



Beyond Eurocentric Models: Rethinking Guidance and Counselling Services in Tanzanian Schools Through an Indigenous Lens

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Abstract

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Guidance and counselling in schools are key helping children cope, maintain their mental health and continue learning. However, Western psychological approaches have dominated counselling services in Tanzania making students and counsellors as mere consumers. This might hinder the educational and growth needs of a Tanzanian child. Therefore, this paper reports a review of literature in Tanzania to investigate provision of guidance and counselling services in schools in the light of Afrocentric approach which takes in the Tanzanian cultural context. The paper highlights the historical development of guidance and counselling services in Tanzanian schools, then examines the setbacks of employing Western approaches on providing guidance and counselling services, and finally, advocates the need for Afrocentric approaches as an important aspect in practicing school guidance and counselling in Tanzanian context.

INTRODUCTION

The field of guidance and counselling in Tanzania has predominantly been shaped by Western models, yet these frameworks often fail to fully address the socio-cultural realities of Tanzanian students (Bhatia, 2020; Nwoye, 2015). This paper critically examines the historical and contemporary provision of guidance and counselling services in Tanzanian schools through an Afrocentric perspective. By analyzing the evolution of guidance and counselling from pre-colonial to post-colonial Tanzania (Gabagambi, 2021; Mwakililo et al., 2025), this study seeks to highlight the significance of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices in shaping effective guidance and counselling

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practices particularly in schools. As such, the paper presents a novel, culturally grounded critique of Western psychological framework in Tanzanian school counselling.

By examining counselling through the lens of Tanzanian culture, practices, social realities, and lived experiences (Hosaka et al., 2023; Marten, 2022), this paper contributes a novel perspective to the Afrocentric approach. It does so by employing a literature review grounded in Tanzanian contexts, moving beyond mere theoretical critiques of Afrocentrism. Furthermore, methodologically, the paper uses a combined approach involving narrative and critical review of the literature to examine guidance and counselling in Tanzanian schools.

Guidance and counselling, as a formalized practice, can be traced back to the early 20th century (Lebow & Snyder, 2022; Yang et al., 2023), emerging in response to the industrial revolution (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018). Initially, school counselling was primarily focused on vocational guidance, assisting students in career decision-making based on industrial labor demands (Mdee et al., 2019). However, as societal needs evolved, guidance and counselling services expanded to encompass social, personal, and educational concerns (Musisi & Musisi, 2002; Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). Despite these expansions, Western-oriented counselling practices have often overlooked indigenous African approaches, which historically integrated guidance and counselling into daily social interactions and communal life (G. E. Lyimo et al., 2025; Nwoye, 2017).

In the African context, guidance and counselling were deeply embedded in traditional systems of socialization and community support. Indigenous counselling methods prioritized collective responsibility (Day, 2023; Montesanti et al., 2022), where family and community elders played central roles in mentoring and advising younger generations (Nwoye, 2015). Before colonial rule, education in Tanzania—then Tanganyika—was informal, community-driven, and closely linked to daily life, fostering skills development, social cohesion, and intergenerational knowledge transfer (Charema & Shizha, 2008; Nkuba & Kyaruzi, 2015). This form of education inherently incorporated guidance and counselling through storytelling, role-playing, and communal learning practices (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003; Moodley, 1999).

Additionally, healing, divination and communication with the ancestral world, and community healing also played an integral role in addressing psychological distress within traditional African societies (Winkelman, 2019). Rituals and ceremonies were used to provide emotional and psychological relief, reinforcing social bonds and community support (Dzinamarira et al., 2024; Shange & Ross, 2022; Soori et al., 2024; Zhang & Jia, 2022). Unlike Western counselling models, which often emphasize individual therapy, African counselling practices prioritized collective healing, moral guidance, and communal wisdom (Winkleman, 2010). However, the integration of indigenous counselling systems into formal education remains limited, as Western paradigms continue to dominate professional training and practice (Bhatia, 2020; Letsoalo et al., 2024; G. E. Lyimo et al., 2025).

