

The Prevalence of Guidance and Counseling Services in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Tanzania

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the prevalence of guidance and counseling services in Tanzanian secondary schools. The findings are derived from the study “**Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling in Facilitating Students’ Wellbeing in Tanzania**” which attempted to compare the effectiveness of guidance and counseling on facilitating students’ wellbeing between public and private secondary schools in Tanzania. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design and included a total of 108 respondents. This paper opens our insight to the fact that guidance and counseling are not prevalent (not effectively existing) in most secondary schools due to the fact that the infrastructures and aspects related to guidance and counseling services do not exist in most schools. Therefore, the need to support its presence by creating the necessary conditions and infrastructures.

Keywords: Education, Effectiveness, Guidance and Counseling, Teacher-counselor, Wellbeing

I. Background to the Study

According to UNESCO (2013: P 1), “the overriding goal of education is to achieve the full development and realization of individual human beings.” Provision of quality Education to every person is central for success in life of which its attainment is aspired by all nations (UNICEF, 2003). Therefore, education entails strengthening individual’s freedom and capacity to apply knowledge, skills and values to essential matters of life and society. Therefore, it is conceivable to believe that an educated person is the one with socially acceptable manners, well informed about the future of life and who has useful knowledge and skills to successfully contribute for development in the fast growing world.

Despite the crucial role of education, the process of educating individuals especially adolescents is always challenging due to existence of various emotional and social setbacks (Hassan, 2015). Reports on drug abuse, sexual harassment, academic underachievement, truancy and serious misunderstanding between teachers and students are among the several of the problems facing schools today (Wambu & Fisher, 2015). Solving these challenges calls for an effective guidance and counseling programme to provide intervention focused on helping students to change specific aspects of their thinking and acting.

Studies inform that, guidance and counseling services equip students with skills related to lifelong learning, provide the basis for making informed decisions in regard to the future life and help students to live fulfilled lives (Nzeleni, 2015).

Guidance and counseling was introduced in Tanzania secondary school system in 2002 following the government circular number 11 which instructed the provision of such services in schools for the aim of shaping students’ behaviours and bridge the gap between western education and traditional life (MoEC, 2002). According to the circular each school was supposed to appoint a teacher-counselor whose responsibilities

included talking to students about their physical, academic, social and health welfares. It also directed the establishment of a special committee to deal with guidance and counseling and issues related to HIV/AIDS.

The role of guidance and counseling is highly needed in Tanzania even now than before to support the function of building human capability through transformation of thought and acquisition of life skills and ensure that people are engrained with a developmental mindset and competitive spirit as per the Tanzania development vision 2025 (Tanzania Investment Center, 2011; MoEVT, 2016).

Despite the issuance of the circular and presence of the best national development vision, evidences suggest that students' wellbeing has not been improved with cases of dropout and poor performance being higher. For example, according to MoEST (2018), in 2017 only a total of 65,700 students dropped from secondary schools due to truancy, indiscipline and early pregnancy. However, there is no evidence of whether such cases are related to the presence of effective guidance and counseling services or some other factors.

Therefore, this study sought to unveil the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services in facilitating students' wellbeing in public and private secondary schools in Tanzania.

II. Significance of the Study

Findings of this study are expedient to various educational stakeholders especially teachers, parents, policy makers and students. In particular, these findings assist policy makers and teachers to gain an insight on the current practices of guidance and counseling in schools and the extent to which it improves students' lives. The study proposes proactive measures to strengthen the functionality of school based guidance and counseling services as emphasized by circular number 11 of 2002 and ETP 2014 (URT, 2002; URT, 2016). Parents and guardians may use these findings to enhance their efforts and investment in education to achieve a proper upbringing of their children. Furthermore, the study findings provides basis for policy makers and practitioners to develop the framework and philosophy that will guide the conduct of guidance and counseling services for both public and private secondary schools.

On top of that, this study ensures that upon leaving schools and colleges, today's students become more productive and well-adjusted as the country seeks to move to the middle economy.

III. Methodology

A cross-sectional survey was used to allow the use of multiple methods which brought rich information for an in-depth understanding of the prevalence of guidance and counseling services in secondary schools. Purposive and snowball sampling methods were used to select 108 informants of this study. Semi-structured Interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis were used for data collection. The use of multiple data collection tools with a randomly selected sample was meant to cross validate the study findings (Creswell 2012). Data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source data were generated through questionnaires and interviews, whereas the secondary source data were obtained from documents through documentary review checklist. Data collection instruments were validated and tested for reliability. Official permission for data collection was sought from the District Executive Directors of Moshi Municipality and Hai District Council. Participants of this study were contacted for their consent and their names were kept anonymous.

