

## **Influence of Counselling Services on Grade One to Four Students' Academic Performance in Aljamea-Tus-Saifiyah University, Nairobi, Kenya**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Counselling is among the vital programs needed in schools used to guide the students in their school life. This research intended to look at the influence of counselling services on academic performance among the students of grade one to four in Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University, Nairobi campus. This study was underpinned on Operant conditioning theory guided by the following research question; how does counselling services offered influence Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah Nairobi campus students' academic performance? The study used a mixed methods approach and a convergent-parallel design. The target population was all students and lecturers of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, Nairobi. Stratified random sampling technique and purposive sampling was used to select 210 students and 11 faculty staff respectfully. Data was collected through interviews and questionnaires. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the reliability of quantitative items. Quantitative data collected was cleaned, coded and entered into computer SPSS software to generate frequencies and percentages that summarized data. Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis and presented in narratives and direct quotes. Key findings indicate that counselling services positively influenced the academic performance of students. The study recommended that counselling sessions be integrated in the schedule of students. All ethical considerations were adhered to during the study.

**KEYWORDS:** Kenya, Nairobi, Counselling, Students, Academic performance, Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, Mixed-methods

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Counselling is defined as the act of providing professional services, guidance, assistance, and advice to an individual in finding solutions to their psychological or personal problems(Kirkwood, 2012). Whereas, school-based counselling is the professional supportive services offered to students by trained counselling personnel in aid of resolving their psychosocial and personal challenges not limited to poor adjustment to new environments, homesickness, formation of new relationships, poor study habits, eating disorders, accommodation problems, and time management among others (Anderson, Guan & Koc, 2016).

School counselling dates back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States of America, where it was designed purposefully for educational and career development in the future then. As several industries emerged and revolved in America at this time, there was a need to shift on the type of course provided to the secondary school students to enable them integrate in the job market by carefully selecting subjects that would yield to successful career path development and value addition(Gysbers, Heppner & Johnston, 2014). The presence of increased social, personal and developmental challenges; unmotivated staff towards work; increase in juvenile court cases and unruly behaviours led to the introduction of counselling cases in Hong Kong(Luk-Fong & Lee-Man, 2014).

Symonds (2015) in a study conducted in Routledge, U.K. found that one of the most significant changes to the school instructor's job is managing new types of harassing. Understudies of more youthful ages are utilizing innovation for correspondence and mingling, and thusly, are putting themselves in danger for a sort of harassing that is hard to manage for both understudy and advisor. A school counsellor should consistently work to know about new social issues that are always emerging between understudies.

In Africa, student counselling was initially implemented through cultural values whereby existed taboos that would help to govern how people behaved at a certain age and environment. In the year 1936, counselling services were introduced in South Africa particularly to serve the White population and later made available to the black population in the late 1980s(Carey, Harris, Lee & Aluede, 2017). Today, South Africa has established a monitoring body providing oversight for the provision of counselling services called Health

Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). The body also regulates the licensing of Counselling professionals (Esterhuyzen, 2013).

School-Based Counselling has become part of the modern-day education system world-wide and Nigeria is not left out on this. In a country characterized by unstable government and political democracy, the education system in Nigeria has undergone many challenges from lack of policies, formulation of implementable policies due to changes in governments, and very high premiums on the cost of acquiring education. Several education ordinances were formulated, but none could meet the Nigerians expectations until the revision of the NPE of 1977 in 1981, which led to the adoption of the American education system (6-3-3-4). It was at this time when the policy on counselling was introduced in the Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE). Counselling services were ignited into the Nigerian schools by the fact that there was a mismatch between the education and the job market needs (*National policy on education*, 2004).

The Kenyan government found it necessary to establish Counselling services in the schools in 1971 after a report made by Ominde in the year 1964 highlighting the importance of having counselling services in schools. It was at this time when transitions from primary schools to secondary schools and coping up with the new environment were low and necessary adjustment was needed to help mediate (Kawuki, 2003).

Counselling in Kenya has not created a great impact in Kenya despite being highly embraced by the ministry of education. They face various challenges since they are usually burdened by other tasks and responsibilities. Most of the personnel who offer counselling are teachers who alongside are expected to teach various subjects. Students also fail to cooperate with the counsellors, who are a challenge to them (Boitt, 2016).

Recent findings of research by Dr. Benjamin Mugambi Kanga (2017) reported that counselling helps students adjust to their new environments by 72.7%, thus affecting their academic performance positively. In a study done by Oliver Wekesa Kituyi on the guiding and counselling practice concerning academics (2014), it was recorded that counselling influence classroom achievement by 80.25%.

With that said, students in every institution face challenges, especially if they live away from home. Thus, there is a need to comprehend the difficulties a student faces in such circumstances. Living away from the family, home, friends, familiar surroundings and environment can have distressing effects on the mental health of an adolescent, thus, causing them discomfort and uneasiness to cope with the challenges of life. Since the child is in boarding school, this can also have a significant negative effect on his studies, which is the most important factor for him being away from home in a different and unfamiliar environment. (Begum, 2016).

