

THE SITUATION OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENEMA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to assess the situation of Guidance and Counseling services in Secondary Schools in Kenema District based on descriptive survey type. The sample selection was based on the existence of Guidance and Counseling services in schools in Kenema District. A total of twenty schools were used for the study. Data were collected through the use of questionnaire, interview and observation and were analyzed using mixed methods approach that employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Results as analyzed revealed that Guidance and Counseling services are inadequate in Secondary Schools in Kenema District due to lack of facilities and trained and qualified personnel. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education should establish and equip Guidance and Counseling centre devoid of the office of the Principal and the staff room to ensure confidentiality. Also, the Ministry of Education should award scholarships to teachers to train as schools' Counselors and that workshops, seminars and in-service training to be conducted on Guidance and Counseling services.

Key Words: *Guidance, Counseling Services, Counselors, Career, Counseling, Personal.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the functions of education is to provide opportunities for each student to reach his full potential in the areas of educational, vocational, personal, and emotional development. Guidance is an integral part of education and is centered directly on this function. Guidance and counseling services prepare students to assume increasing

responsibility for their decisions and grow in their ability to understand and accept the results of their choices (Gibson, 2008; Kauchak, 2011). The ability to make such intelligent choices is not innate but, like other abilities, must be developed.

Kochkar (2000) considers guidance necessary to help the pupil with specific problems like lack of relationship between ability and achievement, deficiency in one or several school subjects, faulty study habits, and defective methods of learning and poor motivation. Bhatnagar and Gupta (1999) are of the opinion that for better student achievement, it is necessary to aid pupils make progress in their education by removing their difficulties and developing good study skills. Hence guidance programs must include this aspect of student aid. Guidance plays a vital role in removing the educational, personal, social, mental, emotional and other similar problems of the students. The main purpose of instruction is to enable the child to learn, whereas the teacher's task is to facilitate the learning process and develop study habits and right attitudes toward learning. A teacher who has the guidance point of view in teaching will keep all this in mind.

In modern times the complexity of life has intensified the need of organized guidance services. Both developed and developing countries lay great emphasis on the guidance of their youth to channelize their energies. The major objectives of Guidance and Counseling are to assist individuals to develop the ability to understand themselves, to solve their own problems and make appropriate adjustments to their environment as the situation dictates (Gibson, 2008).

In guidance and counseling, these two words generally take on different meanings. The former refers to helping students' whole-person development, while the latter is frequently targeted at helping students with problems. In other words, guidance work is preventive and developmental in nature whereas counseling is more of supportive, remedial work (Lai-

Yeung, 2014). The global trend seems to have moved from a casework and remedial approach to a preventive, developmental approach in providing guidance and counselling (Gysbers & Henderson, 1994; Yuen, 2002; Lai-Yeung, 2014). Hence guidance and counselling is a very necessary therapy to school children.

According to Oviogbodu (2015) counseling can be defined as a number of procedures in assisting an individual to solve his problems. Counseling is more involved emotionally in the affective realm personalized learning, that is, emotions and feelings, values, attitudes. Counselling is an interaction or relationship between two or few individuals, the client counsellor relationship of trust (Geshinde 1991; Adebowale,

2012; cited in Oviogbodu, 2015). According to Chireshe and Kasayira (2006) guidance and counselling is a process which enables individuals to acquire the skills they need to make choices and decisions about their future. The process also assist the learners to be active managers of their own career paths as the learners are helped to select careers appropriate to their capabilities, interests and needs.

Nyaegah (2011) emphasizes that counseling is a profession and as such it requires competence, knowledge and skills, which cannot be acquired unless one undergoes relevant training. Studies conducted in the United States of America indicated that the majority of learners revealed that the school counselors had been helpful with learners' problems (Chireshe 2006). However, in a study conducted in Kenya, Kamore and Tiego (2015) found that the teachers in charge of guidance and counseling in most schools lack necessary training and competency in handling school discipline issues in their schools.

The responsibilities of counselors should involve supporting student development not only in academic and career matters but also with personal and social concerns (Fitch & Marshall, 2004; Nastasi (2000) cited in Pillay, 2011). Egbochuku (2008) study on the assessment of the quality of guidance and counseling services on students' adjustment in Nigeria pointed out that:

The facilities needed by the school counselor to carry out quality guidance and counseling services in the school are numerous. Some of these are accommodation, bookshelves, and tables with drawers, cabinets for storing pamphlets, finance, time and psychological test materials among others. Inadequacy of these facilities limited the effectiveness of the service rendered.

