

Effect of Responsibility Uptake on Students' Behaviour Adjustment in Public Secondary Schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT: The study examined the effect of responsible uptake counselling strategies on students' behaviour adjustment in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The investigation was motivated by the rise of behaviour problems such as truancy, poor academic performance, and engagement in delinquent activities among students. The study employed pragmatic paradigm, a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach with *ex post facto* and phenomenological designs. The target population comprised approximately 15,000 students, 232 teacher counsellors, and 232 deputy principals from 232 public secondary schools. A sample of 144 schools, 375 students, 23 deputy principals, and 23 teacher counsellors was selected through stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling techniques. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and in-depth interview guides. Reliability was established through Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data was thematically analyzed. Findings revealed that responsible uptake counselling strategies significantly influenced students' behaviour adjustment. The study concluded that responsible uptake counselling intervention effectively promotes responsible, adaptive, and prosocial behaviour among students. It recommends the institutionalization of Reality Therapy strategies within school counselling programs to strengthen behaviour interventions and improve overall student behaviour adjustment in public secondary schools.

KEYWORDS: Reality Counselling strategies, Responsibility Uptake, Students' Behaviour Adjust

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Reality counselling strategies (also referred to as reality therapy) focus on helping students to take responsibility for their behaviour by making conscious choices that align with their basic needs. These needs are survival, love, belonging, power, freedom, and fun. The counselling strategies are grounded on the belief that students can control their actions and improve their lives through realistic and responsible decision-making (Zhao, Zhang, Li & Wang, 2024). Wubbolding (2017) described reality therapy as a cognitive-behavioural approach that emphasizes choice, control, and personal responsibility. It employs the WDEP system (Wants, Doing, Evaluation, and Planning) to help students assess their goals, behaviours, and the effectiveness of their actions in achieving success and satisfaction in life. Reality counselling strategies emphasize on self-evaluation, present focused interventions, and behaviour change to help students meet their psychological needs effectively. The approach encouraged students to take responsibility for their choices while developing actionable plans to improve their well-being (Kim & Lee, 2022). In this study, reality counselling strategies referred to success identity mindset counselling strategies, self-care counselling strategies, de-emphasizing negative past experiences counselling strategies and responsibility uptake counselling strategies as techniques to promote behaviour adjustment among public secondary school students in Uasin Gishu County.

Responsibility-uptake refers to individuals being able to acknowledge and accept ownership of their behaviour and choices, understanding that they have control over their actions and the consequences that follow (Monda, Aloka & Mwebi, 2021). Glasser (1965) emphasized that individuals are responsible for their own behaviour and that, with rare exceptions, they choose the behaviours that fulfill their needs. Reality therapy focuses on helping individuals evaluate their current behaviours, determine whether these behaviours are effectively meeting their needs and develop actionable plans to make more responsible and fulfilling choices (Fekadu, 2019). This therapeutic approach emphasizes present actions and encourages clients to take control of their lives by making conscious, responsible decisions. In this study responsibility uptake involved students choosing to obey rules, make plans to change and use their time wisely and constructively emphasizing on personal accountability and active engagement in behaviour change.

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Behaviour adjustment in public secondary school students entails their ability to modify behaviour to meet the expectations and norms in schools, various social environments, such as family, places of worship and among peer groups. It encompasses the development of self regulation, social skills, and coping mechanisms that enable adolescents to navigate the challenges associated with this adolescent developmental stage. According to Sunawan and Xiong (2016) behaviour adjustment refers to enhancement of coping mechanisms and life skills that facilitate better decision-making and responsible behaviour. Effective behaviour adjustment during adolescence is crucial for promoting mental health, academic success, and the formation of positive social relationships (Chewen, Munyua & Ogula, 2023). According to Mabeya, Kimotho and Munyua (2024) behaviour adjustment refers to marked improvements in self-control, empathy, and cooperation, which was largely attributed to the implementation of cooperative learning strategies. In this study, behaviour adjustment was measured through specific indicators including punctuality, sobriety, respect for authority, and individuation. Behaviour adjustment encompasses the change from problem behaviours which are described as any behaviours that deviates from socially acceptable norms and values and which violates schools' policies; potentially impeding the efficient and well-organized operation of an educational system (Atunde, 2019).

Punctuality was reflected on time management skills and student's commitment to personal responsibilities in both academic and social contexts. The practice of punctuality fosters reliability and earns trust from peers and educators (Kumar & Singh, 2019). Sobriety highlighted self-regulation and the ability to resist engaging in risky behaviours such as substance use and other addictions. Maintaining sobriety contributes to cognitive focus, emotional stability, and overall school performance, thereby enhancing a student's academic and personal growth (Turner & Clarke, 2020).

Respect for authority demonstrates a student's alignment with societal expectations and adherence to school rules, manifesting through respectful interactions with teachers, administrators and fellow students. Students who respected authority were typically more adept at understanding the importance of rules, preparing them for responsible citizenship (Davis & Parker, 2021). Individuation, or the development of a unique identity and autonomy, was crucial for promoting independent and responsible decision-making. This trait enabled students to navigate societal pressures and peer influence with confidence, encouraging self-motivated and positive choices that support long-term behavioural adjustment (Martinez & Lee, 2018).

Uasin Gishu County has been experiencing increased social problems including substance abuse and other addictions, teenage pregnancy, truancy, poor academic performance, deaths and drop out of schools. The county has witnessed notable rise in substance abuse, particularly alcohol use among students (Clavarino & Najman, 2017). According to the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA, 2021), Uasin Gishu had recorded high numbers of youth seeking treatment for alcohol-related problems, reflecting the urgent need for effective programs to address this crisis. The prevalence of substance abuse not only contributes to behaviour problems, which is very unbecoming, but also undermines the overall health and well-being of the youth in the region (Angelova, 2021). The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS, 2020) revealed that teenage pregnancy rates in Uasin Gishu County had witnessed an alarming increase. This was echoed by Ndanyi (2022), who revealed that over 27000 girls had dropped out of school from 2020-2023 due to teenage pregnancy. This was an indication of adolescent sexual engagement, which needed urgent attention and action from parents, teachers and other stakeholders (Nyaboke, 2023). According to Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS, 2020) teenage pregnancy contributed to school dropout rates and perpetuating cycles of poverty and behavioural problems. In response to these challenges, there is a pressing need for training programs that equip youth with knowledge and skills for them to make informed decisions regarding their health and relationships. The researcher concentrated on Uasin Gishu County in order to explore effective strategies for behaviour adjustment among students in Uasin Gishu County, ultimately contributing to a healthier and more resilient community.

