



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Trauma Informed Interventions and Academic Adjustment among Adolescent Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

Justine Momanyi Omare^{1*}, Peter Omae Onderi², Athanansio Bashaija³

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Abstract: Globally, the problem of escalating incidences of trauma among adolescents has adversely affected their physical, behavioral, emotional and psychological functioning hence impairing their quality and ability to adjust in school. The purpose of this study was to establish the effectiveness of trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment among adolescents in public secondary schools in Kisii County. This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed method design. The study targeted a population of 1100 students from which 275 students were sampled through simple random and purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires, Focused Group Discussions, in-depth interviews and academic adjustment scale. Both descriptive and inferential techniques were employed to analyze quantitative data. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The results from Pearson Correlation coefficient affirmed a positive statistically significant nexus ($n=.732$, $n= 275$, $p<.0.05$) between trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment. The qualitative data findings further affirmed that trauma informed interventions enhance academic adjustment and resilience among adolescents. The study concluded that effective adoption of trauma informed interventions are critical in coping with academic adjustment levels among adolescents.

Keywords; Trauma, informed intervention, academic adjustment, adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Globally, many adolescents are experiencing disruptive tendencies and maladjustment in their transitional stage of life due to physical, socio-economic and psychological dilemma leading to increased traumatic manifestations. UNICEF Reports have approximated that over 80 million adolescents between 10-14 years and 86 million adolescents aged 15-19 years have shown signs of psychological disorders respectively which is associated to trauma (UNICEF, 2021). The rapid upsurge of trauma cases in most adolescents especially school going students is attributed to diverse traumatic challenges due to internal or external influences; prior exposure to adversity, current situation and experience(s) and past events. The

exponential growth of trauma occurrences have caused suffering and disruption of school and education activities, dysfunctional health and well-being among youth and children, hence limiting them from reaching their full potential (UNICEF, 2021). The evidence from World Health Organization (2020) demonstrated that adversity among the adolescents and school going children is quite alarming due to home, family, environmental factors and cultural practices causing a great concern among psychologists, health practitioners educators and other stakeholders. The soaring incidences of trauma and its associated consequences have compelled World Health Organization to put in place robust mitigation measures to avert the problem of trauma by establishing varied programs and strategies through governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and other relevant institutions to reduce the magnitude of trauma at individual and societal level. Conversely, the trauma encounters have kept proliferating among adolescents and many of them are grappling with the problem exhibited worldwide. Several studies have paid attention to the need to deal with the predicament of trauma and its consequences across the world. In Syria, the UNICEF Report showed increased problem of trauma cases among children resulting to significant adverse effects in their psychological, emotional, social and developmental well-being (UNICEF, 2022). Some of the issues of trauma which attracted attention among adolescents in Syria were linked to; emotional and physical abuse, sexual torture, violence and conflicts, suicidal thoughts, natural

^{1*)} Department of Educational Psychology and Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, Jaramogi Oginga University of Science and Technology, Bondo, Kenya.

² School of Arts and Social Sciences, Maseno University. Private Bag, Maseno, Kenya.

³ Department of Educational Foundations and Psychology, Faculty of Education, Kabale University, Uganda.

**) corresponding author*

Justine Momanyi Omare

Email: omaremomanyi@gmail.com

catastrophes, child neglect, family and community problems, bullying, rape, masturbation among others. The high proportion of traumatic cases have negatively affected several children in their emotional functionality and well-being and ultimately deteriorating their academic performance in schools (UNICEF, 2022). In United States of America, Colorado Department of Education (2018) the department of education showed that increased prevalence of trauma resulted to escalation of school drop-out, truancy, less class participation and eventually dismal, low academic achievement and unhealthy outcomes. As a result, the study sought trauma intervention approaches to deal with trauma by providing support and set up functional strategies to curb the problem and other related issues among others.