A few students in Aljamea campuses not being exceptional to the aforementioned psychological and personal complications are offered professional school-based counselling services by professional counsellors based on its various campuses. The counselling services offered to the Aljamea students are multifarious, depending on the challenges being handled by the individual student. Among the challenges experienced by the students include homesickness, new environment and academic responsibilities. The services range from environmental adjustment, academic counselling, emotional counselling, goal setting, to defining healthy study habits.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah institution has four campuses that admit students from the Bohra community and the students spend eleven years with the institution in which they study a holistic curriculum, which is a blend of religious texts, contemporary studies, and vocational skills. As a result, Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah has produced various pioneers, scholars, instructors, managers and so forth with the mileage of the ages.

With that said, there is no research carried out on this institution's way of counselling children and how it contributes to their academic performance. Therefore, this study intends to establish the influence counselling has on grade one to four students' academic performance at Aljamea in Nairobi, Kenya.

This study was guided by the following research question:

a) How does counselling services offered influence Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah Nairobi campus students' academic performance?

The study aims to improve awareness amongst the teachers of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah in specific, as they play a major role in the academic endeavours of the students. It will help them in handling sensitive issues of students and will guide them to convince the students to see the essence of education and also memorization of the Holy Quran.

It will also help students to understand the importance of counselling and that seeking counselling is not an act of weakness and not a sign of mental or physical illness. The research will add further knowledge to academia and will contribute to the existing body of literature in higher education on the role of counselling on the academic performance of students.

The research will cover the undergraduate students at Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University, Nairobi. Participants of this study will be the students of grade one to four of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University. The research will be conducted at a single institution which could give comparative results on what could be

happening in the universities across the world and thus, the results will give information beyond Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, Nairobi campus.

The study will focus on the influence of counselling on student academic performance.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research will be underpinned on the contributions of a behavioural theorist, Burrhus Frederic Skinner, who is well known for his operant conditioning, developed in 1948. As a behaviourist, Skinner did not believe in human free will terming it an illusion but rather believed in his philosophical idea, which he referred to as a "radical behaviourism" (Willibey, 2019). The operant conditioning states that "Organisms tend to repeat those responses that are followed by favourable consequences, and they tend not to repeat those responses that are followed by neutral or unfavourable consequences"(McSweeney & Murphy, 2014).

Skinner believed that behaviourism was a result of conditioning. Skinner argued that people are more likely to repeat a behaviour depending on the consequence it breeds (McSweeney & Murphy, 2014). The consequence would be in the form of reinforcement (rewards) or punishments. Rewards would increase the probability of behaviour to reoccur while punishments would reduce the chances of a behaviour reoccurring. In other words, the reward is factors that will reinforce and strengthen behaviours. Whereas punishment weakens behaviours. Skinner categorized reinforcement into two categories, positive reinforcement, and negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement happens when a favouring outcome results from a stimulus. The favourable outcome strengthens behaviour. An example of positive reinforcement is praise or money. Whereas, negative reinforcement strengthens a behaviour by the removal of an aversive stimulus. For example, a parent who always buys candy to a child after performing a particular task, the parent can withdraw the candy (fails in buying it) after establishing that the child did not perform the task as usual. Punishment, on the other hand, happens when an outcome weakens the likelihood of a particular behaviour reoccurring in the future. Just like the case of reinforcement, a stimulus can be introduced to weakens a behaviour (positive punishment) or be removed to weakens a certain behaviour (negative punishment). Other than disciplining a student with a whip, think of a situation where you put on your new outfit to an even (behaviour) but your colleagues laugh at you and make funny jokes (stimulus) at you're the attire. Sure enough, the likelihood of you putting on the same attire shall be weakening in the future. Such a scenario is what Skinner described as a punishment.

The theory aims at strengthening good behaviours through reinforcement and facilitating behaviour change from bad behaviours to good behaviours through the introduction of punishments (Sigelman, De George-Walker, Cunial & Rider, 2017). On the same note, operant conditioning provides natural and easy methods of learning new things and behaviours and also modification of existing behaviours. Through operant conditioning, parents, teachers, and counsellors have learned how to control children's behaviours where they instil in the children positive behaviours preferable to them(Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2015). Lastly, operant conditioning has become useful as a therapy for various types of addictions, both in children and adults(Huffman, 2018).

The limitations of this theory are that punishing a behaviour may not prevent it from reoccurring in the future (Sigelman, et al. 2017). Sometimes people may fake behaviours to receive reinforcers and avoid being punished at that time. The operant conditioning theory puts more emphasis on the environment, ignoring other important factors like cognition(Estes, 2014). Operant conditioning may not apply to everyone and in teaching complex concepts since it involves very simple and obvious techniques(Bernstein, 2018). Even though this theory has weaknesses, the weaknesses will be covered by review of literature and the theories reviewed later in this research to supplement its weakness.