IV. Findings and Discussion

This paper is concerned with the prevalence of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Tanzania. The comparison encompassed the following four areas:

- (i) Guidance and counseling services available.
- (ii) Time spent in guidance and counseling.
- (iii) Role of other teachers in the provision of guidance and counseling.
- (iv) Support by school management to enhance counseling services.

The results per each aspect are as presented below:

4.1 Guidance and Counseling Services Available

This section presents the types of counseling services available in public and private secondary schools in Tanzania. The research question “Which guidance and counseling services do you provide to students in this school?” was used to collect data from teacher-counselors. The data were collected through interviews. Findings are summarized in the following table:

Figure 1: Availability of Guidance and Counseling Services

Type of GC services	Required		Available		
	F	%	Public Schools	Private Schools	
Students' Orientation Services	6	6	100	6	100
Gender Based Counseling	6	2	33	2	33
Intervention Counseling	6	6	100	6	100
Academic Counseling (Including combination choices)	6	1	17	1	17
Career Counseling	6	-	0	1	17
Referral services	6	2	33	-	0
Follow up Counseling services	6	2	33	2	33
Total	42	19	45	18	43

Source: Field Data (2019)

Key: GC = Guidance and Counseling, F = Frequency

As revealed in the table above guidance and counseling services existing in public and private secondary schools were problem solving oriented. For example only one school (private) had career counseling while only two schools (public and private) had academic counseling intended at enabling students to properly choose their subject combinations. Referral services were not available in all private schools due to scarcity of counseling personnel while follow-up services existed at 33.3% (two schools out of six) for both public and private schools. Data from document review indicated that teacher-counselors did not make follow-up to assess client's progress from the first counseling interview. Most issues listed in counseling records did not reveal the situation reached after undertaking guidance and counseling services.

4.2 Time Spent in Guidance and Counseling Services

This part investigated amount of time available for teacher-counselors to engage with guidance and counseling activities. This part was important in regard to the fact that teacher-counselors had many other responsibilities within the school context. Data were collected from teacher-counselors through interviews. The leading question for this section asked “*To what extent do you find time to fulfill guidance and counseling duties?*” Findings indicated that most schools (whether public or private) did not have specific time table for guidance and counseling. Teacher-counselors relied more on break time, lunch time and evening after class sessions for providing guidance and counseling. This argument is supported by the following statements as recorded from several teacher-counselors during interviews:

I am a science teacher and it is true that I am always busy with classes, marking students' assignments and other duties. But even students themselves are used to the situation as they do not seek our services during class hours.(Teacher-Counselor 2A, March 2019).

If I have an appointment with a student I might use break time or lunch time to talk to him/her. Otherwise I might request the student concerned to see me early morning the next day before class hours.(Teacher-Counselor 3A, March 2019).

I normally meet my clients during lunch time but it depends with the situation as observed by the student him/herself. If it is an emergence or if the student has been brought by parents, I may find a way to begin handling the situation at that moment.(Teacher-Counselor 6A, March 2019).

The three statements showed that teacher-counselors did not have enough time to fulfill their duties as counselors because they were pre-occupied by other duties especially classroom teaching. At school 2A, 4A, 5A and 6A data obtained indicated that boarding students had an advantage because they could consult teacher-counselors on any time of their convenience including weekend days. One of them said:

“For A-level students who are living here at school they can consult us any time including Saturday and Sunday. But for O-level students, time is somehow a challenge.”(Teacher-Counselor 5A, March 2019)

In private schools only one school had the counselor available on Saturdays for consultation with clients, especially, female students. Luckily the school was boarding so students could also see the counselor during the night. When asked about time she had for guidance and counseling, the teacher-counselor had the following to say:

“The church has instituted me here specifically to be a guider and counselor. My clients can have no time to see me but I have plenty of time for them. Sometimes I stay in office to 10pm with a small group of students if they have a similar problem. I am also available on Saturday and Sunday afternoon.” (Teacher-Counselor 5B, March 2019).

Such statement implied that teacher-counselors with little teaching loads were readily available to provide guidance and counseling services to students while those with higher teaching loads had no or little time to engage with counseling duties.