In developed countries, student behaviour problems remain a major educational challenge, negatively affecting academic achievement, school safety, and student well-being. In the United States, bullying, cyberbullying, substance abuse, chronic absenteeism, and disruptive behaviour continue to be widespread, with traditional punitive disciplinary measures such as suspensions and expulsions proving ineffective in promoting long-term behaviour change (CDC, 2021; Marshall, 2020; Sparks, 2023). Reality counselling strategies have therefore been proposed as a more constructive approach by addressing students' unmet psychological needs, fostering self-awareness, personal responsibility, and problem-solving skills. Similarly, in China, academic dishonesty, classroom disruptions, and absenteeism remain prevalent, particularly among male and senior students, disrupting effective teaching and learning (Zhang Yin & Zheng, 2018; Sun & Shek, 2021; Xinjuan & Noryati, 2023). In India, student behaviour problems including classroom indiscipline, absenteeism, academic dishonesty, and ragging had been intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, with teachers reporting worsening discipline, poor concentration, and learning loss (Bhatnagar, 2021; Sajeevan et al., 2022; Saini et al., 2023). Evidence from India further demonstrates that Reality counselling strategies improve students' motivation, emotional regulation, responsibility, and discipline (Nurjanah et al., 2020), providing empirical support for examining their effectiveness in addressing behaviour problems among public secondary school students in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

Across Africa, student behaviour problems remain a persistent challenge in secondary schools, manifesting as vandalism, bullying, substance abuse, truancy, classroom disruptions, aggression, theft, sexual misconduct, and other forms of indiscipline that

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undermine teaching, learning, and school safety (Onyechi et al., 2017; Nurjanah et al., 2020). Choice Theory explains these behaviours as attempts by students to satisfy unmet psychological needs for love and belonging, power, freedom, fun, and survival, suggesting that punitive disciplinary approaches are often ineffective (Curry, 2018; McShane, 2018). Instead, Reality counselling strategies emphasize personal responsibility, self-regulation, meaningful relationships, and problem-solving, enabling students to make constructive behavioural choices (Karimyar Jahromi & Mosallanejad, 2024). Evidence from South Africa and Uganda illustrates the severity of learner indiscipline, including violence against teachers, classroom disruption, truancy, drug abuse, and reliance on punitive disciplinary measures that have yielded limited success (Dhlamini, 2018; Daniel, 2018; Awor, 2016; Alex, 2021; Musabyimana, 2018). Consequently, Reality counselling strategies have been recommended as a student-centred approach to classroom management and behaviour adjustment by helping learners recognize that they have control over their actions and can choose responsible behaviours, thereby fostering improved discipline, positive relationships, and a more conducive learning environment (Andina, 2019; Uredi & Gokalp, 2023).

Kenya continues to experience significant student behaviour problems in secondary schools, including truancy, absenteeism, drug and substance abuse, theft, bullying, and school arson, all of which undermine academic achievement and school safety (Agesa & Mbirithi, 2021). The country has witnessed several tragic incidents of school violence and arson, including the St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School tragedy (1991), the Nyeri High School prefects' killings (1999), the Kyanguli High School fire (2001), the Lokichogio Mixed Secondary School attack (2017), and more recent school fires linked to student unrest (Ndaita, 2016; Lubanga & Lutta, 2017; Cheloti, 2021). In Uasin Gishu County, the situation is compounded by rising alcohol and substance abuse, teenage pregnancies, HIV infections, bullying, school dropouts, and recurrent arson incidents, particularly in Turbo and Kapseret sub-counties, where more than 500 teenage pregnancies were reported within a year (Chewen et al., 2023). These behavioural and social challenges have contributed to poor academic performance, emotional distress, and increased youth involvement in risky behaviours despite ongoing government and non-governmental interventions (Wainaina, 2019; Angelova, 2021). The persistence of these problems highlights the need for more effective, student-centred interventions that promote personal responsibility, resilience, and sound decision-making. Consequently, this study investigated the effect of Reality counselling strategies on students' behaviour adjustment in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, as a potential alternative to traditional punitive disciplinary approaches.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is an urgent to address the snowballing cases of student misconduct, including truancy, bullying, substance abuse, vandalism, and defiance of school rules (Nnoyiba, 2020). These behaviours have disrupted learning, weakened peer relationships, and undermined the school environment, while traditional punitive disciplinary approaches have shown limited success in producing lasting behavioural change and, in some cases, have increased student alienation (Angelova, 2021). Although Reality Therapy has demonstrated effectiveness in promoting positive behaviour in studies conducted in countries such as Indonesia and the United States (Netrawati et al., 2021; Turner, 2022), there is limited empirical evidence among Kenyan secondary school students. This study therefore sought to address this geographical and contextual research gap by investigating the effect of Reality counselling strategies on behaviour adjustment among students in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, with the aim of informing evidence-based counselling practices and educational decision-making.