Simatwa (2007) on his part pointed out that students discipline remains the most serious problem facing education systems. He further acknowledged that a good percentage of prefects and teachers perceived guidance and counseling services in schools negatively as a waste of time and ineffective. Perhaps due to lack of qualified G&C administrators or deficit of guidance and counseling resource facilities and materials in our educational institution.

Mutie and Ndambuki ,2004 cited in Cheruiyot and Orodho, 2015) posited that:

The effectiveness of the educational and vocational information service in a school depends largely on the systematic organization, proper maintenance and regular use of the G&C centre.

Ideally the centre should be a large room equipped with filing cabinets, display racks, bulletin boards, tables and chairs where the materials can be maintained and displayed

This centre should offer ideal place for interactions between service providers and recipients. By using these resource centre with all its human and physical facilities G&C clients will benefit in gaining insight of their academic endeavors. The ideal guidance and counseling Centre as stipulated by the national guidance and counseling policy, Republic of Kenya (2011) are: Guidance and Counseling Office (size 5 x 4 meters) equipped with one office table with drawers, shelves for books and magazines; Sound proof quiet counseling room furnish with, 2 good office desks/tables, Lockable cabinets, Computer, printer and shredder, Four office chairs, fresh flowers and notice board.

Guidance and Counseling services in schools is an essential aspect of the educational policy in Sierra Leone. The 1995 Education policy emphasizes the training of Guidance Counselors and creation of Counseling Departments in schools and the role of the Counselors are to ensure that they help students develop abilities of self-understanding, decision-making, life planning and action-taking so that they can be able to adjust in the career options they decide to pursue.

Guidance and Counseling therefore, is being offered in Universities as professional course. As school counseling continues to define itself as a profession and to show its usefulness empirically, counseling services in schools are likely to expand worldwide in an effort to improve everyone's life satisfaction.

De Jong and Lazarus (1992), argued that the biggest obstacle to providing support services for all children of school going age was the limited number of professionals available and the unequal employment of these limited human resources in South Africa. They also argued that the number of trained people that provided support services needed to be increased substantially. According to Van Niekerk (2002) only a few schools had qualified full-time counselors who specialized in guidance counseling. Guidance counseling here focused on the counseling of individuals or groups of learners, who presented with similar concerns, e.g. lack of clarity regarding subject choice towards further study.

Guidance and Counselling is an integral part of Sierra Leone education system and the policy emphasized on the training of school counselors and the establishment of counseling departments in schools, therefore, this research aims at evaluating the situation of Guidance and Counseling services in Secondary School in Kenema District.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are the skills, training and qualification of teachers relevant to Guidance and Counselling services in the selected schools in Kenema District?
2. What are the counselling areas addressed by counsellors in the selected schools in Kenema District?
3. Are resources/facilities available and sufficient for Guidance and Counselling services in the selected schools in Kenema District?

METHODOLOGY

The area of this research is Kenema District. Kenema District has sixteen chiefdoms and Nongowa is the largest chiefdom. The study adopted the descriptive survey design.

Population and sample

The study population comprised teachers rendering Guidance and Counseling Services in secondary schools in Kenema district. The researcher used random sampling techniques in selection of twenty schools. Teachers in-charge of Guidance and Counseling Services were selected for the study. The sample size of this research involved twenty teachers. A mixed methods approach that employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques was adopted. The instruments used for this research were questionnaire, interview and observation. Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. Tables and bar charts were used for easier interpretation.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Figure 1 shows that out of the twenty (20) teachers who are in charge of counseling services in the selected schools, only two (2) teachers 10% are trained and qualified with a Bachelor Degree in Guidance and Counseling whilst eighteen (18) teachers 90% are trained and qualified in other subject areas. This implies that most of the teachers offering Guidance and Counseling services do not have the requisite training, skills and qualification to handle the services appropriately. This supports the view of Van Niekerk (2002) who said that only a few schools had qualified full-time counsellors who specialized in Guidance and Counselling. This relates to the study conducted in Kenya, where Kamore and Tiego (2015) found that the teachers in charge of guidance and counseling in most schools lack necessary training and competency in handling school discipline issues in their schools.

Table 1: Distribution of teachers by qualification

Area	Trained and Qualified	Percentage
Guidance and Counseling	Course 2	10%
Other Areas	18	90%
Total	20	100

Figure 1 below provides information on multiple areas counselled by teachers in the selected schools. The figure shows that twenty (20) teachers 100% offered counseling services on the academic aspect. Twelve (12) teachers 60% offered counseling services on the personal aspect. Five (5) teachers 60% counsel the social and vocational aspects. This infers that adequate attention is not paid to the different counseling areas as Pillay (2011) stated that the responsibilities of counselors should involve supporting student development not only in academic and career matters but also with personal and social concerns.

