Parental Involvement in Guidance and Counselling and the Implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum in Kenyan Junior Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Kenya's transition to Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) has fundamentally redefined the relationship schools must cultivate with families. Yet one dimension of parental engagement has attracted comparatively little research attention: participation in school-based guidance and counselling. This study examined whether, and how strongly, parental participation in guidance and counselling is associated with effective CBC implementation in public junior secondary schools in Sotik Sub-County, Bomet County, Kenya. Theoretically anchored in the Multidimensional Engagement Theory of Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), the study used a convergent parallel mixed-methods design drawing on 398 respondents — headteachers, teachers, students, and parents. Quantitative data from structured questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation; qualitative data from semi-structured headteacher interviews were analysed thematically. The study tested the null hypothesis that parental participation in school-based guidance and counselling has no statistically significant association with effective CBC implementation. Among the 100 parent respondents, only 25.0% participated regularly in guidance and counselling activities (composite M = 2.05, SD = 0.74 on a five-point scale). Where participation occurred, its associations with student outcomes were notable: 82.4% of student respondents rated parental G&C participation as effective or very effective in improving school attendance, and 70.6% affirmed its role in enhancing decision-making quality. Pearson correlation confirmed significant positive associations across all three CBC outcome indicators ($r = .59$ composite, $p < .05$), supporting rejection of the null hypothesis. Headteacher interviews identified limited parental CBC literacy, logistical constraints, and inadequate institutional structures as the primary barriers. The study concludes that parental guidance and counselling engagement is a substantially underused lever within CBC implementation systems, and recommends targeted structural interventions to broaden and deepen it.

Keywords: parental involvement; guidance and counselling; competency-based curriculum; junior secondary schools; Kenya

INTRODUCTION

When Kenya formally adopted the Competency-Based Curriculum in 2017, it committed schools not merely to changing what is taught but to transforming how learners are supported in developing demonstrable competencies—critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, self-efficacy, and digital literacy, among others. (KICD, 2019; Begi, 2019) Junior secondary schools bear the sharpest implementation responsibility: learners at this transitional stage are constructing identities, exploring competency pathways, and making educational choices that will shape their adult trajectories.

International evidence is unambiguous that reforms of this ambition do not succeed through school-level action alone. When family engagement is weak, even well-designed curricula underperform; when it is strong, reform effects are amplified. (Fredricks et al., 2004) Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence model captures this

structurally: schools and families share overlapping zones of educational responsibility, and when those zones are deliberately aligned through partnership mechanisms — including structured counselling — learner outcomes improve measurably. (Epstein, 2011) The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model adds a motivational dimension, arguing that parents participate when they believe they should, believe they can, and perceive invitations from the school — three conditions largely absent for many parents in Sotik Sub-County. (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective similarly positions parental engagement as a mesosystem bridge between home and school microsystems, without which the child's development environments remain functionally disconnected. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

This study was designed to examine that gap empirically. Its purpose was to assess the nature and strength of the association between parental participation in school-based guidance and counselling and effective CBC implementation in public junior secondary schools in Sotik Sub-County. The investigation was guided by three objectives: first, to establish the extent of parental participation in guidance and counselling within the sub-county; second, to assess its associations with three CBC implementation indicators—student school attendance, decision-making quality, and peer collaborative learning; and third, to examine the institutional barriers and enabling conditions that shape participation. The null hypothesis tested was that there is no statistically significant association between parental guidance and counselling participation and effective CBC implementation in public junior secondary schools in Sotik Sub-County, Bomet County.