This philosophy is applicable in the counselling discipline and the school set up in improving academic performance (Skinner, 2017). In schools, counsellors provide academic counselling to students who perform poorly by offering alternatives to their poor study behaviours hampering excellent academic performance. A counsellor can further help such students by promising them gifts of money, or any other supportive learning materials, added Shaterloo and Mohammadyari (2011).

Alternatively, school counsellors can advise the school instructors to employ Skinner's operant conditioning in strengthening good study habits through reinforcement or weakening poor study behaviours through punishment (Skinner, 2017). Subject teachers can help improve the academic performance of students in his or her subject by dashing out gifts such as money or learning aids to the best-performed students (Shaterloo & Mohammadyari, 2011).

Therefore, the relevance of Skinner's operant conditioning as a learning process that strengthens good behaviours through reinforcement and weakens bad behaviours through punishment is seen as students are moulded and helped drop poor study behaviours that would adversely affect their academic performance.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A number of scholars have dealt with topics related to this study. This chapter will focus on what other researchers have done and their findings and provided relevant information required to address the research questions raised in chapter one. The focus of the chapter will be on critical review of related theories that could bridge the gap left by the Burrhus Frederic Skinner's (1948) and the empirical studies that will give a thematic insight on the research questions raised from chapter one. Finally, the chapter will deal with summary of the related literature review and the knowledge gaps.

This section deals with theories which describe influence of counselling to academic performance of students. The theory discussed in this section is Erikson's Psychosocial Theory.

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory (1950)

Erikson's theory is relevant to this study since most students' experience psychological issues due to differences in their environment. The adjustment period may bring along loneliness. Therefore, some of the students suffer from emotional needs such as love. These issues can be addressed by offering counselling to the students. Additionally, students spend most of the time in school and thus the counsellors are part of the environment that determines their growth and thus, research on how the students respond to guidance and counselling and how it affects their overall performance is relevant.

Erik Erikson (1902–1994) was a stage theorist who took Freud's controversial psychosexual theory and revised it into an eight-stage psychosocial theory of development (Hopkins, 1995).

Erikson developed his eight stages of psychosocial development grounded on Freud's psychosexual theory. Erikson suggested that we are motivated by the need to achieve proficiency in certain areas of our lives (Erikson, 1995).

**Trust vs. Mistrust:** From birth to 12 months of age, infants must learn that adults can be trusted. This occurs when adults meet a child's basic needs for subsistence. (Masur, 2018).

**Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt:** As toddlers (ages 1–3 years) begin to explore their world, they learn that they can regulate their actions and act on their environment to get results. For example, we might observe a budding sense of autonomy in a 2-year-old child who wants to choose her clothes and dress herself. (Mandleco & Mandleco, 2004).

**Initiative vs. Guilt:** Once children reach the preschool stage (ages 3–6 years), they are capable of commencing activities and asserting control over their world through social interactions and play (Baumrind, 1978).

**Industry vs. Inferiority:** During the elementary school stage (ages 6–12), children face the task of *industry vs. inferiority*. Children begin to equate themselves with their peers to see how they measure up. (Tung & Kiyak, 1998).

**Identity vs. Role Confusion:** In adolescence (ages 12–18), children face the task of *identity vs. role confusion*. According to Erikson, an adolescent's foremost task is developing a sense of self (Eccles, 1999).

**Intimacy vs. Isolation:** People in early adulthood (the 20s through early 40s) are concerned with *intimacy vs. isolation*. After we have established a sense of self in adolescence, we are ready to share our life with others (Whitbourne, Sneed & Sayer, 2009).

**Generativity vs. Stagnation:** During this stage, middle-aged adults begin contributing to the next generation, often through childbirth and caring for others; they also participate in meaningful and productive work, which contributes positively to society (Peterson & Stewart, 1993).

**Integrity vs. Despair:** From the mid-60s to the end of life, we are in the period of development known as late adulthood. Erikson said that people in late adulthood reflect on their lives and feel either a sense of satisfaction or a sense of failure (Payne, 1994).

The psychosocial theory acknowledges personality development as a process that continues throughout the lifespan, supporting the principles of life-long learning. One of the important aspects of Erikson's life span psychosocial development theory is that each developmental stage builds on another (Dewey, 2007; Erikson, 1988; Kunz & Soltys, 2007).

**Criticism of psychosocial theory:** The limitation of this theory is that it is time-consuming and difficult to apply to individuals experiencing confusion. It also limits individuals and prevents them from rediscover themselves after experiencing life in different angle. There is also a negation to this theory and defies the fact that the personality of human beings is not dependent on their age. (Sokol, 2009).