Traditional African guidance and counselling practices fostered resilience, self-worth, and personal responsibility, crucial for holistic student development (Clay et al.,

2021; Fisseha et al., 2025). Proverbs, folklore, and wisdom-sharing were key mechanisms for moral and psychological guidance, with sayings such as *Asiyesikia la mkuu huvunjika guu* (One who does not heed advice breaks a leg) serving as tools for imparting wisdom (Chiboola, 2020; Letsoalo et al., 2024; G. E. Lyimo et al., 2025). These culturally embedded practices emphasize the need for a re-evaluation of contemporary guidance and counselling models in Tanzanian schools. By integrating indigenous knowledge with modern psychological frameworks (Adolfsson et al., 2025; Da Silva et al., 2024; Kurnio et al., 2021; Nemogá et al., 2022; Sohad & Mafrolla, 2025), educational institutions can provide culturally responsive and contextually relevant counselling services that better serve Tanzanian students.

This paper argues for a paradigm shift in the provision of guidance and counselling services in Tanzanian schools, advocating for an approach that harmonizes Western methodologies with indigenous African traditions. Such an approach will enhance student well-being, foster a sense of identity and belong, and ensure that counselling practices align with the socio-cultural realities of Tanzanian communities. Through a critical review of historical and contemporary counselling practices, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the decolonization of education and the reimagining of student support services in Africa. Therefore, this study is guided by three objectives. First, the study to examines counselling practices and placement of school counsellors in Tanzania and then critically evaluate the challenges of providing Western guidance and counselling services in Tanzania. Lastly, the study advances the Afrocentric approaches in offering guidance and counselling services. A theory of unintended consequence of incompleteness has been formulated to assess the limitation of traditional Western psychology imported to Africa (Nwoye, 2018). This study uses this theory to critically evaluate the Western counselling approaches.

METHOD

This paper is based on literature review of various studies, historical reports, theses and policies regarding the counselling services in Tanzania from the colonial time to the present. A combined review approach involving narrative and critical review of the literature has been employed.

Eligibility Criteria

In this review, we included studies published between 1990s and 2024. The period of 1990s marked significant changes in the Tanzanian educational system after the introduction of the Tanzanian education and training policy (MoEVT, 1995) which replaced the Education for Self-Reliance policy (Nyerere, 1967). The then newly introduced policy included issues such as democracy, human rights and globalization which we find to be important on influencing school guidance and counselling and therefore need to be studied. Inclusion of 2024 publications were meant to reflect the latest developments and challenges in counselling, particularly concerning Afrocentric integration and educational reforms.

The literature included in the review encompasses peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, theses, as well as policy and historical documents. Our inclusion criteria focused on guidance, counselling, indigenous knowledge, and Afrocentric approaches in contrast to Western psychological approaches related to school guidance and counselling. Consequently, the literature pertaining to counselling practices in education or psychology, as well as the historical, cultural, and philosophical foundations of African or Tanzanian education and counselling systems was reviewed. The publications selected were those written in English language. Additionally, publications that are unrelated to guidance and counselling in African or Western contexts, as well as articles lacking full-text access, were excluded from the review.

Information Sources and Search Strategy

In obtaining publications for review, we conducted a comprehensive literature search across databases including Google Scholar, ERIC, JSTOR, Science Direct, Semantic Scholar and African Journals Online (AJOL). We searched other sources such as government websites, Tanzanian institutional repositories especially Mzumbe University and Open university of Tanzania. We began the search through Google Scholar limiting ourselves to the range of publications between 1990 and 2024. At first, the search was based on general topics such as guidance and counselling in Tanzania, counselling in Tanzania, counselling in Tanzanian schools, Western counselling approaches, African counselling approaches, indigenous counselling and Afrocentric counselling. Then, we narrowed down the search by combining terms such as African approach to counselling in Tanzania, Western counselling models in Tanzanian schools or Indigenous based counselling in Tanzania. Search queries were adapted for each database according to their indexing system.

Selection Process

We started by developing the review objectives covering counselling practices and placement of school counsellors in Tanzania, the challenges of offering Western framed counselling and then the need for Afrocentric approaches in Tanzanian schools. We would first read the titles of the articles, theses to see if they match the selection criteria. Then, we would read the abstract and a full paper which meets the criteria. The selection was guided by inclusion criteria related to topic relevance, the rigorousness of the study, and cultural framing of counselling approaches. We visited educational policies related to education and counselling between the review time.