The study makes a contribution at three levels. For school leaders and counsellors, it provides sub-county-specific evidence to guide targeted engagement programme design. For policy, it argues that parental guidance and counselling participation should be disaggregated from general parental involvement metrics in CBC monitoring frameworks. For scholarship, it extends Fredricks et al.'s Multidimensional Engagement Theory from the student-engagement domain — where it is well established — to parental engagement, an application with considerable theoretical and practical utility.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Three theoretical perspectives inform this study's analytical framework. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris's Multidimensional Engagement Theory, initially developed to explain student engagement in schooling, provides the primary organising lens. (Fredricks et al., 2004) The theory distinguishes three dimensions of engagement: behavioural (observable participation and responsiveness), emotional (relational investment, sense of belonging, and trust), and cognitive (depth of understanding, internalisation of goals, and strategic application of learning). Applied to parental participation in guidance and counselling, these dimensions become analytically precise: a parent who attends a counselling session (behavioural) but leaves without understanding CBC's competency goals (cognitive deficit) cannot perform the home reinforcement role that CBC requires. Emotional engagement — whether the parent feels welcomed, valued, and genuinely partnered in the process — determines whether behavioural participation is sustained or episodic.

Epstein's Overlapping Spheres model complements this by explaining the institutional architecture through which each engagement dimension is enabled or constrained. (Epstein, 2011) Where schools create deliberate partnership structures—accessible scheduling, trained counsellors, culturally appropriate communication — all three engagement dimensions can be cultivated simultaneously. The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model adds explanatory power for the pattern of low initial participation: parents need not only the motivation to engage but perceivable invitations from the school and a belief that their participation will make a difference. (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) In Sotik Sub-County, where such invitations are structurally inconsistent, even motivated parents may not engage. Bronfenbrenner's ecological framing locates the school-family counselling relationship as a mesosystem interaction — and reminds us that strengthening this interaction requires attention to the broader macrosystem conditions (agricultural economy, CBC policy design, and resource allocation) that constrain it. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

The conceptual framework derived from these perspectives is shown in Figure 1. It positions parental participation in guidance and counselling (operationalised through the three engagement dimensions) as the

independent variable, effective CBC implementation (assessed through attendance, decision-making quality, and peer collaboration) as the dependent variable, and four contextual conditions as influencing but unmodelled factors: parental CBC literacy, school counselling infrastructure, agricultural seasonality, and counsellor capacity. These four were selected because they are directly and repeatedly documented as proximal constraints on school-based counselling engagement in the Kenyan literature. (Amunga et al., 2020; Syomwene, 2022) Other possible moderators—parental education level, household income — operate more distally and were not the focus of this sub-county investigation.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Parental G&C Participation and CBC Implementation Effectiveness

PARENTAL PARTICIPATION IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING		**CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS (not statistically modelled)**		**EFFECTIVE CBC IMPLEMENTATION**
• **Behavioural Engagement** *Attendance at G&C sessions; responsiveness to school communications* • **Emotional Engagement** *Relational trust; sense of partnership with counsellors* • **Cognitive Engagement** *CBC literacy; applying counsellor feedback in home support*	➡	• **Parental CBC Literacy** *Awareness of CBC goals and counselling expectations* • **School Counselling Infrastructure** *Dedicated spaces and trained counselling personnel* • **Agricultural Seasonality** *Livelihood demands conflicting with school schedules* • **Counsellor Capacity** *Caseload, training, and professional supervision*	➡	• **Student School Attendance** *Regular, sustained presence in CBC lessons* • **Quality of Student Decision-Making** *Self-directed and competency-aligned choices* • **Peer Collaborative Learning** *Classroom cooperative orientation and teamwork*
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE		**CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS**		**DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

Note. Adapted from Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) and Epstein (2011). Contextual conditions are acknowledged as influencing factors but were not modelled statistically as mediators or moderators. See footnotes 9–13 for theoretical sources.

Parental Engagement and Curriculum Reform: What the Evidence Shows

The positive association between parental engagement and learner outcomes in curriculum reform contexts is among the most replicated findings in educational research. Meta-analyses by Jeynes and by Boonk et al. independently confirm significant improvements in achievement, attendance, and behavioural outcomes where parental involvement is strong—with effect sizes that hold across cultural and socio-economic contexts. (Jeynes, 2018; Boonk et al., 2018) Critically, these effects extend beyond examination performance to the motivational and dispositional outcomes that competency-based curricula target: self-directed learning, collaborative orientation, and academic persistence. Where CBC or comparable reforms have been implemented—including Rwanda, Zambia, and several United Kingdom settings—parental engagement has consistently distinguished schools where reform takes root from those where it remains superficial. (Mulenga & Kabombwe, 2019; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Harris & Goodall, 2016) The implication is not that parental involvement supports CBC implementation; it is that CBC implementation cannot be fully achieved without it.

