

Teachers' Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Counsellors In Government Schools, Mbale Municipality Uganda.

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Abstract

This research study investigated the teachers' evaluation of the effectiveness of counselors in government schools in Mbale municipality. The study adopted a cross sectional survey design. The population of the study were teachers in public Secondary Schools in Mbale municipality, a sample of 165 respondents was used. Census inquiry was used to select schools, while simple random sampling techniques was used to select teachers from the population. The instrument used to elicit information was a questionnaire designed by the researchers titled Teachers' Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Counsellors in Government Schools in Uganda Questionnaire (TPECQ). Three research questions were raised for the study. The data collected was analyzed using relative frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The study found a positive evaluation of teachers on the effectiveness of counsellors in Mbale municipality. Where in research question one the mean is 2.5052, and standard deviation is .81877, research question two 2.4152, and SD is.83985, and research question three is 2.3658, and SD .70669. In conclusion, the evaluation of teachers of the effectiveness of counsellors in Mbale municipality government school is high and positive. Recommendations among others, professional counsellors should be in charge of counselling activities in schools

Keywords: Teachers, Evaluation, Effectiveness Counsellors.

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I. Introduction

Counselling is the interaction that comes as a result of the professional mutual relationship between a specialized counselor and his student where the counselor assists the student to understand himself and his abilities and talents to achieve self and environmental compatibility in order to attain the appropriate degree of mental health in light of the techniques and specialized skills of the guidance process (UNESCO, 2011).

As a result of the continued request for increased accountability in education, there is heightened awareness and interest by all members of the school community to ensure that proper and effective counselling programmes are defined and implemented. Teachers, administrators, counselors, students, parents, as well as other personnel in the system holds considerable stake in the evaluation of our school services. School counselors, due to their unique situation in working with students and school staff, often find varied perspectives of how others see their roles and responsibilities defined. Through the examination of these perspectives, the ultimate goal is to bring clarity to the counselor role and thus support for the entire guidance and counseling program (Katherine, 2006).

Uganda like other countries in the Saharan sub region has made strides towards promoting career guidance and counselling with an aim of producing students who are prepared to make adequate career decisions by the time they complete secondary school and tertiary levels of education respectively. Thus, career decision making is perceived to be a key output of career guidance and counseling among students at all levels of education with the support from teachers, counsellors, professionals, private sector, old students, and other government officials. The government of Uganda has made effort to invest in career guidance and counseling at all levels of education through infrastructure development, human resource, capacity building, publication and distribution of career guidance materials, monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling activities in the country. (Anne, 2018)

A school counselor is a professional and experience someone who works in elementary, middle, and /or high schools to provide academic, career, college readiness, and personal/social competencies to all students through a school counseling program. According to the State University Encyclopedia (2012), School counselors help to make learning a positive experience for every student. They are sensitive to individual

differences. They know that a classroom environment that is good for one child is not necessarily good for another. Counselors facilitate communication among teachers, parents, administrators, and students to adapt to the school's environment in the best interests of each individual student. They help individual students make the most of their school experiences and prepare them for the future. Counselors spend their time with children individually, in small groups, or in classrooms thus, having some connection with every student in the school. With the advent of systems thinking, the elementary school counselor now has a working relationship with students' families and with community social agencies.

Although the roles of school counselors vary among settings, common tasks include individual counseling, small-group counseling, large-group or classroom presentations, involvement in school wide behavior plans for promoting positive, extinguishing negative behaviors and consulting with teachers, parents, and the community. Therefore, counselors in secondary schools must cultivate positive attitude in teachers and students about counseling services. They must exhibit and possess the required talents in order to be in position to lead students to self-actualization.

In order to understand how counselors work with students and staff in school guidance programs today, it is important to recognize the evolution of the profession first. The school counseling profession traces back to the early 1900's where it had the sole purpose of vocational guidance. It was developed in response to the economic and social problems of those times. Teachers were assigned the counseling position, in addition to their regular teaching duties (Gysbers, 2015). As times progressed, new complexities arose and additional challenges to students and staff surfaced. It became evident that guidance programs needed to change with the times by providing trained and professional personnel to cater for the issues of counseling.

In Uganda like in most African countries, Guidance and Counseling (G&C) is a relatively new movement. The need for formal Guidance and Counseling in schools was realized in the 1960s, when the Ministry of Education then established the office of Career Guidance at its headquarters in Kampala. When Uganda got independence in 1962s, it became necessary to gear the education of the children towards national development.

The Minister of Education in the 1960s, the late J.S LuyimbaziZake did a lot to promote the Career Guidance and Counseling movement in this country. He also emphasized the need for school leavers to choose appropriate careers for their future.