Data Collection and Synthesis

We have approached our literature review using combined approach involving both narrative and critical review in which counselling is examined in the light of Afrocentric approach as explicated by Turnbull, Chugh, & Luck (2023). A narrative review was conducted to provide a broad overview of the existing literature, defining the research scope and objectives while identifying key themes and trends in counselling practices (Snyder, 2019). This process involved systematically searching for and selecting relevant studies that discuss both Western and indigenous approaches to counselling in Tanzanian schools. The critical review component involved an in-depth evaluation of

selected literature, focusing on methodologies, biases, and theoretical perspectives. This approach facilitated the identification of strengths and limitations in current counselling models while highlighting gaps in existing research (Grant & Booth, 2009). By critically analyzing the assumptions embedded in Western counselling frameworks, this study presents an argument advocating for the integration of indigenous African counselling practices into contemporary school-based guidance and counselling services in Tanzania.

Outcomes and Reporting

After the review, we present the findings thematically based on the key objectives of the study. The synthesis of findings from both review approaches offers a comprehensive understanding of counselling services, highlighting the necessity for culturally relevant models. The Afrocentric perspective informs this analysis, ensuring that recommendations are aligned with the socio-cultural realities of Tanzanian students (Nwoye, 2015). Using a critical review lens, the study further analysed methodologies, biases, and theoretical perspectives and then developing critical argument regarding the types of counselling provided.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper presents a review and critical analysis of literature surveying guidance and counselling practices in Tanzania in the light of African lens. Also, the paper highlights the challenges of providing Western guidance and counselling approaches in the Tanzanian settings. This section presents the results of the review in three main themes: At first, counselling practices and the placement of school counsellors is done, secondly, the challenges of providing Western guidance and counselling services in Tanzania are provided and discussed, and finally the Afrocentric approaches in offering guidance and counselling services.

Counselling Practices and Placement of School Counsellors in Tanzania

Historically, guidance and counselling practices in Tanzania trace its origin in 1980s following the outbreak of HIV-AIDS alongside social changes. Since then, guidance and counselling practices have been common in some places especially in universities, hospitals and some private schools. For instance, the Tanzania education and training policy (1995) recognises the need for guidance and counselling. Furthermore, the Tanzania Government recognises the presence of school counsellors and has a provision requiring schools to have counsellors (Amani & Sima, 2015).

The Tanzania government thought to institutionalise guidance and counselling services in the country (Biswalo, 1996). In the year 1997, the government through the then Ministry of education instructed all heads of schools to ensure that schools have counsellors at least to guide students on career issues and course selection (URT, 1997). Furthermore, the government introduced a guideline for counsellors in schools and teachers' colleges in 2007. The guideline features the core competencies needed by all guidance and counselling practitioners. The inception of Circular No. 11 of 2002 demands the establishment of guidance and counselling services in schools and colleges. Additionally, the Tanzania Education Policy of 2014 stipulates that counselling needs to

be provided to staff of all cadres and students so that they access life skills that will help them to make informed decisions. The policy priority initiative is to strengthen production and provision of services at all levels of the education system.

Provision of guidance and counselling services in Tanzania is not without challenges. While counselling psychology is a *science*, in Tanzania, some students come to counselling courses with a belief that they are already *counsellors* since they have been *counselling* their relatives or siblings at home. Based first author's interactions with students of guidance and counselling, we find that students take counselling very lightly, obvious and straightforward such that it does not require special skills. Perhaps, this could be attributed to lack of professional counsellors in the Western sense, and or the way counselling is being expressed in Kiswahili culture. In one empirical study, Chilewa, and Osaki (2022) report the following statement from a teacher in a secondary school in Dar es Salaam,

“Guidance and counselling practice is like a parent and their kids, it is inborn professional. Inservice training is important but when you become a teacher you must have such skills.”