1.3 Objective of the Study

1. To investigate the effect of responsibility uptake counselling strategies on students' behaviour adjustment in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

1.4 Null Hypothesis

H₀₁: Responsibility uptake counselling strategies has no effect on students' behaviour adjustment in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, sKenya.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The current study was guided by Reality Theory (Choice Theory) developed by William Glasser (1965), which emphasizes that individuals are responsible for their own behaviour because all behaviour is a matter of personal choice (Glasser, 1998, 2011). The theory assumes that human behaviour is motivated by the need to satisfy five basic psychological needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. According to Glasser, students develop positive behaviour when they learn to make responsible choices that satisfy these needs in socially acceptable ways. Reality Theory further assumes that individuals can control only their own behaviour, and lasting behaviour change occurs when they evaluate their actions, accept responsibility, and make better choices rather than blaming external circumstances. Consequently, responsibility uptake counselling intervention encourages students to develop an internal locus of control, self-awareness, accountability, and problem-solving skills, leading to improved discipline, emotional well-being, academic motivation, and positive social relationships (Kumar & Veenavani, 2020; APA, 2020).

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Reality Theory has several strengths that make it appropriate for addressing students' behaviour adjustment. It promotes personal responsibility, self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy, enabling students to evaluate their behaviour and formulate realistic plans for positive change rather than relying on punishment (Glasser, 1998; Eslami, Mahdiyan, & Eslami, 2023). The theory is student-centred, action-oriented, and strengthens teacher-student relationships by encouraging guidance, mutual respect, and supportive counselling (Sitota & Tefera, 2022). However, the theory has limitations. It has relatively limited empirical validation across diverse cultural contexts, and its emphasis on individual choice may underestimate the influence of external factors such as family environment, peer pressure, socioeconomic conditions, and school climate on students' behaviour (Doughty & Connelly, 2020; Anh, 2021).

Reality Theory is highly applicable to the current study because responsibility uptake counselling intervention is founded on the principle that students can improve their behaviour by accepting responsibility for their actions and making constructive choices. The theory provides a suitable framework for examining how responsibility-taking counselling strategies influence behaviour adjustment among students in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Through guided self-evaluation, goal setting, and problem-solving, students are encouraged to replace disruptive behaviours with responsible and socially acceptable behaviours while developing greater emotional regulation, resilience, and accountability (Wubbolding, 2011; Kamsari et al., 2021). Given the persistent challenges of truancy, substance abuse, bullying, and indiscipline in Kenyan secondary schools, Reality Theory offers a practical, non-punitive, student-centred framework for promoting sustainable behaviour adjustment and achieving the objectives of the current study.

2.0 EMPIRICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Andina (2019) investigated the effectiveness of Reality Group Counseling in addressing destructive classroom behaviour among four Grade 11 students in Indonesia using a mixed-method assessment involving interviews, observations, and the Culture Fair Intelligence Test (CFIT). The findings showed that the participants possessed average intelligence, indicating that their behavioural problems were not due to cognitive limitations but rather psychosocial factors such as feelings of neglect and lack of appreciation from family and peers. Following five sessions of Reality Theory-based group counselling grounded in Glasser's Choice Theory, the students demonstrated reduced classroom disruptions, improved adherence to school rules, enhanced peer relationships, increased self-awareness, and greater personal responsibility, with these positive changes sustained one month after the intervention. The study suggests that Reality counselling strategies can effectively promote behaviour regulation by fostering internal control, self-evaluation, and responsible decision-making, making them relevant for addressing similar behavioural challenges among secondary school students in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. However, the study's findings should be interpreted cautiously because of its very small sample size ($n = 4$), lack of a control group, and limited documentation of the intervention procedures, which restrict the generalizability and replicability of the results. Nevertheless, the study provides empirical support for the use of Reality counselling strategies as a practical, student-centred approach to improving behaviour adjustment in school settings.

Eslami, Mahdiyan, and Eslami (2023) examined the effectiveness of Reality Therapy in improving the emotional balance and responsibility of adolescent girls in Iran using a quasi-experimental pre-test, post-test, follow-up, and control group design. The study involved 40 secondary school students, selected through convenience sampling and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups of 20 participants each. Data were collected using Watson et al.'s (1988) Emotional Balance Questionnaire and Gough et al.'s (1952) Responsibility Scale, and analyzed using repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that Reality Therapy significantly improved adolescents' emotional balance and responsibility ($p < .01$), suggesting that the intervention positively enhances students' psychosocial well-being and their capacity to make responsible choices. These findings support the application of Reality counselling strategies in promoting responsibility uptake among students, which is expected to contribute to improved behaviour adjustment. However, the study was limited by its exclusive focus on female students within a single Iranian cultural context, reliance on self-reported data without teacher or counsellor perspectives, lack of direct measurement of observable behaviour adjustment outcomes, and insufficient information on the long-term sustainability and contextual adaptation of the intervention. These limitations create a contextual and methodological gap, highlighting the need for studies in Kenya, particularly in Uasin Gishu County, involving both male and female students, multiple sources of data, and direct assessment of behaviour adjustment outcomes following Reality counselling interventions.

Sari, Thahir, and Utami (2020) evaluated the effectiveness of Reality Counselling integrated with value judgement techniques in reducing bullying behaviour among vocational students using a single-subject A-B-A research design. Behavioural data were collected through structured observations and analyzed using statistical and clinical techniques. The findings demonstrated a consistent reduction in bullying behaviour following the intervention, indicating that Reality Counselling, reinforced by culturally grounded value judgement, effectively promoted positive behaviour by addressing students' psychological needs and moral reasoning. The researchers recommended that school counsellors integrate culturally relevant values into counselling programmes to enhance behaviour change. However, the study was limited by its single-subject design, absence of a control group, short intervention period, lack of long-term follow-up, inadequate exploration of students' experiences, and insufficient description of the

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value judgement component, thereby limiting the generalizability and replicability of the findings. These limitations highlight the need for more rigorous studies involving larger samples, comparative designs, longitudinal follow-up, and mixed methods. Consequently, the current study sought to address these gaps by examining the effectiveness of Reality counselling strategies on students' behaviour adjustment in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

Hajhosseini, Gholamali-Lavasani, and Beheshti (2016) investigated the effectiveness of group counselling based on Reality Therapy in reducing academic procrastination and improving behavioural self-regulation among first-grade male high school students in Zaveh County, Iran. The study employed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design involving 24 students who were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups after convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Academic Procrastination Scale (APS) and the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) and analyzed using Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA). The experimental group participated in eight Reality Therapy group counselling sessions, while the control group received no intervention. The findings showed that Reality Therapy significantly reduced academic procrastination and enhanced behavioural self-regulation by encouraging students to reflect on their behaviour, accept responsibility for their choices, and develop realistic plans for change, consistent with Glasser's Choice Theory. However, the study was limited by its small sample size, focus on male students from a single geographical area, short-term assessment, lack of qualitative data, absence of comparison with other intervention models, and limited description of the counselling sessions, thereby restricting the generalizability and replicability of the findings. These limitations underscore the need for further research involving larger and more diverse populations, mixed-methods approaches, longitudinal follow-up, and detailed intervention protocols.