A report by Dye (2018) assessed the long term effect of trauma among children that experienced trauma and observed persistent trauma ensuing to health complications including psychiatric disorders. In Sri Lanka, Ponnampereuma & Nicolson (2020) examined the mental health outcomes in relation to daily stressors and traumatic experiences among adolescents. The study disclosed that daily stressors accelerated the levels of traumatic experiences and subsequently culminating to functional impairment, increased behavioral and emotional problems. In Nigeria, Lawrence & Cerniglia (2020) attested that trauma among university students elicited devastating interpersonal relations and reduced the quality of life due to depression. In South Africa, Stroud (2017) focused on the adjustment and social intervention on mental health among university students in their first year of study. The outcome indicated that many students underwent psycho-social challenges which had an impact in their daily normal lives thus affecting their well being. In Kenya, the constitution of Kenya 2010 led to the enactment of several laws to protect the rights and freedom of children as an effort to ensure their lives are secure and healthy (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). To the contrast, the extent of adversity has seemed to persist in learning institutions. Consequently, the government of Kenya established the education sector disaster management policy to avert diverse risks that posed danger and mental health discomfort among students in schools (RoK, 2018). This was one of the measures to reduce the gravity of distasteful occurrences in learning institutions by partnering with relevant stakeholders. However, trauma is caused by many causes and individual students experience and cope with it differently as they interact with their culture and environment, thus the need for trauma informed interventions. A study by Wambu & Fischer (2015) asserted that teachers of guidance and counselling play vital role in shaping and strengthening behavioral, developmental and academic challenges. However, due to lack of standardized levels and adequate resources, most students continually keep facing social, psychological and behavioral disengagement because of the uncertainty to deal with the challenges they encounter in their lives. A related study by Mukangi, Nyagwencha & Mogute (2020) highlighted that several adolescents are at risk of post-traumatic effects in their lives particularly among the boys in Machakos area, hence the need for establishing of therapeutic interventions in schools. The Ministry of Health through the Kenya National Framework for the Organization of Trauma Services disclosed that child trauma was attributed to harmful cultural practices, poor social support, violence against children and humanitarian engagements which cause extreme fear and anxiety among others resulting to detrimental effects in the lifetime (MOH, 2021). Subsequently, the framework elaborated the country's tremendous progress in dealing with trauma and other related problems such as violence, drug and substance

abuse among others required an integrated multi sectorial approach which initiated and established varied strategies, policies and laws to curb the rising menace of trauma among children (MOH, 2021).

Despite the efforts geared towards solving the problem of trauma, many children and adolescents are still suffering from undesired exposure to traumatic experiences which disorient their academic stability in school. The report from UNICEF disclosed the prevalence and proliferation levels of trauma incidences among adolescents as being on the rise due to external and internal factors, hence contributing to unhealthy and psychological risks perpetuating instability and development (UNICEF report, 2021). The prolonged growth and widespread problem of traumatic cases among adolescents has caused devastating effects such as; mental health challenges, depression, over-anxiety, negative social and academic performance leading to frustrations, depressions, suspensions, dropouts and disengagement at home and school. The outcome of uncontrolled negative trauma experiences among children has led to dire effects in their present school lives. The effectiveness of tackling traumatic situations has raised a major concern from teachers, parents and other educational stakeholders (Lusambili, Nyaga, Kimamo & Muthami, 2022) and (Ndeti, Owour, Khasakhala, Mutiso, Odhiambo & Kokonya, 2007). The undesirable behaviours have stirred many students to suffer from unnecessary pressure, negative thoughts, emotional imbalance and stress among others from varied spheres leading to extreme frustration and academic maladjustment. Despite the knowledge, advocacy, and awareness accrued on trauma, there is scanty literature in learning institutions in Sub Saharan Africa particularly among secondary school students in Kenya. It is this context that precipitated the study on the effectiveness of trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment among adolescents students in public secondary schools in Kisii County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical studies have contributed great knowledge concerning the field of trauma. In United States, Kutter (2021) assessed the impact of adverse childhood experiences among students in relation to the efficiency of trauma-informed practices and resilience. The study concluded that adoption of trauma-informed practices had a positive statistically significant association with academic outcomes. However, the reviewed study was conducted in a setting with diverse socio-economic and geographical context from the present study, hence the findings from the present study would advance the spectrum of existing knowledge in the field of psychology. A related study investigation was conducted by Thomas, Crosby & Vanderhaar (2019) on trauma-informed practices in schools in a period of 10 years. The results showed that trauma informed practices played a vital role among students and teachers. The reviewed study provided significant findings, however the data used in the study were collected from secondary sources which could be limited on its dependability and authenticity. Therefore, the present study collected data from primary sources through multiple approaches such as closed ended questionnaires, Focused Group Discussions and in-depth interviews and to boost credibility of the results in the study.

