 schools, 17 (89.5%) maintained guidance and counselling record books, while two (10.5%) combined counselling records with discipline records.

The custody of counselling records varied across the schools. Ten schools kept the records with the Heads of Institutions, five with Deputy Heads of Institutions, and two with teachers responsible for guidance and counselling. These findings indicate differences in record-management arrangements.

The records indicated that a total of 4,105 learner entries or cases were recorded as receiving guidance and counselling. Classroom behaviour accounted for the largest category, with 1,280 records (31.2%). This was followed by health-, family-, and social-related concerns, with 1,094 (26.7%), and peer relations and interpersonal behaviour, with 929 (22.6%). Rule compliance and authority accounted for 533 (13.0%), while attendance and punctuality accounted for 269 (6.6%). These findings indicate that counselling was not limited to direct violations of school rules but was also used to address wider behavioural and social concerns.

The records further indicated that guidance and counselling were mainly provided for serious or persistent disciplinary and behavioural cases, while minor cases were generally managed through routine classroom or administrative procedures. This pattern suggests that counselling was often used as a targeted response to cases requiring additional attention rather than being consistently incorporated into all aspects of preventive discipline management.

**Table 4.** Distribution of recorded guidance and counselling cases

| Broad category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Attendance and punctuality | 269 | 6.6 |
| Rule compliance and authority | 533 | 13.0 |
| Classroom behaviour | 1,280 | 31.2 |
| Peer relations and interpersonal behaviour | 929 | 22.6 |
| Health, family, and social-related behaviour | 1,094 | 26.7 |
| **Total** | **4,105** | **100.0** |

*Source: Study data.*

**Interview findings from Heads of Institutions**

Interviews with Heads of Institutions (HOIs) revealed that although guidance and counselling were considered important for managing learner indiscipline, their implementation faced several institutional challenges. Table 6 presents the main challenges identified.

The most frequently reported challenge was the competing teaching responsibilities of teachers assigned counselling duties (78.9%). In addition, 68.4% of HOIs reported inadequate counselling facilities and insufficiently trained personnel, while 47.4% identified limited resources. Most HOIs (79.0%) indicated that counselling was mainly reserved for serious or persistent disciplinary cases, while minor cases were handled through routine classroom management and administrative procedures.

One HOI explained:

"*Guidance and counselling is good, but we don't have facilities and personnel. Available teachers need to teach, and counsel, and in most cases need follow-ups. This overwhelms the teacher*."

These qualitative insights corroborate the survey data, underscoring systemic shortcomings in both institutional backing and staff

readiness. Heavy instructional workloads likely restrict the time available for counseling sessions and subsequent tracking, whereas missing infrastructure and scarce materials hamper overall service provision.

**Table 5.** Institutional challenges affecting guidance and counselling

| Challenge identified | Heads of Institutions, n | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Inadequate counselling facilities | 13 | 68.4 |
| Insufficiently trained personnel | 13 | 68.4 |
| Limited counselling resources | 9 | 47.4 |
| Competing teaching responsibilities of counselling teachers | 15 | 78.9 |
| Counselling mainly reserved for serious or persistent cases | 15 | 79.0 |

*Source: Study data.*

Furthermore, prioritizing counseling solely for severe or chronic behavioral issues points to a reactive model rather than a proactive, preventive approach. These structural hurdles mirror previous research: Chisanga (2020) observed similar obstacles regarding training, resources, and strategic planning in Zambia, while Abonyi and Salifu (2023) highlighted significant disconnects between official disciplinary frameworks and actual practice in Ghanaian basic schools.

## Conclusion

The study examined the presence of learner indiscipline and guidance and counselling practices in managing learners' discipline in public Junior Schools in Moiben Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The findings established that learner indiscipline occurred in several forms, including lateness, poor time management, absenteeism, truancy, disrespect, fighting, classroom disruption, and bullying. School records further showed that disciplinary concerns varied across behavioural categories and grades.

Guidance and counselling were used to address classroom behaviour, peer relations, attendance, rule compliance, and health-, family-, and social-related concerns. However, their implementation was constrained by inadequate administrative support, limited teacher preparedness, weaknesses in programme planning, inconsistent record keeping, insufficient counselling facilities, limited resources, and competing teaching responsibilities.

Although school administrators recognised the value of guidance and counselling, respondents did not generally perceive the programmes as consistently effective in reducing disciplinary problems. The findings suggest that the effectiveness of counselling depends not simply on its formal availability but also on the institutional arrangements supporting its delivery.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Heads of Institutions and relevant education stakeholders should provide clear support for guidance and counselling programmes, including defined responsibilities, adequate time,

and the resources required for implementation.

2. Teachers assigned counselling responsibilities should receive appropriate preparation and capacity-building opportunities to strengthen their ability to address learners' behavioural and disciplinary challenges.
3. Schools should consider providing suitable spaces that allow counselling sessions to take place in a supportive environment and protect learners' privacy.
4. Schools should develop structured guidance and counselling programmes that address both recurring disciplinary concerns and preventive learner-support needs.
5. Counselling records should be maintained systematically and securely to support continuity, identify recurring concerns, and monitor learner progress over time.
6. School administrators should review the workload of teachers assigned counselling duties to ensure that teaching responsibilities do not consistently prevent counselling sessions and follow-up.
7. Guidance and counselling should form part of a broader approach to learner development that supports positive values, responsible behaviour, respectful relationships, and participation in school activities.

## Limitations of the Study

The study relied on information from Heads of Institutions, Deputy Heads, and teachers, excluding learners' perspectives on counselling experiences, help-seeking behaviour, and perceived usefulness. It also used descriptive data and respondents' perceptions rather than experimental or longitudinal methods; therefore, the findings do not establish a causal link between guidance and counselling and improved discipline. Additionally, the study was limited to selected public Junior Schools in Moiben Sub-County, and the findings should be interpreted within this context rather than generalized to all public Junior Schools in Kenya.

## Suggestions for Further Research

Further research could examine learners' perceptions of guidance and counselling in public Junior Schools under CBE, including the factors influencing their willingness to seek counselling services. Studies could also investigate whether structured counselling programmes are associated with measurable changes in attendance, classroom behaviour, peer relationships, and recurring disciplinary cases.

Comparative studies involving public Junior Schools in different counties could establish whether the implementation challenges identified in Moiben Sub-County are shared across other settings.

Longitudinal research could also examine whether improved administrative support, teacher preparation, counselling facilities, and follow-up are associated with changes in recorded disciplinary concerns over time.

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