In Indonesia, Sari, Thahir, and Utami, (2020) conducted a study to investigate the effect of reality counselling with value judgement techniques to reduce bullying behaviour of vocational students. This is because bullying is a problem that is a scourge in the world of education. In addition to the victim, bullying also affects the offender. This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of reality counseling with judgement of values to reduce bullying behaviour of vocational students. Bullying behaviour done by students caused students not to be able to fulfill their basic needs. This study used a single subject research method with A-B-A design. Data collection techniques are done using observations with guidelines that have been developed. The analysis technique used was statistical analysis and clinical analysis techniques. The results showed a significant decrease in student bullying behaviour through value judgment techniques at baseline A1 intervention and baseline A2. School counselors should utilize local cultural values to consider values to evaluate student bullying behaviour. This study used ex post facto design and linear regression to analyze the data for the quantitative strand and phenomenological design for the qualitative strand.

Supeni and Jusoh (2021) reviewed the application of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy (CTRT) in preventing sexual misconduct among Malaysian youth through a qualitative narrative literature review. Guided by Glasser's Choice Theory, the review found that CTRT helps adolescents satisfy their psychological needs through responsible choices by promoting self-evaluation, personal responsibility, goal setting, self-control, and intrinsic motivation, thereby reducing susceptibility to risky behaviours and peer pressure. The study concluded that integrating CTRT into school counselling programmes could strengthen students' moral and behavioural development and recommended the development and empirical evaluation of CTRT-based intervention modules for educational settings. However, the review was limited because it relied solely on secondary literature without collecting empirical data, focused only on sexual misconduct within the Malaysian context, and lacked a systematic review methodology, reducing the generalizability of its findings. These limitations created methodological and contextual gaps that justified the current study, which empirically investigated the effect of Reality counselling strategies on a broader range of behaviour adjustment outcomes among public secondary school students in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

Prawitasari, Rahman, and Candra (2023) examined the effectiveness of Islamic Reality Therapy (IRT) in reducing academic burnout among high school students in Indonesia using a classroom action research design with two intervention cycles. The study involved 12 purposively selected students with high levels of academic burnout and used a psychometric burnout scale to measure changes before and after the intervention. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, which showed a consistent reduction in burnout levels following group guidance sessions based on Islamic Reality Therapy. The findings indicated that integrating Reality Therapy principles with Islamic values effectively enhanced students' self-awareness and personal responsibility while reducing burnout. However, the study was limited by its small sample size, absence of a control group, and reliance on descriptive statistics, reducing the strength and generalizability of the findings. Consequently, the current study addressed these limitations by employing a larger sample and both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses to examine the effectiveness of Reality counselling strategies on students' behaviour adjustment in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

Norouzpour, Vakili, and Rezakhani (2019) investigated the effectiveness of Reality Therapy in improving self-efficacy and identity styles among female high school students in Tehran, Iran, using a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design. The study involved 30 purposively selected students who were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Data were collected using the Self-Efficacy Scale and Identity Styles Questionnaire and analyzed using Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA). The findings revealed that ten Reality Therapy sessions significantly improved students' self-efficacy and identity development ($p < .05$), suggesting that Reality Therapy enhances psychological competence, responsible decision-making, and

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emotional maturity. However, the study relied solely on self-report measures, included only female students from one district, had a small sample size, and lacked long-term follow-up, limiting the generalizability of the findings. These gaps informed the current study, which included both male and female students and examined a broader range of behaviour adjustment outcomes in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

Ojewola (2017) examined the effectiveness of Reality Therapy in reducing indiscipline among in-school adolescents in Nigeria using a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design based on a 2×2 factorial matrix. The study involved 48 students randomly selected from two secondary schools, with data collected using the Disciplinary Issues among Secondary School Students (DIASSS) questionnaire and analyzed through Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The findings showed that students who received Reality Therapy demonstrated significantly lower levels of indiscipline than those in the control group, indicating that the intervention effectively promoted responsible decision-making and positive behaviour. The study also found significant gender differences in treatment outcomes. However, its small sample size, restriction to two schools, lack of teacher and counsellor perspectives, and limited exploration of gender differences reduced the generalizability and depth of the findings. These methodological and contextual limitations justified the current study, which involved a larger and more diverse sample and incorporated multiple stakeholders to examine the effectiveness of Reality counselling strategies on students' behaviour adjustment in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The study adopted a pragmatism research paradigm and employed a convergent mixed-methods design, which enabled the researcher to collect, analyze, and integrate quantitative and qualitative data concurrently. This approach facilitated triangulation of findings and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the effect of Reality counselling strategies on students' behaviour adjustment than either method could achieve independently. The quantitative component utilized an ex post facto research design to examine the relationships between Reality counselling strategies and behaviour adjustment without manipulating the independent variables, while the qualitative component employed a phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of teacher counsellors and deputy principals regarding the implementation of Reality counselling strategies in public secondary schools. The study was conducted in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, targeting 15,000 students, 232 teacher counsellors, and 232 deputy principals from 232 public secondary schools. Multiple sampling techniques were employed, including census sampling for the two national schools, proportionate systematic random sampling for extra-county, county, and sub-county schools, stratified and simple random sampling to select 375 students, and purposive sampling to select 25 teacher counsellors based on counselling qualifications and experience. Additionally, 25 deputy principals were selected using a combination of census and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to students and in-depth interview guides for teacher counsellors and deputy principals. The questionnaires contained both closed-ended and open-ended items organized into sections covering demographic characteristics, four Reality counselling strategies (success identity mindset, self-care, responsibility taking, and de-emphasis of negative past experiences), and students' behaviour adjustment. The interview guides generated qualitative data on participants' experiences with implementing Reality counselling strategies. A pilot study involving 38 students, 3 teacher counsellors, and 3 deputy principals was conducted to refine the instruments. Instrument validity was established through content, construct, criterion, and face validity, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency. Qualitative trustworthiness was enhanced through triangulation and member checking. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics, including simple and multiple linear regression and t-tests for hypothesis testing. Qualitative interview data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes. Ethical requirements were observed by obtaining approval from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, NACOSTI, and relevant county education authorities, while informed consent, student assent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were maintained throughout the study.