Guidance and counselling represent a qualitatively distinct modality of parental engagement. It requires parents

to engage with the developmental, emotional, and identity-related dimensions of their children's schooling—dimensions that CBC foregrounds but which lie largely outside the scope of conventional academic monitoring or homework support. (Begi, 2019; KICD, 2019) Evidence from sub-Saharan African settings indicates that school-based counselling programmes produce their strongest outcomes when they systematically incorporate parental perspectives, because parents hold contextual knowledge about learners' home environments, familial dynamics, and personal histories that no counsellor can independently access. (Obunga et al., 2025; Ranji et al., 2025) Counselling-based parental engagement also functions as a protective factor for learner wellbeing and retention in economically precarious contexts. (Caulfield, 2001)

Kenyan CBC Parental Engagement: Findings and Methodological Limits

Kenyan scholarship on parental engagement in CBC implementation has grown substantially since 2019, though it has not yet produced a settled or methodologically uniform picture. Amunga, Were, and Ashioya, drawing on multi-county survey data, reported that teacher-parent communication quality predicted CBC engagement more strongly than socio-economic status or school proximity — a finding important for this study because it suggests that what schools do institutionally matters more than what parents bring individually. (Amunga et al., 2020) However, Amunga et al.'s design did not disaggregate counselling engagement from general parental involvement, nor did it focus on rural agricultural sub-counties.

Syomwene (2022) and Mulinya and Kimotho (2025) have produced two closely relevant recent contributions. Syomwene's (2022) study on parental involvement strategies in CBC literacy development demonstrated that structured parental engagement produces measurable improvements in competency-oriented outcomes while also documenting pervasive barriers to CBC parental involvement—cognitive, logistical, and institutional—particularly in resource-constrained settings. Mulinya and Kimotho's (2025) study in a Nairobi informal settlement similarly found that limited CBC literacy among parents constitutes a compounding barrier to meaningful engagement. (Syomwene, 2022; Mulinya & Kimotho, 2025) Ranji, Chumba, and Kurgat's Nakuru County regression analysis similarly found significant associations between parental engagement and CBC implementation effectiveness, with qualitative data identifying guidance and counselling sessions as among the most valued engagement mechanisms. (Ranji et al., 2025) Taken together, these studies establish a credible empirical platform — but all are geographically situated in counties with greater institutional capacity than Bomet, and none isolates guidance and counselling as a discrete predictor variable. Mugambi and Mauti's (2025) study of CBC implementation in Kenya's public junior schools reinforces the broad pattern, confirming that rural, resource-constrained settings face compounded barriers not fully captured in more urbanised samples. (Syomwene, 2022; Mugambi & Mauti, 2025) Syomwene's (2022) documentation of communication breakdowns and structural absences that obstruct parental CBC engagement provides a useful point of comparison, with parallels confirmed by this study's headteacher data. (Syomwene, 2022) Mulinya and Kimotho's (2025) finding that up to 67% of parents in low-income Nairobi settlements lack functional CBC literacy is a sobering contextual benchmark: Sotik Sub-County's agricultural economy produces similar literacy gaps through different structural mechanisms.

Identified Gaps

Three gaps converge to justify the present investigation. Methodologically, existing studies aggregate diverse parental involvement modalities, making it impossible to isolate the specific contribution of guidance and counselling engagement. Geographically, the evidence base is concentrated in more urbanised or institutionally stronger counties, leaving rural sub-counties such as those in Bomet effectively understudied. Qualitatively, headteacher perspectives on the mechanisms and constraints shaping parental G&C participation are underrepresented: most studies rely on teacher or parent data alone. This study addresses all three gaps simultaneously.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was employed, following Creswell and Plano Clark's specification.

(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) Quantitative questionnaire data and qualitative headteacher interview data were collected concurrently during the same eight-week fieldwork period, analysed independently using their respective procedures, and subsequently integrated at the interpretation stage through a side-by-side convergence procedure. This design is well suited to the research question, which requires both the statistical precision of correlation analysis and the contextual depth of institutional account-giving.