A study carried out by Maynard, Farina, Dell & Selly (2019) revealed most school leaders agreed on the necessity to employ some of the trauma informed practices, however there was no clear evidence on their effectiveness during

implementation. The reviewed study depended on secondary sources whose findings could be unreliable and subjective. To deal with this gap, the present study collected data from first-hand information to increase accuracy and boost authenticity of the results and add significant value in the scope of existing literature. In Spain, Fernandez, Araujo, Vacas, Almeida & Gonzalez (2017) randomly sampled 300 first year students in a study that examined the predictors of student's adjustment during transition to university. The findings asserted that entry characteristics of students predicted student's adjustment. The reviewed study was conducted among university students who were relatively mature adults and their cognitive processes were advanced and complex unlike the present study which targeted adolescents who were younger and the two target groups faced diverse challenges. The outcome from this study would add insight and scope of literature in the area of study. In Philippines, Alipio (2020) assessed the correlation between students' adjustment levels to college life and academic attainment. A sample size of 132 students was obtained through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires. The results attested that there is no association between the adjustment level of students to college and academic performance. The reviewed study was quantitative in nature implying that participants' opinions, feelings and reasons behind the responses were not catered for, hence limiting the depth of the findings. This is contrary to the present study which employed triangulation especially through structured questionnaires and Focused Group Discussions to gather qualitative data, hence enriching the knowledge in the area of study. A study by Agrawal (2020) reported a close positive link between self-esteem, social adjustment, psychological well-being and academic performance of learners in public and secondary schools from a sample of 100 students. The reviewed study generated vital finding in the field of psychology. However, the sample size was smaller hence the findings could not be generalized. In contrast, the present study sampled 275 students which were more representative to a larger population. Another study that examined on first years' resilience, their self-concept and its association to college adjustment was conducted by Haktanir, course Watson, Ermis & Karaman (2021). The outcome from the sample size of 514 students indicated that study variables were positive predictors of college adjustment. In South Africa, Wyk, Mason, Philips & Walt (2022) investigated on the association between resilience and success among students pursuing engineering courses. The study report from 360 students affirmed a positive statistically significant correlation between stress mastery, resilience and academic success. A study by Muhwezi, Abbo, Okello & Ovuga (2020) in Uganda, examined on the life events with psychosocial competence in relation to life events among secondary school students. The study targeted 2902 participants who were drawn through random sampling technique.

The report predicated a positive link between life events and psycho-social competence among learners where those with better coping interventions scored higher scores. In Kenya, several school going aged children were exposed to several traumatic experiences which were attributed to frequent conflicts, drug and substance abuse, violence and influence of mass media especially television sets according to Mbwayo, Mathai, Harder, Nicodimos, & Stoep (2019). The reviewed study provided valuable insight on the possible causes of the rising cases of trauma among children. Nonetheless, it did not address the specific group especially adolescents in secondary school as it is the case in the present study where the adolescents were under scrutiny.

In view of the reviewed literature, most studies agreed that trauma is an escalating problem that has adversely affected physical, social and emotional disturbance and disorders among adolescents especially in high school, hence negatively influencing their quality of academic adjustment and future prospects. Some of the reviewed literature employed one method to gather data thus limiting the findings. In contrast, the present study adopted mixed methods to increase accuracy and dependability and provide in-depth exposition to expand knowledge base on traumatic informed interventions and its association to academic adjustment among students in public schools. Notably, there was a discrepancy in most reviewed literature because they did not address effectiveness between trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment among adolescents

Hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment among adolescents in public secondary schools in Kenya.

METHODS

Study Design and Sample

The study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed method design. In the study quantitative data were collected followed by qualitative data to elaborate the findings (Creswell, 2014). This design was appropriate because it generated immense information from participants and moreover it verified the rationale for the responses given in order to enrich the prevailing literature. The quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires while qualitative data were obtained through Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews.

Participants

The study key informants were 1100 students which were drawn from two Sub Counties in Kisii County. The study sampled 275 students from eight (8) secondary schools through simple random and purposive sampling technique. The targeted students at adolescent stage in secondary schools because they were more susceptible to adverse experiences with divergent challenges and complexities related to their developmental stage. At the same stage, they are expected to adjust and thrive academically although this is a major problem to some of them. Additionally, eight (8) teachers of guidance and counselling were selected to authenticate vital insight on trauma occurrences regarding the study variables from student perspectives.