According to Ragelienė (2016), Erikson's theory aims at solving crisis identity and role confusion amongst students. It also helps in enhancing good relationships with peers. The strength of this theory is that it helps in highlighting the many things that contribute to the personality of an individual other than the character only. Erickson fails to examine the social context in which an individual grows in which could be among the causes of the developmental crisis. The theory gives an insight on the childhood crisis, especially during the adolescent period.

The theory reviewed gives a picture on the character of students' and the significance of applying counselling to the growing students, they fail to address all the other variables surrounding the counselling process like the counsellors' role and challenges that come along with the counselling exercise.

Counselling aims at building students' strengths in the realization of their dreams and weaknesses, which they could be overcome through the counselling process. The counselling process helps the students to make correct choices and decisions related to their own lives. Most of the students' decisions rotate around the means into which they can improve their academic performance and make it better.

Morris (2014) carried out a research study in New Jersey, USA, on two hundred and fifty students using survey questionnaires. It was found that the counsellors should take into consideration the cultural values surrounding the people and how they affect them in achieving their goals in life. Most of the students are affected by cultural values which tie them and prevent them from engaging in certain tasks because they believe in existence of taboos. Therefore, there is a need to address this issue in order to help the students cope easily with school life. This is also evident in Aljamea since these students meet from different parts of the world and so they carry with them their cultural values and norms, which affect how they relate with each other.

According to Maree (2011), in Western Cape University in South Africa, where about three hundred students and teachers were offered with questionnaires and interviewed. It was found that counsellors have various roles in enhancing the students' performance by helping them to come to terms with the things they can't change. The study concluded counselling played a vital role in the performance of the students and thus, it should be improved and embraced fully by the students.

Eliamani (2013) carried out a study in Taraba, Nigeria, on 364 students using structured questionnaires, it was found that counselling services influence students' academic achievement. A major effect of the findings is that academic achievement and rate of transition of Taraba state students into tertiary institutions will be enhanced if the government can release more funds for in-service training of school counsellors to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

Academic achievement is used to measure the quality of education (Akareem & Hossain, 2016). Even today, most people measure their success in life in terms of how they perform academically. In most societies, parents take their children and enrol them in the best performing schools since they believe and uphold those who pass well in their exams. In Aljamea University, most students are from different parts of the world that have come to Kenya to pursue religious education and other academic endeavours.

Counselling is a major tool used to give motivation to the students (Escapa & Julià, 2018). Through counselling, the clients are encouraged to work hard in school and to remain focused on their studies. Counsellors offer gifts to the students and also make promises to the student if they attain certain grades in class. They also encourage the poor performing students in their studies by giving them a one on one session where they are given a chance to speak their mind out. The motivation also helps to address the effect. This helps to improve the performance of the students since they can realize their weaknesses and thus work on them.

Kituyi (2014) conducted a research in Nairobi, Kenya, where a population of about three hundred students were interviewed peer counselling affects the performance of the students and thus, it should be part of the vital programs offered in school. Counselling also plays a role in helping the students adjust to school life and cope with the surrounding environment. It helps the student by making them aware of what they expect in their environment to avoid disappointment or high expectations, which could, in turn, affect the student's life. They also take the students through the rules and regulations of the schools so they get to know about the dos and don'ts of the school. By helping the students adjust to their new destination, which acts as a second home to many, this helps them to perform excellently since they feel contented. The research concluded that counselling is among the major things that have led to elevated academic performance.

Counselling helps in solving discipline among students and thus prevent them from indulging in immoral behaviors. It plays a role in imparting discipline (Kirangari, 2014). Teachers and lecturers, who act as counsellors in most institutions, have put forward discipline measures towards students to prevent them from indulging themselves in corrupt manners. Among the discipline measures used by these counsellors and teachers include canning and giving out punishment depending on the degree of the offense into which the student commits. High levels of discipline correlate to high performance in school and thus counselling assists the students in upgrading their manners.

Guidance and counselling also help the students by imparting the knowledge about individual planning (Odhiambo, 2014). The counsellor shows the students how to plan their lives and school work. They assist students in developing their personal timetables that would help them manage their free time, especially while outside the university. These timetables help them develop a character of self-drive and give them the problem to make better choices on what activities to engage in during their free time. This helps to improve the performance of most students since they can use this time to study the subjects or units that challenge them.

Counselling addresses psychological problems that affect most students in universities and other institutions. Most of these students suffer emotionally more, especially because of being separated from their family members (Kanus, 2017). Some students who have never studied away from home find it hard to cope with school life since they tend to miss home so much. Also, as a freshman in university, the environment is so hostile since they are usually surrounded by individuals who have high levels of exposure and thus, they tend to lose confidence and this affects their performance in school. Counselling is, therefore, necessary to make those who suffer emotionally comfortable again so that they can perform well in school. When offered with counselling, they tend to elevate the self-esteem of these students and thus, they can focus on their educational goals.