4.0 STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 Descriptive statistics on Responsibility Uptake Counselling Strategies

This section presents students' reflections on the responsibility uptake counselling strategies they acquired during reality theory counselling sessions. Using a five-point scale 1 = Not very true of me, 2 = Not true of me, 3 = Not sure, 4 = True of me, and 5 = Very true of me the items assessed the extent to which counselling enhanced learners' ability to take ownership of their academic tasks, personal behaviour, study routines, interpersonal interactions, and school-related responsibilities. Responsibility is a central concept in Reality Therapy, which emphasizes personal choice, accountability, and self-directed behaviour change as essential foundations for improved conduct and academic success. The responses summarized in Table 1 demonstrate the degree to which learners internalized responsible habits and applied them consistently in their school and personal lives.

Table 1 Distribution of Responses on Responsibility Uptake Counselling strategies

Statements		1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Since counselling I learnt how to make a personal revision timetable for all my subjects	F	0	0	67	132	150	4.24
	%	0	0	19.2	37.8	43.0	
After counselling I learnt how to take responsibility for my own behaviour academic choices without blaming others	F	0	0	0	165	184	4.53
	%	0	0	0	47.3	52.7	
Once I got counselled, I learnt that for me to accomplish in my studies it is important to do my assignments in time without pilling them up	F	0	0	66	83	200	4.38
	%	0	0	18.9	23.8	57.30	
I learnt that I should take good care of my property and that of the school during counselling e.g. to avoid vandalism	F	0	0	16	83	250	4.67
	%	0	0	4.6	23.8	71.6	
Since counselling, I learnt that it is my responsibility to have the materials necessary for my studies in school every day e.g. Stationery	F	0	0	50	117	182	4.34
	%	0	0	14.3	33.5	52.1	
After counselling I learnt how to plan myself so that I complete each task at a time before engaging in other unrelated activities	F	0	0	0	165	184	4.53
	%	0	0	0	47.3	52.7	
Since counselling I learnt how to keep myself clean and neat	F	0	0	0	0	349	5.00
	%	0	0	0	0	349	
During counselling I learnt how to talk to my fellow students and my teachers with respect	F	0	0	0	65	284	4.81
	%	0	0	0	18.6	81.4	
Since counselling I learnt that it is my responsibility to keenly listen to my teachers while I am being taught	F	0	0	0	66	283	4.81
	%	0	0	0	18.9	81.1	
During counselling I learnt that it is my responsibility to always work hard in my studies irrespective of my situation	F	0	0	0	133	216	4.62
	%	0	0	0	38.1	31.9	

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Using the Likert scale of 1 = Not very true of me, 2 = Not true of me, 3 = Not sure, 4 = True of me, and 5 = Very true of me, the findings on responsibility uptake counselling strategies reveal that counselling had a substantial influence on learners' academic and behaviour responsibility. To begin with, 67 students (19.2%) indicated that the statement was true of them, while 132 (37.8%) reported that it was very true of them that counselling helped them learn how to make a personal revision timetable for all subjects, resulting in a mean of 4.24. This shows that most learners absorbed the skill of planning their studies effectively. This suggested that counselling empowered students to plan their academic work effectively, reflecting Glasser's Reality Theory which emphasizes responsible choice-making and personal control over one's actions. This trend reflects findings by Husman et al. (2024) in Malaysia and Wambugu and Kamau (2021) in Kenya, who found that counselling interventions enhance academic planning and study organization. Similarly, 165 learners (47.3%) stated that it was true of them, while 184 (52.7%) indicated it was very true of them, that counselling taught them to take responsibility for their own behaviour and academic choices instead of blaming others, yielding a mean of 4.53. This strong endorsement reflects the core tenets of Reality Therapy, which encourages accountability and internal control. This finding illustrates the internalization of personal responsibility a key concept in *Reality Theory*, where individuals are guided to accept ownership of their behaviours rather than externalizing blame, an essential approach in addressing adolescent delinquent behaviour. Comparable findings were documented by Cooper and Hernandez (2020) in the United States, showing reduced blame-shifting and improved behaviour ownership after counselling.

A further 66 students (18.9%) reported the statement was true of them, 83 (23.8%) moderately true, and 200 (57.3%) very true of them that they learnt the importance of completing assignments on time, producing a mean of 4.38. This demonstrates strengthened self-discipline. This shows that counselling sessions instilled in students the value of self-discipline and timely task completion, reducing tendencies toward academic irresponsibility often linked to delinquency. Similar improvements were found in Tanzania by Mkumbo (2020), who reported reduced academic procrastination among counselled learners. In addition, 16 (4.6%) stated that it was true of them, 83 (23.8%) moderately true, and 250 (71.6%) very true of them that counselling taught them to care for personal and school property including avoiding vandalism resulting in a high mean score of 4.67. This aligns with South African findings by Moyo and Sibanda (2023), who showed counselling reduces vandalism and fosters respect for shared resources. Moreover, 50 respondents (14.3%) stated it was true of them, 117 (33.5%) moderately true, and 182 (52.1%) very true of them that they learnt to take responsibility for bringing necessary study materials daily, reflected in a mean of 4.34. This suggests improved organizational responsibility, consistent with Kasozi and Lutaaya (2022) in Uganda. Likewise, 165 learners (47.3%) said it was true of them and 184 (52.7%) very true of them that counselling helped them learn to complete one task before moving to another, yielding a mean of 4.53. This indicates strengthened time management and reduced impulsivity, mirroring findings by Lee and Ahmad (2021) in Malaysia.