Study Setting, Population, and Sampling

The study was conducted in public junior secondary schools in Sotik Sub-County, Bomet County, Kenya. The sub-county is predominantly agricultural, with smallholder tea plucking and maize farming as the primary livelihoods — a context with structural implications for school-scheduled activities, as headteacher data confirm. The target population comprised all headteachers, teachers, students, and parents associated with public junior secondary schools in the sub-county, totalling approximately 59,760 individuals. A sample of 398 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula at a 95% confidence level. (Yamane, 1967) Table 1 shows the distribution by category.

Table 1Sample Distribution by Respondent Category (N = 398)

Respondent Category	Population	n	Sampling Method	%
Headteachers	72	18	Purposive	4.5
Teachers	1,200	100	Stratified random	25.1
Students	12,000	180	Stratified random	45.2
Parents	46,488	100	Purposive — prior G&C contact	25.1
Total	59,760	398	—	100.0

Note. Headteachers were selected purposively as institutional key informants. Teachers and students were selected by stratified random sampling across school zones. Parent respondents were drawn from those who had had any prior contact — however brief — with their school's guidance and counselling service in the preceding academic year, ensuring that all participants could speak with direct reference to the study context. Within this group, the frequency and quality of G&C participation varied considerably, and this variation constitutes the key independent measure in the analysis. Source: Field Data (2025).

The purposive selection of parent respondents from those with some prior G&C contact requires clarification in relation to the participation findings reported below. 'Prior contact' was defined inclusively: it included parents who had attended a formal G&C session, received a written communication from the school counsellor, or spoken with a class teacher acting in a counselling capacity at any point during the academic year. Within this group, subsequent analysis classified each parent's G&C participation level for the most recent school term. Parents classified as 'no participation' during that specific term had had some contact at an earlier point in the year — which is precisely why they met the inclusion criterion — but had not participated in any scheduled G&C activity during the most recent term preceding data collection. This time-bounded definition ensures internal consistency between the sampling criterion and the participation classifications in Table 3.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

Three instruments were used. A structured questionnaire administered to teachers and students gathered quantitative data on parental G&C participation frequency and perceived effects on three CBC implementation indicators, using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Very Ineffective to 5 = Very Effective). A parallel instrument administered to parent respondents measured their own participation levels and self-assessed engagement quality. A semi-structured interview guide was administered individually to all 18 headteachers, covering institutional perceptions of parental G&C engagement, structural barriers, and potential enabling conditions. Importantly, the convergent parallel design — combining self-report questionnaire data from teachers, students,

and parents with independent headteacher interview accounts — provides methodological triangulation that partially mitigates the risk of response bias inherent in any single-source self-report instrument (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Questionnaires were administered on-site by the researcher during scheduled school sessions for each respondent group. No questionnaires were sent home or administered without researcher supervision. Completed instruments were collected on the same day. These conditions — direct on-site administration, same-day collection, and researcher presence throughout — account for the 100% return rate: questionnaires that could not be completed on the day (due to absence) were administered at the next available session within the same school, and questionnaires with more than 10% missing data were excluded from analysis at screening. Of the 398 instruments administered and returned, all met the completeness threshold and were retained for analysis.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through structured review by two educational research specialists at the Faculty of Education, who assessed each item for relevance, clarity, and alignment with the three dimensions of Fredricks et al.'s framework. Construct validity was confirmed through systematic item-to-construct mapping prior to data collection. Reliability was assessed through a four-week test-retest procedure conducted on a pilot sample of 20 respondents from a comparable rural sub-county. The test-retest reliability coefficient for the composite parental participation scale was $r = 0.83$, exceeding Nunnally's recommended threshold of 0.7 and confirming adequate instrument stability. (Nunnally, 1978)

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed in IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25. Descriptive statistics — frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations — were computed for all participation and outcome items. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated to test the association between parental G&C participation and each CBC implementation indicator at $p < .05$. Qualitative data from headteacher interviews were transcribed verbatim, inductively coded, and analysed through Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis protocol. (Braun & Clarke, 2006) Integration was achieved through a convergence matrix: quantitative findings for each outcome variable were placed alongside the corresponding qualitative theme, and the integrated narrative was constructed to confirm, extend, or contextualise the statistical patterns.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Teacher Respondents

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the 100 teacher respondents — the sub-group for whom professional characteristics were collected. Gender data cover all 378 non-headteacher respondents (students, teachers, parents); teaching experience and qualifications pertain specifically to the 100 teacher respondents.