Most of the studies done and reviewed by this study on this topic are global and regional studies. There is need to keep up local literature and especially on influence of counselling on students' academic performance.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The locale of the study was Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah is located in Karen, Nairobi County, Kenya. The university is right within Nairobi city boundaries, with good access to important city amenities such as the internet and other infrastructure.

The study adopted the mixed methods design. By applying the mixed methods approaches, researchers incorporate methods of collecting or analysing data from the quantitative and qualitative research approaches in a single research study (Creswell, Clark, & Plano, 2014). Convergent parallel technique of this paradigm was used to enable the researcher collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

The researcher conducted a cross-sectional survey to collect quantitative data. The researcher used this design to gather information from students of grades one to four and teachers of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah. Phenomenological techniques were used to collect qualitative data about the feelings and experiences of teachers. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected at the same time but with different instruments and at different points. Data from the sources was then analysed and interpreted independently then converged and the results were released in line with Creswell (2014) guidelines on convergent parallel design's procedures.

The target population refers to the entire group of individuals or objects to which the researcher is interested in generalizing the conclusions (Lavrakas, 2008). This study targeted various segments of the population in the entire Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University. All the 795 students and 144 were targeted for the study making a total number of 939 people as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1**

<i>Population Matrix</i>	
	<i>n=939</i>
<b>Category</b>	<b>Target Population</b>
Students	795
Faculty Staff	144
<b>Total</b>	<b>939</b>

Source: *Field data 2020*

The total student population during the study was 795 in Aljamea –tus- Saifiyah Nairobi campus. Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) assert that a sample of between 10% and 30% is an appropriate sample for a study whose entire population is less than 10,000. Two hundred and ten (210) students will therefore be sampled which is 26.4% of 795 students. Since the population is heterogeneous, the researcher put these students in two strata, boys and girls, then in each stratum simple random sampling technique was used to sample equal number of boys and girls. Pieces of papers written with yes and no for each stratum were folded and shaken and someone blindfolded was asked to pick a piece of paper at a time until the required number of boys and girls was attained. Crossman (2012) asserts that simple random gives each and every person an equal number of selections in a research study.

Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah campus has 144 members of staff. Out of these 32 teach grade one to four students. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), a sample between 10 and 30% is deemed appropriate in a study for a population less than 10,000. The study therefore used purposive (also known as selective or expertise) sampling technique to select 11 teachers to take part in this study. This was 34% of 32 teachers who teach this category of students. Purposive sampling was preferred due to expertise of the teachers in the phenomenon under study. The teachers that were sampled for interviews had ample experience in the teaching profession and also had mature student-teacher interaction skills. Crossman (2012) asserts that purposive sampling is a form of sampling used when research requires one to capture knowledge rooted in a particular form of expertise. Table 2 presents sample and sampling techniques of this study.

**Table 2**

<i>Sampling Matrix</i>				
<b>Category</b>	<b>Target population</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Actual Sample</b>	<b>Sampling Technique</b>
Students	795	26.4	210	Stratified Random Sampling
Faculty Staff	32	34.3	11	Purposive
<b>Total</b>			<b>221</b>	-

Source: *Researcher*

Research instruments are tools developed by researchers to achieve their stated objectives when carrying out a research study. In other words, research instruments are designed tools that aid the collection of data for the purpose of analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The researcher used two different research instruments to collect data from students of grades one to four and the faculty of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University, Nairobi, Kenya campus. These instruments were survey questionnaires and interview guides, as elaborated in the following section.

Questionnaires were used mostly by the researcher for the study since they can collect large data from many participants in one place at a time. An interview guide was prepared for the faculty staff teaching in grades 1 to 4.

In every research validity and reliability of research instruments ought to be tested before the instrument is administered to the respondents in the field (Mandodo, 2016). This section addresses how the researcher ensured validity and reliability of the results of quantitative research instruments as well as trustworthiness of the results from qualitative tools.

Validity according to Madondo (2016) is the ability of research instruments to answer what they are supposed to measure. It is the ability of research instruments to address all the research questions or objectives. A study which does not address well the research questions in data collection instruments is not valid. To establish the validity of the research instruments the researcher involved his supervisor and other Catholic University lectures to check content and face validity. The content validation is expected to measure the degree to which the question items reflect the specific areas covered (Terrell, 2012). The supervisor and other lecturers as experts in the field of education reviewed the instruments to determine whether the set of items accurately represented the variables being examined. When they were satisfied with the relevance of the items, they made their recommendations to the researcher. The suggestions given were incorporated to validate the instruments.