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An exceptional finding was recorded where all 349 students (100%) indicated that it was very true of them that counselling taught them how to keep themselves clean and neat, resulting in a perfect mean of 5.00. This unanimous response highlights a major behaviour transformation consistent with Nigerian results from Okafor and Chukwu (2019), who found improved hygiene practices following counselling. Respectful communication also improved markedly, as 65 learners (18.6%) stated it was true of them and 284 (81.4%) very true of them that counselling taught them how to talk respectfully to peers and teachers, giving a mean of 4.81. The findings indicated that students learnt that it is their responsibility to listen attentively to teachers during lessons. This reflects enhanced attentiveness and commitment to learning attributes of responsible students. The findings echoed findings by Gebremeskel (2020) in Ethiopia showing that reality counselling strategies enhanced social interactions and minimizes conflict. Additionally, 66 learners (18.9%) reported it was true of them and 283 (81.1%) very true of them that it is their responsibility to listen keenly to teachers during lessons, resulting in another high mean of 4.81. This reflects increased attentiveness, consistent with Mutisya (2022) in Kenya. Finally, 133 students (38.1%) reported it was true of them and 216 (61.9%) very true of them that they learnt it is their responsibility to work hard despite personal challenges, producing a mean of 4.62. That it is their responsibility to always work hard in their studies irrespective of their situation. This underscores counselling's role in fostering resilience, persistence, and a strong work ethic among students. This suggests improved resilience and academic commitment, similar to findings by Rahman and Zakaria (2020) in Malaysia showing enhanced perseverance following Reality Theory counselling. Overall, the consistently high mean scores across all responsibility-related items demonstrate that counselling effectively strengthened learners' sense of responsibility in academics, behaviour, interpersonal communication, and self-management. These results are strongly supported by global and regional empirical literature confirming the effectiveness of Reality Therapy in promoting responsible behaviour among adolescents.

The findings on responsibility uptake counselling strategies reveal a strong positive shift in students' responsible behaviour following counselling. The mean score of 4.24 for the first statement, which examined whether learners acquired the ability to create personal revision timetables, shows that most students considered this *true* or *very true of them*. This suggests that counselling considerably strengthened their capacity to organize academic tasks, a finding that reflects similar outcomes reported by Husman et al. (2024) in Malaysia, where Reality Therapy-based interventions significantly enhanced students' study planning. Comparable results were reported in Kenya by Wambugu and Kamau (2021), who found that counselling improved learners' revision routines and academic responsibility.

4.2 Students' Behaviour Adjustment

This section presents the findings on students' behaviour adjustment following their participation in counselling services. The analysis captures students' self-reported behaviour changes across various domains, including punctuality, academic responsibility, interpersonal relations, emotional regulation, and avoidance of risky behaviours such as substance use and vandalism. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Not very true of them, 2 = Not true of them, 3 = Not sure, 4 = True of them, and 5 = Very true of them. The frequencies, percentages, and mean scores provide insight into the extent to which counselling influenced positive behaviour transformation among learners. Table 2 summarizes the distribution of responses on key indicators of behaviour adjustment.

Table 2 Distribution of Responses on Students' Behaviour Adjustment

Statements		1	2	3	4	5	Mean
I used to go to school late but after counselling I am punctual every day	F	0	51	0	149	149	4.13
	%	0	14.6	0	42.7	42.7	
Since I was Counsellor I learnt that alcohol and substance abuse are not good for my life	F	0	0	17	99	233	4.62
	%	0	0	4.9	28.4	66.8	
I learnt how to use my sexuality in the right way once I got counselled	F	0	17	16	99	217	4.47
	%	0	4.9	4.6	28.4	62.2	
After going through counselling, I have not missed going to school unless when I am sick	F	0	33	0	99	217	4.43
	%	0	9.5	0	28.4	62.2	
After being guided on how to be myself, I do not allow my friends to force me to do things against my was	F	0	17	17	83	232	4.51
	%	0	4.9	4.9	23.8	66.5	
Guidance and counselling helped me improve in my academic studies. By taking my academic work with the seriousness it deserves	F	0	0	0	117	232	4.66
	%	0	0	0	33.5	66.5	
After counselling, I am able to relate with my friends, other students and my teachers with respect	F	0	0	17	116	216	4.57
	%	0	0	4.9	33.2	61.9	

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After going through counselling, I was able to stop being angry whenever someone corrected me and staying calm during conflict	F	0	0	33	150	166	4.38
	%	0	0	9.5	43.0	47.6	
After counselling I do not take or vandalize any property in school or outside school environment	F	17	17	0	51	264	4.51
	%	4.9	4.9	0	14.6	75.6	
Before counselling I used to not have meaningful relationships but after being counselled I have healthy relationships now	F	17	0	16	99	217	4.42
	%	4.9	0	4.6	28.4	62.2	

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The findings on Students' Behaviour Adjustment illustrate the impact of counselling on modifying behaviour patterns, promoting self-discipline, and fostering positive interpersonal relationships among adolescents in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County. The data, presented through both frequencies and descriptive statistics, reveal that counselling contributed significantly to improving punctuality, academic engagement, self-regulation, and prosocial behaviour. The statement *"I used to go to school late but after counselling I am punctual every day"* showed that none of the students rated it as not very true of them, 51 (14.6%) rated it as not true of them, none were not sure, 149 (42.7%) indicated it was true of them, and 149 (42.7%) rated it as very true of them, yielding a mean of 4.13.