Interestingly, even researchers in the field view counselling differently. For instance, Chilewa and Osaki (2022) argue that overcrowded classrooms hinder counselling practices. The authors tend to imply that counselling can take place in the classroom and therefore the classroom should not be overcrowded. In Kiswahili, counselling is referred to as *Ushauri Nasaha* (which could be translated as counselling advice) or *unashi*, translated as advice/counselling. The use of such terms indicates that counselling is not something special. This becomes a challenge for people to go for any counselling since they take it as something related to giving or receiving advice, which, they normally get from people. These observations have been reported by studies such as Chilewa and Osaki (2022) who found negative perception of students regarding counselling and little support from parents and teachers and even government.

In Tanzania, discipline teachers who are meant to be strict and adhering to school rules and regulations are used as counsellors. The study of Chilewa and Osaki (2022) gives a testimony to that notion. The duo role of a teacher as a counselor has also led to students feeling that counsellors are unavailable (Awinsong et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the teacher counsellors are not qualified professional counsellors (Tanzania Education Policy, 2014; Nkuba & Kyaruzi, 2015). Some other ambitious and caring teachers, provide guidance and counselling services as mere advice within and outside the classes, just like an adult playing a role of adulthood

Challenges of placement of counsellors seems to be a big issue. Many schools do not have qualified counsellors. Studies show that there is lack of counselling facilities and infrastructure, absence of scheme of service for school counsellors, as well as poor recognition of counsellors (G. E. Lyimo et al., 2023). This makes it difficult for students to have access to guidance and counselling services as suggested by the Tanzanian educational policy. The lack of such services may prevent school children from selecting

the best courses, developing career knowledge, building confidence, and staying in school. It may also contribute to psychological challenges such as stress and depression (Mugotitsa et al., 2025).

Challenges regarding counselling services, do not face teachers and counsellors alone. On the students' side who are the expected consumers, research shows that they are not informed on counselling services available at their schools (Ntilisinda, 2017). The author reports that most of the counselling services provided to students were personal, social, academic and career development related. Similar findings regarding the nature of counselling were made by Tarimo (2022).

Other challenges include low number of counsellors, limited counselling services and shortage of counselling resources. For instance, in their study, Lyimo, Mkongo and Lyakurwa (2024) report that there is high student to counsellor ratio, limited counselling services, limited resources and inadequate professional development for counsellor in Tanzania. Regarding counselling services offered to students with special needs, the study of Mgumba (2021) show that available counselling services were not adequate and effective to address counselling needs of students with visual impairments.

Interestingly, studies further show that not all counselling practices in Tanzania schools have hurdles. For instance, a study by Tarimo (2022) involving secondary schools in Dar es Salaam show that the counselling services provided in such schools helped pupils do well in their studies, enhanced good social interactions among pupils, and helped to maintain pupils' academic performance. These findings are corroborated by the study of Lyimo, Mkongo and Lyakurwa (2024) which report that counselling services integration in some selected school in Moshi, Tanzania were reported to promote a holistic approach to student development. The study further report that academic success is intertwined with social, emotional, and psychological well-being, fostering a more comprehensive understanding. Furthermore, studies have linked guidance and counselling services to student academic performance (Lubawa, Ngirwa & Shavega, 2021). The findings of the study of Maree and Magere (2023) reveal that counselling was reported to influence career decision-making capacity, bolstered participants' psychological selves, improved their career adaptability, and bolstered their ability to make informed career decisions.

Challenges of providing Western Guidance and Counselling Services in Tanzania

Several scholars have identified the challenges of providing Western counselling approaches to other cultural groups. However, some African psychologists have been reluctant to examine and challenge the Western view perhaps due to fears of undermining the discipline's unsubstantiated claims of its status as a science (Naidoo, 1996). Meanwhile, the use of Western theories assumes have been blamed to carry the notion of sameness among humans. This has been referred as the myth of sameness or the assumption of universality (Naidoo, 1996). This sameness psychology is based on the assumption that the only human reality is first Eurocentric, then middle-class, and ultimately male in nature. Such a perspective disregards the fact that this culture-, class-, and sex-bound viewpoint is merely one among a multitude of diverse human realities

(Baldwin, 1989; Bulhan, 1985; Katz, 1985; Sue, 1981) as cited in Nadoo (1996), and it is criticized for being ethnocentric and individualistic (Moodley, 1999).