Pilot testing of data collection tools before using them to collect data was essential in this study. This helped the researcher to identify questions that could not make sense to respondents and other problems with the questionnaire that may lead to biased study results. The researcher picked 20 students from grade 1 to 4 and teachers who taught the same level of students as pilot samples. This helped the researcher to identify any omissions or commissions, which may have occurred during the construction of the instruments. This also enables the researcher to establish how the instruments would perform in the actual study. Therefore, the researcher was able to detect any typographical errors, ambiguous items, spelling mistakes, layout and format of the items as well as the appropriateness and levels of the language used in the tools. This enabled the researcher to refine the instruments appropriately.

Reliability is the degree of consistency with which the instrument measures an attribute. According to Saunders et al. (2012), it is concerned with whether or not the questionnaire will produce consistent findings at different times and under different conditions such as with different samples or in the case of an interviewer completed questionnaire with different interviewers. The less variation the instrument produces in repeated measurements of an attribute, the higher the reliability.

Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the questionnaires and a sample of these questionnaires was distributed to 20 students who did not take part in this study in a pilot study. SPSS was used to compute the Cronbach Alpha and it is mostly used to test internal consistency. A Cronbach Alpha of 0.808 was observed. The Alpha was classified as 'very good'.

Based on the agreed date and time, the researcher first got authorization to start data collection from his supervisor and the head of postgraduate studies before collecting data. He consulted the Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah management to be allowed to distribute the data collection instruments to the sampled respondents. Before responding to the questionnaires, the respondents (students and teachers) were provided with the instructions on what to do. Their confidentiality was assured and by assuring them that their identity would not be revealed. Pseudo names were used to identify the respondents.

Completed questionnaires were collected immediately, where not possible, arrangements were made to pick them on a later date. In regards to the interview for the faculty staff, the researcher in person conducted

face-to-face interviews with key informants. The researcher ensured that the interviews were conducted in a quiet environment with no distractions.

Data analysis is how the researcher goes from a mass of data to meaningful insights (Kotler, 2017). After collecting both quantitative and qualitative data separately, quantitative data from the completed questionnaires was prepared (cleaned) to convert the raw data into something meaningful and readable. The data was then validated to find out as far as possible, whether the data collection was done as per the pre-set standards and without any bias. This data was then edited by conducting basic data checks and checked for outliers to identify and clear out any data points that may hamper the accuracy of the results. The data was then coded by grouping and assigning values to responses from the survey. The data was entered into the computer using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21. Descriptive statistics was used for quantitative data obtained from questionnaires (closed-ended items) and checklists. This was done to enable the researcher describe the aggregation of raw data in numerical terms. The data was then computed for presentation and analysis.

The qualitative data, which was obtained from questionnaires (open-ended items) and interviews, was read several times to get familiar with it and get basic observations or patterns. The data was then transcribed. The researcher revisited the research questions and identified the questions that could be answered through the collected data. The data was coded by identifying broad ideas as well as finding concepts, behaviours and phrases and codes were assigned to them. Finally, the researcher identified patterns and connections by identifying themes, looking for the most common responses to questions and finding areas that could be explored further. These themes were interpreted and meanings derived from them. The researcher identified content areas represented in both data sets and compared, contrasted, and synthesized the results in a discussion, figures and table at the same time but separately in a single phase. The two methods were given equal priority but the data analysis was kept independently (each data was analysed separately). The differences within one set of results based on dimensions within the other set were identified, and the differences within a display organized by the dimensions were examined.

The researcher then developed procedures to transform the qualitative results into quantitative data. This was done to look for convergence, divergence and relationships of the two sources of data collected. Further analysis was again conducted to relate the transformed data to the other data by conducting statistical analysis that included the thematic counts. Qualitative data was transformed into Quantitative data. Quantitative findings were reported in form of percentages, frequencies, graphs and pie charts while those from qualitative data are presented in form of narratives and direct quotations. Finally, the merged data was summarized during the overall interpretation by discussing to what extent and in what ways results from the two types of data converge, relate to each other, and/or produce a more complete understanding and then the separate results were interpreted.

The researcher ensured that he adhered to ethical rules governing and guiding academic research study. This is because research is governed by rules and regulations which help to reduce conflicts and misunderstandings among researchers and participants. Therefore, ethical considerations in research are necessary. Firstly, the researcher got permission from the supervisor and head of department at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa. The need for informed consent of the participants is very vital to research (Boeijs, 2010). Based on this therefore, the researcher sought informed consent from the administration in order to go ahead with the research. The researcher prepared informed consent forms, which the participants signed in order to freely and voluntarily accept to be part of the study. Secondly, the researcher fully explained to the participants the nature of the research and assured them confidentiality (Creswell, 2014).

In order to maintain confidentiality, there was need to use pseudonyms and not the real names of the participants (Mvumbi & Ngumbi, 2015). The researcher adhered to this ethics in the entire interview with the participants. The researcher bracketed his bias and depended on the information provided by the respondents. The reason for this was that, according to Creswell (2013; Bourke, 2014; & Pechurina, 2014), the researcher did not want to allow his positionality to influence data collection and data analysis. For the purpose of academic integrity, the researcher duly acknowledged all the sources of information for this study using the report writing style developed by American Psychological Association (APA) 6th edition.