This indicates that counselling helped the majority of students internalize the importance of punctuality, a key aspect of responsible behaviour and academic success. By addressing habitual tardiness, counselling aligns with Reality Therapy principles, encouraging students to make deliberate choices that support their goals rather than continuing counterproductive behaviours. This demonstrates that counselling enabled the majority of students to internalize the importance of punctuality, a critical component of responsible behaviour and academic success. By helping students address habitual lateness, counselling reflected the principles of Reality Therapy, guiding learners to make purposeful choices that support their goals rather than persisting in counterproductive behaviour patterns.

For the statement *"Since I was counselled I learnt that alcohol and substance abuse are not good for my life,"* no student rated it as not very true of them or not true of them, 17 (4.9%) were not sure, 99 (28.4%) reported it was true of them, and 233 (66.8%) indicated it was very true of them, resulting in a mean of 4.62. The high level of agreement suggests that counselling effectively enhanced students' awareness of the dangers of substance abuse, supported responsible decision-making, and reduced the likelihood of engaging in delinquent behaviour. This revealed that reality counselling strategies discouraged risky behaviours and promoted awareness of the consequences of substance abuse, supporting responsible decision-making and reducing potential delinquent behaviour. Regarding *"I learnt how to use my sexuality in the right way once I got counselled,"* none rated it as not very true of them, 17 (4.9%) rated it as not true of them, 16 (4.6%) were not sure, 99 (28.4%) indicated it was true of them, and 217 (62.2%) reported it was very true of them, with a mean of 4.47. These responses show that counselling helped students adopt responsible sexual behaviour, emphasizing self-control, informed choices, and the avoidance of consequences such as early pregnancies or relational difficulties. These responses indicate that counselling guided students toward responsible sexual behaviour, emphasizing the importance of self-control and informed decision-making, which are crucial for personal well-being and avoiding problematic outcomes such as early pregnancies or relational conflicts.

The statement *"After going through counselling, I have not missed going to school unless when I am sick"* recorded no students rating it as not very true of them, 33 (9.5%) indicated it was not true of them, none were not sure, 99 (28.4%) said it was true of them, and 217 (62.2%) reported it was very true of them, giving a mean of 4.43. This finding illustrates the positive role of counselling in improving attendance and strengthening learners' commitment to academic engagement. This demonstrates that counselling improved school attendance, highlighting the effectiveness of behaviour interventions in promoting commitment to academic engagement. For *"After being guided on how to be myself, I do not allow my friends to force me to do things against my will,"* none rated it as not very true of them, 17 (4.9%) rated it as not true of them, 17 (4.9%) were not sure, 83 (23.8%) indicated it was true of them, and 232 (66.5%) rated it as very true of them, yielding a mean of 4.51. This suggests that counselling enhanced students' autonomy and assertiveness, enabling them to resist peer pressure and make ethical, self-directed decisions. These results suggest that counselling enhanced students' assertiveness and ability to resist peer pressure, fostering autonomy and ethical decision-making.

The statement *"Guidance and counselling helped me improve in my academic studies by taking my academic work with the seriousness it deserves"* showed no ratings of not very true of them, not true of them, or not sure. Instead, 117 (33.5%) reported it was true of them, and 232 (66.5%) rated it as very true of them, resulting in a mean of 4.66. This indicates that counselling boosted students' academic motivation and sense of responsibility, demonstrating its influence on educational outcomes. This indicates that counselling strengthened students' academic motivation and seriousness, demonstrating the role of behaviour guidance in enhancing educational outcomes. Regarding *"After counselling, I am able to relate with my friends, other students, and my teachers with respect,"* none rated it as not very true of them or not true of them, 17 (4.9%) were not sure, 116 (33.2%) indicated it was true of them, and 216 (61.9%) rated it as very true of them, producing a mean of 4.57. These responses suggest that counselling fostered

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respectful relationships within the school environment, contributing to a more positive and harmonious school climate. The data show that counselling promoted respectful interpersonal relationships, which are essential for maintaining a positive school climate and reducing conflicts among students.

For “*After going through counselling, I was able to stop being angry whenever someone corrected me and staying calm during conflict,*” no student rated it as not very true of them or not true of them, 33 (9.5%) were not sure, 150 (43.0%) said it was true of them, and 166 (47.6%) rated it as very true of them, with a mean of 4.38. This indicates that counselling supported emotional regulation, reducing aggressive reactions and promoting calm conflict resolution, in line with Reality Therapy’s emphasis on controlling one’s responses. This finding indicates that counselling contributed to emotional regulation, reducing reactive and aggressive behaviour, which is consistent with Reality Therapy’s focus on controlling one’s responses to external stimuli. The statement “*After counselling I do not take or vandalize any property in school or outside school environment*” recorded 17 (4.9%) rating it as not very true of them, 17 (4.9%) indicating it was not true of them, none were not sure, 51 (14.6%) said it was true of them, and 264 (75.6%) rated it as very true of them, resulting in a mean of 4.51. This shows that counselling successfully discouraged vandalism and other destructive behaviours, encouraging responsibility and respect for school and community property. This demonstrates that counselling effectively discouraged destructive and delinquent behaviours, promoting responsibility and respect for communal and personal property.

Finally, for “*Before counselling I used to not have meaningful relationships but after being counselled I have healthy relationships now,*” 17 (4.9%) rated it as not very true of them, none rated it as not true of them, 16 (4.6%) were not sure, 99 (28.4%) indicated it was true of them, and 217 (62.2%) reported it was very true of them, yielding a mean of 4.42. This demonstrates that counselling played an important role in strengthening students’ social skills and helping them build healthier relationships. This indicates that counselling facilitated the development of healthy social connections, enhancing students’ ability to interact constructively with peers and authority figures. Overall, the findings show that counselling had a strong positive impact on students’ behaviour adjustment. The mean scores, which range between 4.13 and 4.66, reveal improvements in punctuality, attendance, academic commitment, emotional control, respectful interactions, and avoidance of risky or delinquent behaviour. These outcomes reflect the central concepts of Reality Therapy, where individuals learn to take responsibility for their conduct, make constructive behaviour choices, and focus on present and future goals rather than dwelling on past missteps. The findings revealed improvements in punctuality, attendance, academic seriousness, emotional regulation, prosocial interactions, and avoidance of risky or delinquent behaviours. These outcomes reflect the application of Reality Therapy principles, where students learn to take responsibility for their actions, make positive choices, and focus on present and future goals rather than past misbehaviour.