A theory of unintended consequence of incompleteness has been formulated to assess the limitation of traditional Western psychology imported to Africa (Nwoye, 2018). Incompleteness includes the tendency of Western psychology to limit itself to empiricism and ignore issues of spirituality, culture and religion which are key in Africa and Tanzania (Nwoye, 2018). According to the theory, Western psychology has been ignoring that psychology and counselling are human endeavours, not physical science and that intuition should be part of it.

Regarding individualism versus collectivism views, for the most part, Western societies and philosophy are based on individualism as opposed to African collectivism. As such, the application of Western counselling theories tends to ignore the African communal values. In the same, African scholars such as Letsoalo et al. (2024) highlights the necessity of integrating African cultural beliefs into mental health care and counselling to create more culturally sensitive and effective therapeutic approaches.

Western psychological approaches have been linked to colonialism or even racism in counselling practices (Adams et al., 2015; Bhatia, 2020). In support of this, the studies of Lymo, Lyakurwa and Mkongo (2023) emphasise the need and importance of integrating cultural elements within professional counselling services in helping students' psycho-social challenges which affect their school academic wellbeing. The authors go on to cite a counselor participant who reported:

“Evidences show that colonialists brought a lot of changes to different cultures. They brought new counselling theories which undermine cultural counselling because it is not scientific. The cultural counselling values should be protected, respected and included in the professional school counselling in secondary schools because of their impact on the modern counselling.”

Another challenge of Western counselling approach is how shyness is perceived. While in the Western culture shyness may not be an issue, in Tanzania people would feel shy to share their deep secret including expressing their problems to strangers. A study by (Awinsong et al., 2015) in Ghana found shyness to be cultural hinderance for attending counselling among high school students. The cultural challenges are also related to confidentiality. While confidentiality is regarded as key in counselling, students in Tanzania cannot confide in counsellors (Awinsong et al., 2015; Ndumbaro, (2020). In the West, counselling is a profession that requires one to undergo training, in Tanzania students are asked to select their counsellors. This is evidenced by a study of (Sima, 2018) in which students reported to be selecting their own counsellors. This is reported to a directive from Circular No 11 that was issued by the Ministry of Education in 2001, which directed school counsellors to be selected by students (MOEC, 2001). Also, counselling is regulated and guided by professional bodies in the West, in Tanzania, there is no such body regulating it (Mnyanyi, 2012).

Afrocentric Approaches in Offering Guidance and Counselling Services

There is a significant debate regarding the definition of African psychology and, consequently, counselling. However, this discussion is beyond the scope of this article. This article adopts the concept of African psychology as articulated by Nwoye (2015), who describes it as “a both-and psychology,” meaning inclusive psychology approach that encompasses only the study of African indigenous psychology but also the study examination the human condition, culture, the life of the mind in contemporary Africa, Africa. Additionally, it involves exploration and adoption integration of relevant of Western that confront help address challenges of present current predicament.

African psychology has been described as a distinct psychological discipline that embodies a community of scholars and a continuous tradition of inquiry (*Languages*, 2012). It advances a holistic conception of human existence and culture that integrates both precolonial and postcolonial African contexts (Letsoalo et al., 2024).

In Tanzania, the provision of guidance and schools are still based on the Western approaches. From the experience of the researchers, the training offered to counsellors in schools is based on the ideas developed in the Western world. Moreover, guidance and counselling courses taught in universities and colleges are still based on the Western views. Only a small portion of what constitutes African guidance is included in the Guidance and Counselling courses offered in some universities. These approaches may have adverse effects on those provided with the counselling. Perhaps the explanations on what leads to psychological problems is perceived differently in Africa. Evil spirits, extraneous forces, deviations against the ancestors, and the gods are viewed as causes of illness in African traditions (Naidoo, 1996). On the one hand, many pupils and students in Tanzania face challenges related to extreme poverty, violence, sexual harassment, bullying, cyber bullying, stressful studying conditions, substance abuse, diseases such as HIV/AIDS, juvenile delinquency, problems of sexuality, early pregnancy, griefs and bereavement, poor study skills, lack of career guidance and counselling among others (Kessy et al., 2025; G. Lyimo et al., 2024; Mattonet et al., 2024; Mbilinyi, 2024, 2025b, 2025a; Nkuba et al., 2018). On the other hand, psychological services offered do not adhere to the cultural and social settings of the children provided with such services.