#### **IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This chapter presents, interprets and discusses the findings of the field study related to the research questions. It is organized under the following sub-themes: questionnaire return rates, background information of participants. The kind of Counselling services offered to students in Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, Nairobi campus, ways counselling services offered influence students' academic performance, the challenges of Counselling process and strategies put in place to curb the challenges.



The researcher administered a total of 210 questionnaires to students in Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, Nairobi campus, all of which were returned. He also conducted interviews with 11 sampled lecturers all from Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University. The response rate is presented Table 3.

**Table 3**  
*n=221*

*Instrument Response Rate*

Category	Sample	Response	Percentage (%)
Students	210	210	100
Lecturers	11	11	100
Questionnaires	210	210	100

Source: *Researcher*

As indicated in table 3, all 210 students and 11 lecturers sampled successfully participated in the study. The 210 questionnaires issued to 210 students were all returned. The high return rate was due to the fact that the researcher administered the questionnaires himself and waited for the participants to fill and then collected them on the same day. According Kothari (2013), 70% or higher questionnaire return rate is very good. Hence, the study achieved a valid response rate. Interviews were conducted with the 11 teachers which translated to 100% response rate. The researcher considered the return rate appropriate and proceeded with data analysis.

The study sought to determine the gender and age distribution of the participants. That ensured the findings of the study were not gender biased. The information on participants' gender and age were sought from students and teachers. The participants' responses are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
*n=210*

*Participants Responses Profiled in Terms of Gender and Age*

Age	No. of participants	Male	Female	Percentage (%)
12-14	24	7	17	11.0
15-16	111	62	49	50.9
17-18	75	34	41	34.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: *Field data 2020*

Table 4 shows that there were 210 participants in the study, profiled in terms of gender and age. Female participants were 51%, 70% of the female participants were between 12 to 14 years of age, 44% of the female participants were between 15 to 16 years of age, while 54% were between 17-18 years of age. Male participants were 49%, 30 % were between the ages of 12-14 years, 56% were between the ages of 15-16 years, while 46% were between 17-18 years of age.

The highest number of people, 111, who participated, was between the ages of 15-16 years formed 50.9% of total respondents. From the findings more female than male took part in the study. The researcher also was gender sensitive in his sampling of this study's participants; more so, the study involved each school age category.

The research question sought to find out the influence of counselling on the academic performance of students. The influence of counselling was assessed by gathering information from the faculty and students. The section begins with the determination of the need for counselling and then proceeds to analyse the influence counselling has on the academic performance of students from grades one to four in Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University, Nairobi campus.

The researcher sought to know if students' performance was affected by counselling services in any way. The students were requested to tick (√) on the degree to which they agree/disagree with the listed statements regarding their performance in the following Likert scale items. *Key: SA=strongly agree, A=agree, UN=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.* The responses of students are as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Students' Responses on High Performance through Teachers' (Asateza) Counselling n=210*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Disagree	13	6.0
Disagree	23	10.6
Undecided	59	27.1
Agree	77	36.7
Strongly Agree	38	17.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: *Field data 2020*

Table 5 shows that 77 (36.7%) of the students agreed that receiving counselling from Masool (class teacher) and Asateza (teachers) has led to high academic performance among them. The lowest number of students at 13 (6.0%) strongly disagreed that this kind of counselling assisted them. Findings from researchers like Mugambi (2017; Lephoto, 2019 & Falco, 2011) reported that counselling helps students adjust to their new environments thus affecting their academic performance positively. From the findings, the researcher concludes that counselling by the Masool (class teacher) and Asateza (teachers) has a positive influence on the performance of students and should be encouraged.

#### **4.4.2 Counselling by Professional Counsellors Has Led to High Performance**

The researcher enquired if counselling received from professional counsellors had led to high performance in students. Students were required to tick (✓) the best option that describes best their feelings using the following Key: *SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Undecided D=Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree*. The student's responses are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Students' Responses on whether Professional Counselling enhanced Students Performance  
n=210*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly disagree	23	11.0
Disagree	35	16.7
Undecided	107	51.0
Agree	33	15.7
Strongly agree	12	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: *Field data 2020*

According to table 6, the highest number of students 35 (16.7%) of the students who participated in this study disagreed that professional counselling has created an impact on their academic performance, 33 (15.7%) agreed that professional counselling assisted in improving academic performance. In contrast, 107 (51%) were undecided and didn't have an opinion to give. In a study done by Kituyi (2014) on the guiding and counselling practice concerning academics, it was recorded that counselling influence classroom achievement by 80.25%. This shows that there is still a considerable population that needs to be addressed and made aware of the existence of the professional counselling available so that they can be able to give their views. Nevertheless, counselling by any counsellor was a necessity for students including those in Aljamea campus.