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of Teacher Respondents and Gender Profile of All Non-HT Respondents

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender (non-HT respondents, n=380)	Male	202	53.2
	Female	178	46.8
Teaching Experience (teachers only, n=100)	< 5 years	23	23.0
	5–10 years	41	41.0
	> 10 years	36	36.0

Highest Qualification (teachers only, n=100)	Certificate/Diploma	19	19.0
	Bachelor's Degree	62	62.0
	Master's Degree	19	19.0

Note. Gender percentages are calculated on 380 non-headteacher respondents (100 teachers + 180 students + 100 parents). Teaching experience and qualification percentages are calculated on the 100 teacher respondents only. Source: Field Data (2025).

Extent of Parental Participation in Guidance and Counselling

The composite parental participation scale produced a mean of 2.05 (SD = 0.74) across the 100 parent respondents, below the scale midpoint of 3.0, indicating generally low engagement. Table 3 presents the full distribution of participation levels for the most recent school term. Figure 3 presents these proportions as a visual distribution.

Table 3Distribution of Parental Participation in G&C Activities, Most Recent Term (n = 100 parents)

Participation Level (current term)	**n**	**%**	**Mean**	**SD**
Active, regular participation	25	25.0		
Episodic / reactive participation	45	45.0		
No participation (current term)	30	30.0		
Composite scale	100	100.0	2.05	0.74

Note. Participation levels refer to the most recent school term. The 30 parents classified as "no participation" had met the broader inclusion criterion (prior G&C contact during the academic year) but had not attended any scheduled G&C activity during the most recent term. Mean and SD refer to the composite participation scale, not to individual category frequencies. Source: Field Data (2025).

Figure 3. Distribution of Parental Participation Levels, Current Term (n = 100)

Indicator	**Distribution**	**% of Total**
Active, regular participation	[redacted]	25.0%
Episodic / reactive participation	[redacted]	45.0%
No participation (current term)	[redacted]	30.0%

Note. Bar length proportional to percentage. Active = regular attendance at scheduled sessions; Episodic = attendance prompted by a specific child concern; None = no attendance during the current term. Source: Field Data (2025).

Associations with School Attendance

Table 4 presents student ratings of the perceived association between parental G&C participation and school attendance. Across the three items, a combined positive response rate (Very Effective + Effective) of 82.4% was recorded—the strongest pattern among the three CBC outcome indicators examined

Table 4 Student Ratings: Perceived Influence of Parental G&C Participation on School Attendance (n = 180)

Item	VE%	E%	N%	IE%	VIE%	VE+E%
G&C participation improves student attendance	52.9	29.4	11.8	5.9	0.0	82.4
Attendance improves when parents attend school sessions	41.2	35.3	17.6	5.9	0.0	76.5
Parental engagement reduces student absenteeism	47.1	23.5	23.5	5.9	0.0	70.6

Note. VE = Very Effective; E = Effective; N = Neutral; IE = Ineffective; VIE = Very Ineffective. Percentages are of student respondents (n = 180). Source: Field Data (2025).

Associations with Decision-Making Quality

Table 5 reports student ratings on the decision-making outcome. A combined positive response rate of 70.6% was recorded, indicating a meaningful perceived association between parental G&C participation and students' decision-making capacity — a core CBC competency domain.