Counsellors dealing with school children tend to use theories such as psychoanalysis, cognitive behavioural therapy, client centred theory, among others. Traditional scientists in Tanzania use an observation-based classification system to assess cause and effect in various things including human behaviour and psychological issues (Kimangale et al., 2020). The problems related to Western psychology led to a move called Association of Black Psychologists (White, 1972; White & Parham, 1990) and an Afrocentric perspective to psychology (Myers, 1988). However, some researchers have questioned the issue of African or Black psychology arguing that it is merely a description of African indigenous beliefs rather than an attempt to theorise and explain nature based on science (Makhubela, 2016). Citing Myers (1988) and Diop (1991), Makhubela further argues that viewing Western psychology as mainly European is being parochial and ignorant of the African contribution in the field of psychology. The author further argues, even the great Greek scholars such as Socrates and Aristotle were influenced by the knowledge obtained

from Egypt. While what Makhubela asserts might be true, we contend that, the way psychology is taught and practiced in Tanzanian schools, no such mention or link of African knowledge is being made.

At a theoretical level, some authors have contended that evolution has not created African mind differently from European. This idea is meant to rationalise that humanity is one and therefore, psychology can be universal. However, within the African psychology, three different schools of thought exist (Cokley & Garba, 2018). The traditional school of thought which focuses on criticising White psychology but accepts Eurocentric views with some minor adjustments. The Second school of thought is the reform school of thought. This tends to view African psychology as a distinct discipline and it tends to attack White psychology as being biased by ignoring some cultures. The third is the radical school of thought. This school tends to emphasize on African philosophy and has developed the African framework (Cokley & Garba, 2018). African psychology scholars argue that psychology should immerse itself into African culture. This would include considering the use of tools which consider African context. For instance, using a questionnaire to obtain data from African people who cannot read and write would be insensitive to the nature of the target group.

African psychology takes into account the issue of traditional healing (Moodley, 1999) since most of the Africans are still treated under traditional medicine (Kimangale et al., 2020). Additionally, African psychology uses three methodological approaches which are deconstruction, reconstruction and construction (Cokley & Garba, 2018). Pioneered by Curtis Banks, deconstruction approach is based on the review of the methodological and theoretical approaches used in various studies. Banks challenges the White dominant studies and provides contrasting findings which at first, did not consider the cultural aspects of the African (Banks, 1976) cited in (Cokley & Garba, 2018). Banks and later scholars challenged the findings of various studies on intelligence, gratification, and locus of control.

Regarding reconstruction methodological approach, Wade Nobles introduced the notion that Africans must take another path and go beyond what is established (Cokley & Garba, 2018). This approach calls for conceptualisation of the African psyche in the traditional African sense. Noble started by challenging the notion of self-concept portrayed in the Eurocentric literature. He argued that the African self-concept is based on the Ubuntu philosophy, which is, *I am because we are*. Other topics of interest raised and studied by this approach include, racial identity, cultural mistrust, and cultural paranoia.

The last methodological approach is construction. This approach concerns with construction of new theories (Baldwin, 1979). This approach views African psychologists as innovators and creators of their own knowledge. African psychology is based on the infinite, divine and internal compass. In his article on using indigenous knowledge in psychology, Edwards (2004) attends to communal and social forms of psychology as appropriate to local indigenous knowledge systems and to balance the overemphasis in modern, northern, western textbooks on individualism leading to an alienated

encapsulated view of the person.

Guidance and counselling have been seen as a means to develop and promote both psychosocial wellbeing and career management among students and clients in general. However, the way guidance and counselling are conceptualized and practiced in the West tend to differ with the way they are being done in Africa and Tanzania in particular. In this paper, we have provided a synopsis of the literature in Tanzania to investigate provision of guidance and counselling services in primary and secondary schools. The highlighted the historical development of guidance and counselling services in Tanzania.