The Ministry of Education (2017) recognized the importance of Guidance and Counseling movement in this country. It also emphasized the need for school leavers to choose appropriate careers for their future and recognized the importance of guidance and counseling services at all levels of education. It recommended, among other recommendations, that, each school ranging from primary to tertiary should have at least one teacher responsible for Guidance and Counseling.

The Guidance and Counseling Department of the Ministry of Education and Sports was established in 2008, after the re-structuring of the ministry, and charged with the duty of helping teachers in schools to ensure provision of guidance and counseling to the young ones; and help them think about their future occupations and guide them to select or opt for occupations, in which they would fit best, appropriate subjects or courses to pursue in order to realize these occupations, hence crucial Vocational education and personal guidance are all equally important (MOES, 2011).

The overall objectives of the Department are to Promote, support and ensure the provision of quality guidance, counseling including psychosocial services in the entire Education Sector Sensitize all stakeholders and advocate for policies and strategies to effectively address issues of Guidance and Counseling, HIV/AIDS and other psychosocial concerns in the entire Sector, Develop and maintain an up to date National Data Bank and Information System on the issues/status of Career Guidance, Counseling, placement of school leavers, HIV/AIDS and other psychosocial trends, and services in schools so as to guide decision making and advice to stakeholders; and Initiate and coordinate the provision of Guidance and Counseling in schools/institutions.

The key functions of the department includes developing policies, strategies, plans and guidelines for the implementation and provision of Guidance and Counseling services, Carry out advocacy, sensitization and information dissemination programmes, Ensure training and retraining/refresher programmes for teacher counselors and other stakeholders to ensure that G&C is effectively provided in schools; Advise on and ensure provision of appropriate materials in respect to G&C service provision. Initiate and conduct workshops, seminars for in-service teachers/tutors and other practicing personnel.

Other functions are to, Guide and support any initiative for promoting G&C services. Provide linkages with organizations and other bodies in the region and internationally. Establish an information/data bank on psychosocial and career information. Conduct research and studies on career guidance, and counseling services and to coordinate placement of students at various levels of education (MOES,2013)

All school teachers should be able to play the role of counselor to their pupils. However effective Guidance and Counseling requires that teachers are trained and grounded in the principles and practice of child counseling. The counseling program should be able to do the following developmental Guidance that means,

develop, coordinate, and implement various programmes that foster development of children in all areas of life as well as preventive interventions for HIV/AIDS, STIs; pregnancy, delinquency control.

Individual Pupil's Academic Planning and Performance, Working hand in hand with teachers of all subjects through participation, collaboration, and consultations to provide relevant support for pupils' individual planning and development.

According to Anne (2018) various services are designed for counselors in schools among which are Responsive Services which means support services should be provided to pupils in need through individual and small group Guidance and Counseling interventions, crisis intervention, parent out-reach, consultation, referral, to mention but a few.

Systems Support, putting mechanisms in place for various activities that can support the aims of school's Guidance and Counseling services. Examples include conducting workshops for parents and staff, documentation through research or data collection, community outreach/sensitization, and program continuity. Counselors are also in a key mediation position with an advocacy role for pupils and the staff, families, and outside child (referral) agencies.

From the foregoing, there is evidence to argue that some of the techniques and skills of modern-day guidance counselors were practiced by Catholic priests in the middle ages, as can be seen by the dedication to the concept of confidentiality within the confession. It is on record that all efforts by the these missionary and the government of Uganda were centered on career guidance where the practitioners were majorly teachers who were not professionally trained. Nevertheless, formal guidance programs using specialized and professionally trained counsellors did not start until the turn of the twentieth century. (Masereje, 2016)

This could probably be one of the reason for the observation of the researchers during school counseling practicum that some teachers seems to misconstrue counselors' role and effectiveness and in some schools even head teachers have such misevaluations of counselors' role. In the sense that the head teacher of a given school shows disagreement for individual counseling session between a client and a counselor instead he accepted group counseling only to take place, this is a clear indication of his misevaluation of counselors' role. And in some schools, teachers regard a counselor as someone who is supposed to enter class and teach the counseling topics. The problem of this study is due to this observation by the researcher during school practicum that among teachers, and some head teachers misperceived the role of counselor.

Moreover literature is awash with reports on strikes, student unrest, examination malpractices, absenteeism, drug abuse and bullying (Directorate of Educational Standard, 2008, 2009; Ocoromach, 1999; Seburimage, 1998; Uganda National Examinations Board [UNEB], 2005, 2006). According to DES. (2008) AND MOES (2012), one of the reasons for this trend of events is that learners' needs are not attended to in time. It is pertinent to ask that to what extent are guidance and counseling services used to align student behavior to the code of conduct.