V. The Role of other Teachers in the Provision of Guidance and Counseling

This section intended to study the role played by other teachers in the provision of guidance and counseling services to students. Data were collected from teacher-counselors and teachers through interviews. The research question “*What is the role of other teachers in the provision of guidance and counseling to students?*” was asked to all participants. Findings showed that various guidance and counseling services were conducted in

cooperation with other teachers especially discipline masters/mistresses and class teachers. For instance, at school 1A, the teacher-counselor reported that they usually had whole school counseling held once per week, gender based counseling held once per month and class based counseling all of which were conducted collaboratively with teachers. When interviewed, a teacher from school 1A seemed to comply with the above arguments by saying:

“Teachers have a lot to do with regard to students’ counseling. Every time I happen to talk with students, my words must have some sense of counseling. When I go to class I do not only teach but advice students on how to move with various matters of this life, and all teachers are doing the same.” (Teacher 1A, March 2019).

The above statement implied that although teachers were said to play part in counseling, they did not differentiate counseling from guidance or giving advice. This is what makes the teacher-counselor at school 2A to hold the following perception:

“It is true that every teacher has some skills of guidance and counseling, but these services must be coordinated by the person with enough time, knowledge and skills.” (Teacher-Counselor 2A, March 2019).

Thus, for the above teacher-counselor, not every teacher is a counselor. The role of teachers on providing counseling services must be put under the coordination of a specific teacher-counselor (who must possess certain level of qualification). Another role played by teachers was expressed as ‘in staff counseling’ where students with a series of unacceptable behaviour or persistence with a certain negative behaviour are called to express themselves in front of the staff. There after each teacher gives a word of advice to the student (s) concerned. Expressing his appreciation to that kind of guidance and counseling, one of the teachers interviewed said:

“Teachers use various methods in shaping students’ behaviours. Sometimes students addicted to negative behaviours are called to express themselves in front of the staff. Then teachers have a chance to provide some wise words for helping the student and that has helped a number of students.” (Teacher 6A, March 2019).

Similar to the previous, this statement supports the idea that the role plaid by other teachers was not counseling parse but just giving advice on what is right or bad. For private schools, as revealed in this study, there was a scarcity of teacher-counselors as two schools did not have teacher-counselors. In these schools counseling services were provided by deputy heads of schools and discipline masters/mistresses. In one school where the discipline mistress acted as the teacher-counselor, when asked how she managed the two positions she had the following to say:

“Being the discipline mistress does not mean that every time I punish students, sometimes I just talk to them about changing their behaviour” (Teacher-counselor 2B, Match 2019).

The above argument suggested that the same teacher could once punish the student for misbehaving and act as a counselor on another time which is contrary to the principles of guidance and counseling which requires a counselor to be a person who is always polite to his/her clients.

Another role plaid by teachers was acting as the source of clients for the teacher-counselors. This was seen from the argument put forward by a teacher-counselor at school 6B by saying:

“Most of our clients are brought to us from other departments especially, the academic office, the discipline department and other teachers.” (Teacher-Counselor 6B, March 2019).

This implied that for schools that had teacher-counselors, other teachers helped in identifying students requiring counseling service and forwarding them to the teacher-counselor.

Based on the arguments presented above under this section, it is clear that the role of other teachers in the provision of guidance and counseling was more of giving advice and directing the students to behaving well. They also played part in group based guidance programs coordinated by teacher-counselors as well as acting as sources of clients to teacher-counselors by identifying needy students.

VI. Support by School Management to Enhance Counseling Services

As part of the status of guidance and counseling in schools, this study attempted to understand the support provided by the school management in enhancing counseling services. This was important because the school management especially heads of schools have the weighty responsibility of running and controlling school programmes, their support to each single programme/service established within the school determines its success or failure. Data for this section was collected through interviews with heads of schools and teacher-counselors.

Findings from public schools sampled revealed that only two heads of schools supported guidance and counseling services by ensuring that teacher-counselors have offices where they can work from. Actually in these two schools, teacher-counselors had offices with furniture, shelves and file cabinets to store counseling records. Heads of other schools did not mention any specific support they gave to enhance counseling services. During interviews they pointed to minor issues like writing letters to parents in case teacher-counselors wanted to meet them. In most of these schools teacher-counselors seemed to be unsatisfied with the support they received from heads of schools. This was evidenced by one among the teacher-counselors who said:

“Well, it depends on which support you are talking about because if it is fund we are even afraid of talking about it. There is always no money especially in this era of the fee free education. Otherwise they support us because even the chairs we use belong to the school;”
(Teacher-Counselor 4A, March 2019).

Such concern was also raised in two different schools both being public where teacher-counselors reported that sometimes they followed their clients to their home places. But the cost incurred in transport was not refunded by their respective school managements.