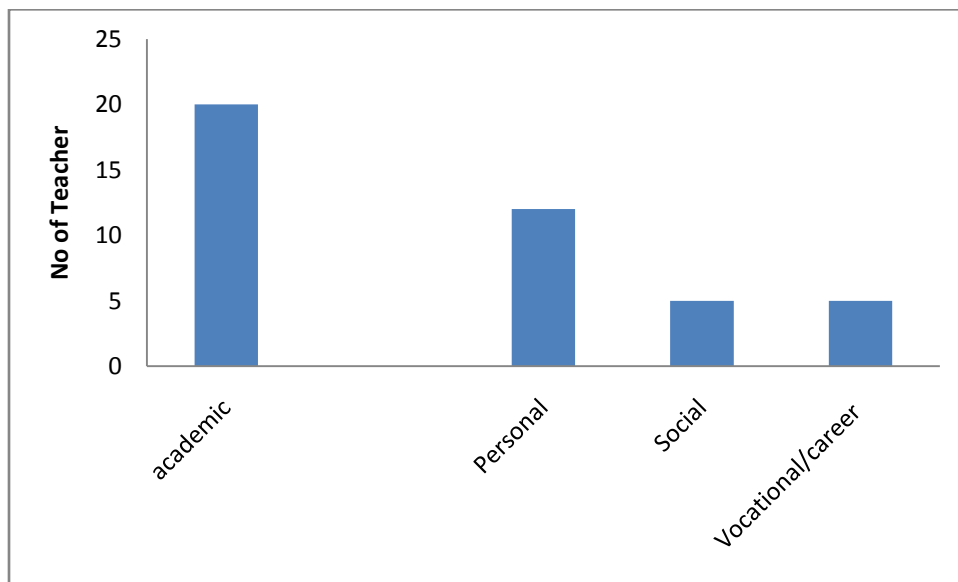


Figure 1: Areas Counselled by Teachers

Table 2 below shows the facilities/resources “available and adequate”, “available but inadequate” and “not available” in the twenty selected schools. The table shows that out of the twenty (20) schools, five (5) schools 25% had adequate office space, five (5) schools 25% had office space but inadequate for guidance and counseling services and ten (10) schools 50% had no office space. Four (4) schools 20% had adequate furniture, eight (8) schools 40% had inadequate furniture and seven (7) schools 35% had no furniture. Three (3) schools 15% had

adequate stationery; ten (10) schools 50% had inadequate furniture whilst 7 schools had no furniture. None of the schools 0 % had electricity, computer and television facilities. Three (3) schools 15% had cupboards/cabinets, 9 schools had inadequate cupboard/cabinets and 8 schools had no cupboards/cabinets. Three (3) schools 15% had storage rooms, 5 schools had storage rooms but inadequate and 12 schools had no storage rooms. Two (2) schools had adequate publicity, 6 schools with inadequate publicity and 8 schools had no publicity. Two (2) schools had adequate human resource and 18 schools had the human resource but not adequate. This implies that Guidance and Counseling services are not effectively done due to unavailability and inadequacy of resources/facilities in secondary schools. This is in support of Mutie and Ndambuki, 2004 cited in Cheruiyot and Orodho, 2015) who posited that:

The effectiveness of the educational and vocational information service in a school depends largely on the systematic organization, proper maintenance and regular use of the G&C centre.

Table 2: Facilities/Resources in Selected Schools

Resources/facilities	Available and adequate		Available but inadequate		Not available	
	No. of school	Percentage	No. of school	Percentage	No of school	Percentage
Office space	5	25%	5	25%	10	50%
Furniture	4	20%	8	40%	8	40%
Stationery	3	15%	10	50%	7	35%
Computer	0	0%	0	0%	20	100%
Electricity supply	0	0%	0	0%	20	100%
Cupboard/ cabinets	3	15%	9	45%	8	40%
Television	0	0%	0	0%	20	100%
Storage room	3	15%	5	25%	12	60%
Publicity	2	10%	6	30%	12	60%
Human resource	2	10%	18	90%	0	0%

CONCLUSION

From the findings, it can be concluded that some form of Guidance and Counseling services are provided to pupils in Secondary Schools in Kenema district. That Guidance and Counseling services in these schools are faced with a lot of challenges such as unavailability of trained and qualified human resources and material

resources/facilities. These challenges have negatively affected the implementation of guidance services in Secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made that the Ministry of Education should establish and equip Guidance and Counseling centres devoid of the office of the Principal and the staff room to ensure confidentiality. Also, the Ministry of Education should award scholarships to teachers to train as schools' Counselors and that workshops, seminars and in-service training to be conducted on Guidance and Counseling services.

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