Data collection Instruments

The study on trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment among adolescents in public secondary schools employed triangulation approach to gather data. The data collection instruments were; student's closed ended questionnaires which were administered to obtain quantitative data on trauma informed interventions and modified academic adjustment scale that measured the extent of academic adjustment in school. For qualitative data, Focus Group Discussions were used on students while in-depth interviews were utilized on teachers of guidance and counselling. The trauma informed interventions questionnaires included items on; trauma

knowledge base, peer support, connectivity to different groups of people, and referral procedure and systems in schools. The academic adjustment scale items comprised of items on; attendance to school, classroom participation, level of concentration, goal oriented, self-directed learning and decision making.

Data collection procedure

The study was executed upon the approval from relevant authorities like the university ethics committee, Ministry of Education, on trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment were measured based on the Likert scale that rated the responses as follows; strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, Neutral=3, agree=4 and strongly agree=5. For qualitative data Science and Technology and school administrators and teachers of guidance and counselling. In the study, quantitative data, it was collected from Focus Group Discussions of 8-12 students per group. The essence of Focus Group Discussions were to ascertain the manner in which they handled averse scenarios from their own perspectives and how this influenced the academic adjustment in school.

The deliberations of the participants were done in one of the rooms to ensure freedom of expression of their views, beliefs and reasons behind their responses. Then, the responses were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The study also conducted in-depth interviews from eight (8) teachers of guidance and counselling to deduce institutional policies and practices on trauma informed interventions and their efficiency towards learner's school academic adjustment. The interviews focused on the opportunities given to students to learn, practice and improve on their strengths than their frailties on positive behavioral reinforcement on trauma related interventions and academic adjustment. This was to ensure corrective, health and desired behaviour practices were implemented, hence building resilient adolescent students. The study ensured debriefing was done accordingly and confidentiality of information from participants was assured and kept by the researcher. Similarly, the adolescent students provided their written informed consent which allowed them to participate or withdraw voluntarily at will at any stage of the study.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics from which means, percentages and Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient were computed using Statistical Package Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the study, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to establish the association between trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment among adolescent students in public secondary. To elucidate the vulnerability of participant's sex and age in connection with trauma and academic adjustment, descriptive statistics was computed and the findings were as shown in Table 1.

Results in Table 1, show that most students affected by trauma in the study were aged between 15-16 years (41.45%), followed by those aged between 14-15 years (29.45%), then ages 12-13 years (19.65 %) and least prone age group was above 16 years (9.45%) respectively. The results confirmed that many participants aged between 14-15 years were at the risk stage due great perplexities and developmental dynamics implying that all stakeholders should be keen to deal with anticipated outcomes. The study intuited a difference in regard to trauma and sex prevalence between boys and girls. A higher proportion of trauma cases were evident in girls between 14-15 years (53.1%) followed by those aged 11-12 years respectively. For boys, the most predisposed group was adolescents aged above 16 years while the least inclined age group was between 14-15 years (46.9%). This infers that girls aged between 14-15 years were more gullible to trauma issues and this might be attributed to differences in knowledge gap on trauma and socioeconomic status background. The discrepancy due inadequate psychological knowledge to deal with trauma amicably might cause academic disorientation and maladjustment, hence the value to create prior trauma awareness, advocacy and empowerment. To establish the appropriateness of trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment among adolescents in public secondary schools, the preference as shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Participants by Age and Sex in Relation to Trauma

| Age (Years) | Sex | | N | Overall Percentage (%) | | |
|------------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Boys | Percentage (%) | | Girls | Percentage (%) | |
| 12 -13 Years | 26 | 48.1% | 28 | 51.9% | 54 | 19.65 % |
| 14-15 years | 38 | 46.9% | 43 | 53.1% | 81 | 29.45 % |
| 15-16 Years | 60 | 52.6% | 54 | 47.4 | 114 | 41.45 % |
| 16 Years & Above | 14 | 53.8% | 12 | 46.2 | 26 | 9.45 % |
| Total | 138 | | 137 | | 275 | 100 % |

Table 2: Prevalence of Trauma Informed Interventions and Academic Adjustment

| Trauma Informed Interventions | Sex | N | SD=1 | D=2 | N=3 | A=4 | SA=5 |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Peer Support | Boys | 138 | 10(7.2%) | 13(9.4%) | 24(17.9%) | 56(40.6%) | 35(25.4%) |
| | Girls | 137 | 6(4.4%) | 5(3.6%) | 18(13.1%) | 60(43.8%) | 48(35.0%) |
| Connectivity | Boys | 138 | 11(8.0%) | 18(13.0%) | 32(23.2%) | 52(37.7%) | 25(18.1%) |
| | Girls | 137 | 8(5.8%) | 12(8.8%) | 16(11.7%) | 70(51.1%) | 31(22.6%) |
| Knowledge Base | Boys | 138 | 3(2.2%) | 5(3.6%) | 14(10.1%) | 88(63.8%) | 27(19.6%) |
| | Girls | 137 | 3(2.2%) | 7(5.1%) | 12(8.8%) | 93(67.9%) | 22(16.1%) |
| Referral System | Boys | 138 | 13(9.4%) | 25(18.1%) | 30(21.7%) | 49(35.5%) | 21(15.2%) |
| | Girls | 137 | 12(8.8%) | 17(12.4%) | 25(18.2%) | 67(48.9%) | 16(11.7%) |