Findings from private schools had no significant difference from public schools. However, at one school operated by a religious institution, teacher-counselor seemed to be at the center of all school programmes. She acted as the mediator between the school administration, teachers and students and so the office of guidance and counseling was highly supported by school management in terms of fund and other facilities. In this school the teacher-counselor indicated some pride regarding the position as she said:

“It is not only students, guidance and counseling is also for the general school leadership and teachers.”
(Teacher-counselor 5B, March 2019).

This implied that when teachers are highly supported within the school system they serve for both the school leadership and students respectively.

On the other hand, the fact that about half of the private schools sampled did not have teacher-counselors made it difficult to describe the support provided to the counseling unit by the respective school managements.

With all the findings under this section, it is obvious that with exception of few schools especially older public schools and private schools owned by religious institutions, school managements did not provide enough support to enhance effectiveness of guidance and counseling services.

This section has presented findings on the comparison of the status of guidance and counseling between public and private secondary schools. Findings have shown that both public and private schools had not established the required guidance and counseling services as they lacked career counseling, referral services as well as follow-up counseling services. Other teachers regarded themselves as counselors although they were not able to differentiate counseling from giving advice. Finally heads of schools were not supporting counseling services to effectively provide the outcomes intended.

VII. Availability of Counseling Facilities in Public and private Secondary Schools

The third objective of the study sought to compare the availability of counseling facilities between public and private schools. To meet this objective an observation checklist was used by interviewing teacher-counselors if each of the facility indicated was available or not. The results are summarized in the table below:

Table 1: Availability of Counseling Facilities in Public and Private Schools

S/N	Facilities	Public Schools	Private Schools	Required
i,	Guidance and Counselling Office	3 (50%)	2 (34%)	6
ii.	Guidance and Counseling Guideline	- (0%)	1 (17%)	6
iii.	Library books and other reference materials	1 (17%)	1 (17%)	6
vi.	File Cabinet	2 (34%)	1 (17%)	6
v.	Counseling Records Book	4 (67%)	2 (34%)	6
vi.	Student problem checklist card	- (0%)	-	6
vii.	Counselor' Scheme of Work	- (0%)	-	6
	Total	10 (28%)	7 (19%)	36

Source: Field Data (2019)

Key: F = Frequency

As revealed in the table above, both public and private schools experienced higher shortage of counseling facilities. To be specific, only two public schools had offices for guidance and counseling while only two had file cabinet for storing counseling records. Four schools had counseling records while only one school had reference books and reader materials which were personal belongings of the teacher-counselor. In Private Schools only two schools had offices for guidance and counseling together with counseling records of which one had a file cabinet. The same school had a counseling manual based on catholic faith. Another private school had reference materials and reader materials which were also personal belongings of the teacher-counselor. Both public and private schools lacked counselor' schemes of work and student problem checklist cards. In view of these findings it is obvious that there is low availability of counseling facilities in both public and private schools.

VIII. Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusion

Teacher-counselors were fairly available in both public and private secondary schools in Moshi Municipality and Hai District Council with public schools taking the lead. However, the quality of these personnel was questionable because most of them had not specialized in guidance and counseling and lacked in-service training.

The status of guidance and counseling services in public and private secondary schools was not sufficient to facilitate students' wellbeing because most of the counseling services offered were inclined to shaping students' behaviour leaving out other components of guidance and counseling related to life planning and decision making.

The guidance and counseling services in most public and private secondary schools were not effectively delivered due to lack of facilities and funds to finance guidance and counseling activities. Also students could not adequately utilize guidance and counseling services because they did not trust teacher-counselors as able to maintain confidentiality.

8.2 Recommendations from the Study

This study provides recommendations both for action and for further studies. These recommendations are based on the findings of the study:

8.3 Recommendations for Action

In order to enhance the wellbeing and academic excellence of the students in secondary schools, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Policy makers should ensure that the position of teacher-counselor is recognized in the scheme of service in order to free them from being overloaded with other duties especially those related to classroom teaching.
- ii. There is a need for heads of schools to be oriented on the education circular number 11 of 2002 in order for them to understand its provisions regarding school based guidance and counseling services in order for them to support its implementation. This should be accompanied with training for teacher-counselors to increase their knowledge on counseling theories, principles and strategies to avoid over reliance on experience and general understanding.
- iii. Schools should restructure their general timetable to allow time for provision of proactive guidance and counseling services to students on general matters related to youth life at least once per week. Also private schools need to ensure the presence of teacher-counselors in their schools due to their significance in the provision of advocacy, crisis intervention and life planning services for students.
- iv. There is need to establish a coordinating unit at district level to facilitate knowledge sharing among practicing teacher-counselors and act as a referral point for students with chronic problems.

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