4.3 inferential statistics

4.3.1 Relationship between Responsibility Uptake Counselling Strategies and Students' Behaviour Adjustment

Table 3 Model Summary Table

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R	Std. Error of the Square	Estimate
1	.630	.397	.396	.396	3.71805

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The regression analysis examining the relationship between Responsibility Uptake Counselling Strategies and Students’ Behaviour Adjustment reveals a strong and statistically significant positive effect, indicating that counselling interventions focused on fostering personal responsibility are highly influential in improving students’ behaviour in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County. The model summary (Table 3) shows a correlation coefficient ($R = 0.630$), suggesting a strong positive relationship between the independent variable Responsibility Uptake Counselling Strategies and the dependent variable Students’ Behaviour Adjustment. This indicates that students who learn to take responsibility for their academic choices, behaviour, personal hygiene, property care, and social interactions are more likely to demonstrate positive behaviour adjustment, including punctuality, adherence to school rules, and respectful interpersonal relationships. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.397$) indicates that approximately 39.7% of the variance in students’ behaviour adjustment is explained by responsibility uptake counselling strategies, which is substantial in behaviour research. This implies that nearly four out of every ten units of change in behaviour adjustment among students can be attributed directly to interventions that teach and reinforce personal responsibility, while the remaining 60.3% of variation may be influenced by other factors such as peer influence, socio-economic conditions, or previous behaviour patterns. The adjusted R^2 of 0.396 confirms the robustness of the model, accounting for sample size and predictor degrees of freedom, while the standard error of the estimate (3.71805) reflects the average deviation of observed behaviour adjustment scores from those predicted by the regression equation.

Table 4 ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3163.890	1	3163.890	228.871	.000
Residual	4796.901	347	13.824		
Total	7960.791	348			

The ANOVA results (Table 4) support the model's significance. With a regression sum of squares of 3163.890 and a residual sum of squares of 4796.901, the F-value is 228.871, which is highly significant ($p < 0.001$). This demonstrates that responsibility uptake counselling strategies significantly predict students' behaviour adjustment, and the model is not due to chance. The large F-value further suggests that these strategies have strong explanatory power in shaping adolescent behaviour.

Table 5 Table of Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-12.356	3.779		-3.269	.001
	Responsibility Uptake Counselling strategies	1.242	.082	.630	15.128	.000

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The coefficients table (Table 5) provides insight into the magnitude and direction of the relationship. The constant term ($B = -12.356$) represents the predicted level of behaviour adjustment when responsibility uptake strategies are absent, implying a low baseline of behaviour adjustment in the absence of interventions. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 1.242$) indicates that a one-unit increase in responsibility uptake counselling strategies leads to an increase of 1.242 units in students' behaviour adjustment. This is a strong effect, demonstrating that responsibility-focused interventions have a considerable impact on behaviour. The standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.630$) confirms a strong effect size, while the t-value ($t = 15.128$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that the relationship is highly significant statistically. Theoretically, these findings align closely with Reality Therapy, which emphasizes that adolescents must take responsibility for their choices and actions to achieve their goals. Responsibility uptake strategies such as learning to manage personal study timetables, taking care of property, maintaining hygiene, completing tasks on time, and behaving respectfully promote a sense of control over one's life, thereby reducing engagement in delinquent behaviours. The strong positive relationship indicates that when students internalize responsibility as part of their self-concept, they make deliberate choices that improve academic performance, interpersonal interactions, and adherence to school norms. Practically, this analysis suggests that schools should prioritize structured responsibility uptake counselling programs to foster behaviour adjustment among students. By equipping students with skills to take ownership of their academic and social choices, school counsellors and educators can reduce absenteeism, discipline issues, vandalism, and peer conflicts, while simultaneously enhancing self-regulation and goal-directed behaviour. The findings highlight the importance of embedding responsibility-focused counselling within the broader school curriculum and reinforcing it through consistent follow-up and mentorship. In conclusion, the regression analysis demonstrates that Responsibility Uptake Counselling Strategies exert a strong and statistically significant positive influence on Students' Behaviour Adjustment. With a high correlation ($R = 0.630$), substantial variance explained ($R^2 = 0.397$), and a strong standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.630$), the findings indicate that interventions promoting personal responsibility are highly effective in improving adolescents' behaviour in school. These results underscore the value of fostering responsibility as a central component of counselling programs aimed at enhancing self-discipline, prosocial behaviour, and overall behaviour adjustment among secondary school students.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that responsibility uptake counselling strategies had a positive and significant effect on behaviour adjustment across all analyses. Teaching students to take ownership of their actions, academic tasks, personal items, and daily routines significantly predicted improvements in self-discipline, rule adherence, punctuality, and interpersonal conduct. This confirms that personal responsibility is a central determinant of behaviour change, in line with the core principles of Reality Therapy. Overall, the study concluded that Reality counselling strategies significantly enhance students' behaviour adjustment, with responsibility uptake and self-care showing the strongest effects. Strategies aimed at reducing the influence of deemphasis of past negative experiences

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and building a success identity also contribute positively, and significantly affect behaviour adjustment among public secondary school students in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended for strengthening of responsibility uptake Programmes in Schools such as integration of structured modules that promote accountability, punctuality, rule adherence, and personal goal setting. The study also recommended incorporation responsibility-building tasks in classroom routines, peer mentoring, and life-skills education. The study also recommended capacity Building for School Counsellors and Teachers on Reality Theory principles, including responsibility, present-focused action, and need satisfaction because equipping teacher counsellors with basic counselling skills to reinforce positive behaviours among students in daily interactions would in a big way ensure that students are well grounded in their lives and problem behaviours would decrease significantly.

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