From the discussion in the literature, we find that the historical development of guidance and counselling in Tanzania dates back to the pre-colonial times where counselling was conceived as part of the social practices. The paper has shown that elders, priests and the rest of the community members were regarded as “counsellors” and that the society depended on them for the guidance and counselling. Use of traditional ceremonies and rituals, proverbs and wisdom by the elders were key strategies used in providing guidance and counselling. In the colonial era, guidance and counselling continued to be viewed and practiced in the same manner. Therefore, counselling in the Western sense, did not exist back then until 1980s. This suggests that the emergence of HIV/AIDS and the new ways of life as a result of liberalization brought new challenges is highlighted in the main text. These new challenges lead for counselling as a practice done in the West.

This review shows that school guidance and counselling in Tanzania remains structurally underdeveloped and conceptually misaligned when viewed through Eurocentric paradigms. Triangulating evidence from Tanzanian school settings (e.g., counselor placement, high student-to-counselor ratios, and limited facilities) with cultural critiques of Western psychology suggests a persistent gap between imported individualistic models and Tanzania’s communitarian lifeworld (Naidoo, 1996; Chilewa & Osaki, 2022; Lyimo, Lyakurwa, & Mkongo, 2025). While several studies report positive academic and socioemotional effects of counselling (Lubawa, Ngirwa, & Shavega, 2021; Maree & Magere, 2023), effectiveness appears contingent on cultural fit, delivery context, and role clarity of school counsellors.

Interpreting these findings through African psychology underscores the need for integrative, Afrocentric practices that honor spirituality, communal decision-making, indigenous proverbs, and elder-mediated mentorship (Nwoye, 2015, 2018; Letsoalo et al., 2024). Related evidence from traditional healing and community-based mental health in Sub-Saharan Africa further indicates that culturally legitimate explanatory models enhance engagement and trust (Shange & Ross, 2022; Soori, Regmi, & Pappas, 2024; Dzinamarira et al., 2024). Practically, we argue for: (1) competency frameworks that embed cultural-spiritual literacies into preservice and in-service counselor training; (2) formal involvement of parents/elders as paraprofessional mentors; (3) policy recognition and a scheme of service for school counsellors; and (4) context-sensitive assessment tools that capture collective wellbeing, belonging, and identity not only individual symptom reduction.

Two limitations temper our claims: the literature skews toward urban/coastal settings and mixes peer-reviewed with grey sources. Future work should test Ubuntu-informed, school-based counselling models via mixed-methods trials, measuring academic outcomes alongside culturally relevant psychosocial indicators. Overall, an Afrocentric, hybridized model is both a cultural necessity and a policy opportunity to make counselling genuinely responsive to Tanzanian students.

CONCLUSION

This study critically examined the historical and contemporary provision of guidance and counselling services in Tanzanian schools through an Afrocentric perspective. Conclusively, counselling services in Tanzanian schools are still underdeveloped, with a lack of trained professionals and proper placement of school counsellors. Many schools rely on teachers with limited counselling training, leading to inconsistent and often ineffective guidance services. Institutional support and policy development are needed to enhance the role of school counsellors. Secondly, Western-based counselling approaches face significant challenges in Tanzania due to cultural mismatches, resource constraints, and limited awareness of counselling services. The individualistic and notions of sameness of Western counselling conflicts with the communal and collective values of Tanzanian society, making it less effective for many students. Additionally, inadequate infrastructure and societal stigma further hinder the effectiveness of these services.

By and large, this study emphasizes the importance of Afrocentric counselling approaches that incorporate traditional African values, storytelling, proverbs, spirituality, and community support, offering culturally relevant solutions for Tanzanian school children. It also highlights challenges with Western-based methods, including conflicting views of human nature, undertrained teacher-counsellors, and cultural barriers like students' discomfort in confiding in strangers. We finally argue that Afrocentric models, rooted in ubuntu, offer a holistic and culturally grounded alternative.

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