Table 3. Correlation results between Trauma Informed Interventions and Academic Adjustment

| | | Trauma Informed Interventions | Academic Adjustment |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Trauma Informed Interventions | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .732** |
| | Sig. (2 Tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 275 | 275 |
| Academic Adjustment | Pearson Correlation | .732** | 1 |
| | Sig.(2 Tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 275 | 275 |

** Correlation is significant at 0.05(2-tailed).

Table 2 indicate the rating of trauma informed interventions in relation to the academic adjustment among adolescents students in public secondary students. The study findings exhibited that most boys (66%) and girls (78.8%) agreed that peer support among adolescents was crucial in enhancing school adjustment. A higher proportion of boys (56.7%) and 73.7%) admitted that connectivity of adolescents teachers and parents was a better way of dealing trauma and academic adjustment in school. In addition, more than half of boys (83.4%) and 84.0%) girls in the study conceded that knowledge base on trauma intervention was important in academic adjustment among adolescents. Most boys (50.7%) and (60.6%) girls considered the aspect of procedure and referral system as a vital concern in handling trauma related cases and academic adjustment among students in secondary schools. The findings alluded that building of knowledge on trauma informed intervention was the most (83.7%) apt approach of stemming out trauma concerns and elevate academic adjustment among the students, followed by peer support (72.4%), while connectivity was rated at 65.2% and referral systems stood at 55.65% respectively.

To establish the nexus between trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment among adolescents in public secondary schools, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was computed. The following hypothesis was tested;

H1: There is a statistically significant correlation between trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment among adolescents in public secondary schools in Kenya.

The results in Table 3, attested that there is a strong positive significant correlation ($n=.732$, 275, $p<.05$) between trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment levels among adolescents. The present study results were coherent with studies by Cantoneros (2022), Alipio (2020), and Mukangi, Nyagwencha & Mogute (2020) which emphasized on the need to adopt sustainable therapeutic informed interventions in schools to curb the incidences of trauma and bolster resilient students which can adjust to academic environment positively. The present results are pertinent because they have averred that trauma informed interventions can substantively boost the academic adjustment and psychological well being among adolescent students in learning institutions. The qualitative data findings from Focus Group Discussions revealed that most adolescents demonstrated the ability to control and regulate their unpleasant emotions and feelings which made it possible to cope, concentrate and create meaningful learning academic engagement. This was expressed in the following excerpt;

'The ugly and painful experiences or scenes we face have accelerated the levels of non-adherence to school rules and regulations, disruptive behaviour, attention seeking tendencies, open defiance towards academic tasks, aggression, disrespect among other deviant tendencies. However, proper measures and awareness if put in place and good care is given from school and home, then we can move on regardless of issues in life in school' .(FGD₁)

The excerpt from Focused Group Discussions asserted that students who frequently suffered from negative trauma experiences demonstrated risk behaviors, low self-esteem, truancy, academic exhaustion and negative thoughts among others resulting to difficulty in emotional control, less emotional resilience and academic disengagement.

However, with effective guidance and provision of sound knowledge on trauma interventions, students construct better academic adjustment levels because they could withstand such adverse situations. At the same time, their views validated that efficiency in handling unhealthy issues required a friendly, trust and caring setting, hence the need to support trauma informed practices and framework across learning institutions. Further, the study conducted in-depth interviews from teachers of guidance and counselling to ascertain their exposition in relation to trauma informed interventions policies and academic adjustment guidelines in schools from the student perspective. These are views and opinions articulated by teachers of guidance and counselling in regard to trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment among adolescents in schools;

'All we need is caregivers, parents, teachers and community to show genuine interaction, proper and effective handling of student concerns regardless of family backgrounds. Then we can minimize excess negative emotions, depression, bullying and violence among other ills in schools. In my view schools should have healthy relationships stipulated to reduce fear, insecurity, and coercion among others happenings. With consistent knowledge, training, nurture and at times efficacious referrals, we can make learners develop a positive school life routine to realize better academic outcomes' . (Teacher counselor₃)