Table 5 Student Ratings: Perceived Influence of Parental G&C Participation on Decision-Making Quality (n = 180)

Item	VE%	E%	N%	IE%	VIE%	VE+E%
G&C participation improves decision-making quality	47.1	23.5	23.5	5.9	0.0	70.6
Students make better educational choices when parents engage	35.3	29.4	23.5	11.8	0.0	64.7
Parental guidance improves self-directed learning	41.2	29.4	17.6	11.8	0.0	70.6

Note. VE = Very Effective; E = Effective; N = Neutral; IE = Ineffective; VIE = Very Ineffective. Items align with CBC critical thinking and self-directed learning competency domains. Source: Field Data (2025).

Associations with Peer Collaborative Learning

Table 6 presents teacher ratings of the association between parental G&C participation and students' collaborative learning orientation. The combined positive response rate of 64.7% is the most modest of the three indicators — consistent with the expectation that peer collaboration is influenced through an indirect home-endorsement pathway rather than through direct school-based intervention.

Table 6 Teacher Ratings: Perceived Influence of Parental G&C Participation on Peer Collaboration (n = 100)

Item	VE%	E%	N%	IE%	VIE%	VE+E%
G&C participation improves collaborative learning orientation	29.4	35.3	23.5	11.8	0.0	64.7

Parents attending G&C better understand group-learning expectations	35.3	29.4	17.6	17.6	0.0	64.7
Home endorsement of collaboration improves classroom teamwork	23.5	35.3	29.4	11.8	0.0	58.8

Note. VE = Very Effective; E = Effective; N = Neutral; IE = Ineffective; VIE = Very Ineffective. Rated by teacher respondents (n = 100). Source: Field Data (2025).

Correlation Analysis

Table 7 presents the Pearson correlation matrix for parental G&C participation and the three CBC implementation indicators. All correlations were statistically significant at $p < .05$. The composite correlation of $r = .59$ represents a moderate positive association, consistent with — though not identical to — the regression-based estimates reported by Ranji et al. from Nakuru County and Mulinya & Kimotho (2025) from Nairobi. (Ranji et al., 2025; Mulinya & Kimotho, 2025) On the basis of these results, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 7 Pearson Correlation Matrix: Parental G&C Participation and CBC Implementation Indicators (N = 398)

Variable Pair	**N**	**r**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
G&C Participation × School Attendance	398	.61	< .05
G&C Participation × Decision-Making Quality	398	.57	< .05
G&C Participation × Peer Collaboration	398	.49	< .05
G&C Participation × Composite CBC Effectiveness	398	.59	< .05

Note. Pearson's r; all correlations significant at $p < .05$ (2-tailed). Analysis conducted in IBM SPSS Statistics v.25. G&C = Guidance and Counselling. Composite CBC Effectiveness = weighted mean of three indicator scales.

Figure 2. Combined Positive Response Rates (VE + E%) by CBC Outcome Indicator

Indicator	**Distribution**	**% of Total**
School attendance (student-rated)		82.4%
Decision-making quality (student-rated)		70.6%
Peer collaboration (teacher-rated)		64.7%
Composite CBC effectiveness		59.0%

Note. Student respondents (n = 180) rated attendance and decision-making items; teacher respondents (n = 100) rated peer collaboration items. Composite score = weighted mean across all three indicator scales. Source: Field Data (2025).

The Structurally Excluded: Parents with No Current-Term Participation

The 30 parents (30.0%) classified as non-participating in the most recent term warrant specific analysis, not as outliers but as evidence of a structural pattern. Headteacher accounts and teacher responses indicate that this group is disproportionately drawn from households whose agricultural work calendars conflict with school-

scheduled G&C activities. This interpretation is consistent with Syomwene's (2022) and Mulinya and Kimotho's (2025) documentation that time constraints and limited CBC knowledge are the most frequently cited reasons for non-participation, and with Amunga et al.'s characterisation of this group as structurally excluded rather than disinterested. (Syomwene, 2022; Amunga et al., 2020) Mulinya and Kimotho's (2025) finding that many non-participating parents do not understand what counselling sessions involve or what benefit they would derive suggests a compounding cognitive barrier — parents cannot weigh a cost they do not perceive as having a benefit. (Mulinya & Kimotho, 2025; Amunga et al., 2020) These parents were not absent from the study: their earlier G&C contact qualified them for inclusion, and their current-term non-participation is a finding in itself. Without outreach and CBC literacy orientation targeted specifically at this group, improvements in aggregate participation rates will remain partial regardless of what is offered to parents already engaged.