To find out the positive effects of counselling on student's academic performance at Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University, the researcher conducted interviews of faculty and the different participants gave different responses as cited by participants A, B and C.

According to respondent W, "*Counselling helps the student to focus on his/ her academic priorities. Eliminates clutter and unnecessary, destructive emotions and feelings,*" he said when interviewed on 16/2/2020.

Respondent X had this to share with the researcher, "*I think it is essential for students to receive regular private counselling. Counselling in my opinion instils students trust in their counsellors, develops positivity and optimism because they feel they have someone to confide in, who knows how they feel.*" Interviewed on 10/02/2020.

While interviewing respondent Y on 12/2/2020, the following were her sentiments, "*The rigor of studies coupled with the sensitive age of the students makes stress management a key factor that will determine a student's academic success. Counselling is important for helping students manage their stress.*"

Additionally, the researcher sought to know if counselling positively affects academic performance of students. The students were requested to tick (√) on the degree to which they agree/disagree with the listed statements regarding the influence of counselling on their performance in the following Likert scale items. *Key: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Undecided D=Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree.* Table 7 indicate students' responses.

**Table 7**

*Students' Responses on Positive Influence of Counselling to Academic Performance n=210*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>No of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly disagree	10	4.8
Disagree	22	10.5
Undecided	73	34.8
Agree	77	36.7
Strongly agree	28	13.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 7 shows that 77 (36.7%) agreed that counselling indeed boosted academic performance of students. The least number 10 (4.8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that Counselling has positively affected the performance of the students. These results agree with most of the researches reviewed by this study. Mekgwe (2010; Sciarra, 2004) revealed that counselling in a school setting is an efficient, effective, and versatile intervention technique for school counsellors moreover, counselling is an excellent way for school counsellors to demonstrate the impact of their practices on important student outcomes, such as academic achievement and behaviour. Thus, the researcher concludes that Counselling has a positive impact on student's academic performance.

The researcher sought to know if students believed that counselling does not affect academic performance. Students were requested to tick (√) on the degree to which they agree/disagree with the listed statements regarding the influence of counselling on their performance in the following Likert scale items. *Key: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Undecided D=Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree.* Table 8 indicates students' responses.

**Table 8**

*Students' Responses on Counselling Services and Students' Performance n=210*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly disagree	54	25.7
Disagree	53	25.2
Undecided	72	34.3
Agree	17	8.1
Strongly agree	14	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field data 2020*

According to the responses given in table 8, 72 (72%) of students who took part in this student could not tell whether counselling increased students' performance. However, 53 (25%) of the students were of the opinion that counselling helped in improving students' performance. The least number of these students felt that counselling had no much impact on academic performance of students. The findings imply that only a small margin of the population does not consider Counselling as a significant effect on how they perform in their studies.

These findings also support what Lephoto (2019) in their study in University of Lesotho retorted, guidance and counselling provision is an educational service that supports and facilitates achievement of educational objectives.

## V. CONCLUSION

The participants were classified according to gender and age in order to find out if counselling had an influence on their academic performance. All the data was collected from teachers and students of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University. As indicated by the study outcome, there was a significant positive influence of counselling on students of grades one to four on their academic performance.

Exposure of students to counselling services helps them perform better, gives them emotional stability, enhances their relationships with teachers and helps them stay focused in day to day academic activities. It was found that there was a positive relationship between receiving counselling services and students' academic performance of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University, Nairobi, in grades one to four.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher underlines a number of recommendations to different educational stakeholders, who have different roles to play to ensure effective student performance in Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University. Therefore, this section highlights recommendations to the management, teachers and students.

#### University Management

The university management should, if possible, consider hiring additional professional counsellors in offering counselling services. It should also consider integrating counselling sessions in the daily routines of students and faculty members so that they have designated time and can plan for it appropriately.

It is recommended that the counsellors should have some affiliation to the same institute so that they can better understand the environment, the system, the faculties and the whole structure to help the student effectively.

#### Lecturers/Teachers

Teachers should keep themselves updated about modern counselling techniques. The teacher-student counselling should be in a recorded form to facilitate efficient follow up. The follow-up system should be reinforced to avoid breaks, which eventually leads to losing the trust of the student.

#### Students

Every learner needs to grow physically, socially, cognitively as well as spiritually. Counselling is part and parcel of these areas of growth and learning. In order to be a desirable member in the society, students need to take this essential part of their learning seriously and voluntarily seek to get this service from both their teachers and other professional counsellors in order to be moulded into good members of a society.

#### Community

Counselling is an essential service for not only the teachers and students but to every member of a given community. It is therefore a recommendation of this study that the community from which these teachers and students are drawn should be involved in counselling services. Success of the students is a result of joint efforts hence the need to incorporate the community as a key stake holder in education.

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