The sentiments in the excerpt from teachers of guidance and counseling illuminated that students which were anchored well with knowledge on trauma informed interventions, registered strong peer support and connectivity that led to improved adaptation to academic school life. This situation demanded clear and innovative ways that could accelerate the psychological well-being during trauma and enable the academic adjustment of students in school. On the account of this study, it is essential to have a continuum of endeavors which should be

embraced and integrated by school practitioners and teachers to minimize the degree of exposure to traumatic issues by providing a reassuring and conducive environment in school.

On the basis of the study results, trauma informed interventions are key in enhancing academic adjustment among adolescent students in schools. It was evident that adoption of trauma informed interventions enabled students to feel comfortable, secure and safe hence facilitating optimal academic adjustment. Therefore it necessary to school administrators, teachers and parents to develop school culture and policies to support such programs. The qualitative findings from the study expounded that endowing adolescents with knowledge on trauma informed intervention could lead to positive engagement and systematic coping mechanisms among adolescent learners.

This would in turn foster their mental health, academic adjustment levels and ultimately academic lead to superior academic achievement. Notwithstanding, the results resonated that learning institutions should initiate and develop institutional friendly mechanisms on trauma informed interventions to allow adolescents express various ways of coping with stressful situations, minimize suspensions or expulsions, extreme emotional disturbance and incidences. The study findings also explicated on the need of integrating all relevant stakeholders to strengthen partnerships and linkages on procedure, reporting and referral systems in a timely manner. This could be achieved by providing training and mobilizing resources to facilitate effective implementation and up-scaling of friendly trauma practices in schools. The study also established that teachers, parents and caregivers should be encouraged to practice interactive and meaningful communication sessions with their children in order to bond and connect to their needs harmoniously and avert trauma cases. All instructors should guide learners on how to control and cope with adversities and develop positive psychological well-being resulting to better academic adjustment. Therefore the study findings alluded that it is should be requisite to accord learners with a wide spectrum of trauma informed interventions which are aligned towards addressing their concerns and adjust meaningfully and thrive in their academic life.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In light of the evidence from study findings, it was concluded that trauma informed interventions have a statistically positive association with academic adjustment among students in public secondary schools. The results substantiated that trauma informed interventions and academic adjustment are pertinent because they inform theoretical and policy makers on the necessity of prioritizing and investing in the area of trauma to foster mental health and psychological well being among adolescents for better academic achievement. In the same vein, trauma informed interventions play vital role in making learning environment meaningful, more caring and participatory resulting to better academic adjustment and eventually promote psychological functioning and academic competence among adolescents. Therefore continuous professional empowerment and capacity building on trauma informed interventions to teachers, supportive staff and teacher counselors and administrators in learning institutions is essential and can positively upscale the academic adjustment and ultimately the

academic achievement of adolescent students. The educational implication of this study is that there is a growing demand to develop systematic and transformative institutional trauma framework and policies which can be implemented with ease. This is to make school environment more receptive to learning and reduce trauma levels and foster academic stability among students. Accordingly, all educational practitioners and relevant stakeholders should be empowered through the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health by providing a holistic and practical approach in dispensing relevant training and avail appropriate resources on trauma and its perplexities to minimize its manifestation and crisis among adolescents in the society. This is to enhance their proportionate degree of health and consequently refine their academic adjustment to both school and home life. All relevant educational stakeholders and practitioners should demonstrate intentional and explicit effort to establish, strengthen and develop capacity on trauma informed interventions and initiatives in a wider context to minimize trauma related aspects among adolescents in public secondary schools.

Author Contributions and Acknowledgement

There are no competing interests to declare in relation to publication or authorship of this work. However, Justine Momanyi Omare coined the study concept and designed the interview guide. He was involved in data collection, transcription, analysis, reporting, and discussion of the results. Athansio Bashaija guided and participated in conceptualization of the study concept, transcribed, and participated in coding and analysis of the data. He participated in writing the discussion of the results. Peter Omae Onderi guided in conceptualization of concept, collected data, analysis and reporting as well as discussion of results. Further, we are indebted to the all the principals for the opportunity to allow us conduct the study in their learning institutions and providing the required resources that ensured effective implementation of the study, not forgetting all the students and teachers of guidance and counselling for their mutual support and cooperation during this study.

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