DISCUSSION

Three findings from this study deserve interpretive attention beyond what the descriptive statistics convey. First, the composite correlation of $r = .59$ ($p < .05$) confirms a moderate positive association between parental G&C participation and CBC implementation effectiveness — it does not establish causation, and the cross-sectional design cannot resolve the directionality question. The directionality question — whether higher parental G&C participation drives stronger CBC outcomes, or whether schools with stronger CBC implementation attract more parental participation — requires longitudinal or experimental designs to resolve. What the data do establish is that where parental guidance and counselling participation is higher, student attendance, decision-making quality, and peer collaborative orientation also tend to be rated more positively. This association is stronger than several comparable correlations reported for general parental involvement in the Kenyan CBC literature, suggesting that the guidance and counselling modality may carry particular salience — though this inference would require controlled comparative research to confirm.

Second, the differential association pattern across the three outcomes — attendance ($r = .61$) > decision-making ($r = .57$) > peer collaboration ($r = .49$) — is theoretically coherent. Attendance is the most proximate behavioural outcome: parental engagement with counsellors who emphasise regular attendance directly reinforces the behavioural dimension of Fredricks et al.'s framework. Decision-making is more cognitively mediated: it requires that parents understand CBC's competency goals well enough to guide their children's choices at home, engaging the cognitive engagement dimension. Peer collaboration is most distal — operating through what teachers described as a home-endorsement mechanism, where parents who attend counselling communicate group-learning expectations positively at home, producing downstream classroom effects. Epstein's overlapping spheres model would predict exactly this gradient: outcomes closer to the school-family institutional interface respond more immediately to engagement than those requiring extended home-to-classroom transmission.

Third, the qualitative data significantly contextualise what the correlations cannot explain: why only 25.0% of parents participate actively, despite headteachers reporting that the parents who do participate consistently return and engage positively. The three headteacher themes — limited CBC literacy, structural barriers, and latent readiness — together describe a participation deficit driven by institutional conditions rather than community disinterest. This framing aligns with the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model's emphasis on perceived invitations: when schools cannot offer accessible scheduling, adequate counselling spaces, or trained personnel, the structural invitation simply does not exist for parents who might otherwise engage. Addressing the 25.0% participation ceiling requires not encouragement but infrastructure.

Three Headteacher Themes

Three themes emerged from headteacher interview data. Across all schools, headteachers consistently described parents as oriented toward academic rankings rather than competency development — a cognitive orientation mismatch that constrains G&C session quality:

"When parents come to guidance meetings, their first question is always: where does my child rank in class? When I try to talk about the child's competency profile, most of them look confused. They still have the 8-4-4 mindset. That is the biggest problem — they do not understand what we are trying to do here." (HT6, rural school, Zone 3)

Structural barriers were the second theme. Three constraints recurred: agricultural calendar conflicts, inadequate counselling spaces, and the absence of trained counsellors in several schools:

"We schedule guidance meetings in February and October. But February is exactly when tea plucking is at its peak, and October is harvesting. Most parents simply cannot come. We have tried evening sessions, but the school has no lighting. There is no good time." (HT11, rural school, Zone 5)

"We do not have a counselling room. The class teacher who does guidance uses a corner of the staffroom. Parents will not talk about their child's personal problems in front of other teachers. So they come, say everything is fine, and leave." (HT4, rural school, Zone 2)

Despite these barriers, a third theme was latent readiness: headteachers expressed genuine willingness to develop structured parental counselling partnerships, given institutional support:

"If I had a trained counsellor, a proper room, and a programme to explain CBC to parents, I believe most parents would come. The ones who come now actually appreciate it — they come back. The problem is we have nothing to offer them properly." (HT2, rural school, Zone 1)

This latent readiness represents the emotional investment precondition that Fredricks et al.'s framework identifies as necessary for sustained engagement. The motivational infrastructure exists; the institutional infrastructure does not. Epstein's overlapping spheres model predicts that purposive investment in that institutional infrastructure — dedicated spaces, trained personnel, accessible scheduling — is the lever most directly available to school leadership.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study has produced three substantive findings about parental guidance and counselling participation in the context of CBC implementation in rural Kenyan junior secondary schools. Active participation rates are low (25.0%), but the structural reasons are specific and addressable. Where participation does occur, it is associated with meaningfully stronger CBC implementation indicators — most strongly with school attendance ($r = .61$) and decision-making quality ($r = .57$), more moderately with peer collaborative learning ($r = .49$). And a substantial group of parents (30.0% in the most recent term) remain entirely outside the system during peak agricultural periods, not through disinterest but through the intersection of logistical exclusion and insufficient CBC literacy.

What distinguishes this study from the existing Kenyan CBC engagement literature is threefold: its focus on guidance and counselling as a disaggregated engagement modality rather than general parental involvement; its sub-county locus in a rural, agricultural setting underrepresented in the existing evidence base; and its triangulation of student and teacher quantitative data with institutional headteacher accounts. The null hypothesis is rejected. The theoretical contribution is to demonstrate the analytical productivity of extending Fredricks et al.'s tripartite engagement framework beyond student engagement to the parental dimension, where all three deficit types — behavioural, cognitive, and emotional — are empirically visible and institutionally explicable.

Several limitations bound these conclusions. The cross-sectional design establishes association, not causation, and the mixed-methods triangulation design partially mitigates but does not eliminate the risk of social desirability effects in self-report engagement data. The study's single sub-county scope means that findings cannot be generalised statistically to other Kenyan counties or educational contexts; following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework, the appropriate standard is analytical transferability — the thick description of Sotik Sub-County's agricultural economy, institutional infrastructure deficits, and CBC literacy gaps provides sufficient contextual detail for readers to assess applicability to comparable rural sub-county settings. The alignment of this study's findings with patterns documented by Ranji et al. (2025) in Nakuru County and Mulinya and Kimotho (2025) in Nairobi suggests meaningful cross-county consistency, while the agricultural context of Sotik Sub-County introduces structural constraints not present in those more urbanised settings. The purposive

parent selection from prior G&C contacts means that the most comprehensively excluded parents — those with no school contact whatsoever — are not represented in the data; this implies that the positive associations reported here may overestimate what would be observed in a fully representative sample. Longitudinal designs using observational rather than self-report engagement data across multiple county contexts are needed to address these limits.

Recommendations

1. Headteachers should map parental G&C meeting schedules explicitly to Sotik Sub-County's agricultural calendar, avoiding peak tea plucking (February) and maize harvest (October) periods identified in this study. Alternative scheduling options — Saturday morning sessions, community-based meetings, or brief structured phone consultations for agricultural-period use — should be developed and piloted with parental input.

2. Every G&C session that involves parents should begin with a brief, structured CBC literacy orientation component — explaining the competency being discussed, what the counsellor is assessing, and what home-based actions would support it. Without this, behavioural attendance (the easiest dimension to increase) will not produce the cognitive and emotional engagement that drives CBC outcomes.

3. School counsellors and class teachers performing counselling functions should receive in-service training specifically on parent-inclusive counselling facilitation. Training should address realistic caseload management, the creation of confidential counselling spaces, and access to peer supervision — recognising that counsellors who are inadequately supported cannot build the relational trust that sustains parental emotional engagement.

4. KICD and the Ministry of Education should include parental G&C participation as a discrete, monitored indicator within CBC quality assurance and school inspection instruments — disaggregated from general parental involvement measures so that its specific contribution to CBC outcomes can be tracked nationally.

5. Future research should test specific parental G&C engagement interventions using longitudinal or quasi-experimental designs across multiple county contexts, and should specifically target the structurally excluded non-participating group through outreach models (mobile counselling, community-based CBC orientation) not captured in this study's design.

Ethical Approval

This study was conducted under NACOSTI Research Licence No. NACOSTI/P/24/39807 (issued 12 September 2024). Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection; parental consent was additionally obtained for student respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout.

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data supporting this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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