The MOES has put in place measures to strengthen guidance and counseling services in education institutions in Uganda. It has, for example, created a fully fledged Department of Guidance and Counseling in the ministry, developed reference materials for teachers, conducted workshops, strengthened monitoring and supervision, and developed policies and guidelines to address psychosocial difficulties experienced by school children (MOES, 2010; Ssenkuma, 2010). Despite these efforts, there has been an escalation of indiscipline among secondary school students in Uganda, Mbale Municipality inclusive. According to a research survey, a lot of students are involved in different acts of indiscipline in public schools of Mbale municipality, for instance in Mbale S.S on 12/11/2014 there was a case of vandalizing electrical gadget in the hall by students of S.S 3, in Mbale High School also a case of drug abuse was recorded on 9th April, 2014, where students of Senior five were involved in kuba drug abuse, and also in Nkoma S.S a student fought with his teacher on 3rd ,April, 2013 as a result of clearance card.

Statement of the problem It is on record that, government of Uganda has made effort to invest in career guidance and counseling at all levels of education through infrastructure development, human resource, capacity building, publication and distribution of career guidance materials, and monitoring and evaluation of career guidance and counselling activities in the country. However, there are glaring gaps in human resource, capacity building, inadequate training manuals, lack of career information and standardized assessment tools, high student and career masters/ counsellor ratio, and the general lack of school counsellor education, supervision, and certification at national level. Anne, Joseph , John & Said, (2018)

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Thus, stakeholders such as teachers, parents, students among others may have misconstrued evaluations of school counselors' role and effectiveness; these concerns are some of the issues which triggered the researcher's interest to undertake a research on the teachers' evaluations of the effectiveness of counselors. Presently the evaluations of teachers appears not known and it seems there is less or no study that has been conducted in Mbale Municipality in relation to the evaluations of teachers about the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services offered in secondary schools. The current trend could probably continue if the evaluations of teachers towards effective counseling services are not improved. Hence the need for this research.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to explore how teachers perceive the effectiveness of counselors in government secondary schools in Mbale municipality government school, Uganda. Specifically; to determine teachers' evaluation of the effectiveness of counselors' vocational services, educational services and personal/social services in secondary schools in Mbale Municipality.

Research questions

1. What are the teachers' evaluation of the effectiveness of counselors' vocational services in secondary schools in Mbale Municipality?
2. What are the teachers' evaluation of the effectiveness of counselors' educational services in Mbale Municipality secondary schools?
3. What are the teachers' evaluation of the effectiveness of counselors' personal/social services in secondary schools in Mbale Municipality?

II. Methodology

The research design used was a descriptive survey which allowed the researcher to use large number of respondents to describe their experience regarding the general knowledge of how they perceive effectiveness of counselors in their school. Target population for this study was teachers in public secondary schools in Mbale municipality. The researchers used simple random sampling techniques to select their samples. To select schools to be used the names of 20 secondary schools were written on small pieces of paper which were later folded and the researchers closed their eyes and picked five papers using simple random sampling. So five picked papers represent the schools where the research was conducted. This enabled the researcher to obtain responses that represent the views of all the secondary school teachers in Mbale Municipality. A self-developed questionnaire titled Teachers' Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Counselors Questionnaire (TPECQ) was designed and administered for the study. The questionnaire used consist 4 sections, the first section asked questions on background/demographic information. The second section asked for information concerning teachers' evaluation of counselors vocational/career services, the third section sought for information about the teachers' evaluations of counselors educational services, and the last section asked teachers to give their opinion on questions regarding the effectiveness of school counselors on personal/social services in their school. The constructed questionnaire was given to experts in the field of study to go through for necessary corrections in order to give it facial validity. In this study the researcher used test retest method to ascertain reliability of the instrument. In the process some respondents for the study who were not part of the actual sample but within the target population were used, this instrument was administered to this same group of respondents twice with an interval of two weeks and Chronbatch alpha was used to correlate the two results, the computed value was 0.738, therefore the instrument was considered reliable. The questionnaires were administered by a direct method, that is, questionnaires were distributed directly to the respondents. At the preliminary session the researcher reassured respondents of confidentiality. Instructions was then read out clearly and clarifications made promptly. The completed questionnaires were later handed in and checked for errors.

Result Presentation

This aspect of the paper presents the analysis of the data collected for the study.

Research Question 1. What are the teachers' evaluation of the effectiveness of counselors' vocational services in secondary schools in Mbale Municipality?

Table 1: Cumulative Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers Evaluation of Counselors Effectiveness on Vocational Services

N	Valid	117
	Missing	3
Mean		2.5052
Std. Deviation		.81877

Source: Results of analysis (2015)

From the presentation of table 1 above the result indicated that out of the 120 respondents only three were invalid, and the cumulative mean of the findings are (2.5052) which implied that the general evaluations of teachers on objective one of the study is positive, and the standard deviation of the findings (.81877) which is low implying that respondents had similar views and opinions about the findings.

Research Question 2. What are the teachers' evaluation of the effectiveness of counselors' educational services in Mbale Municipality secondary schools?

Table 2: Cumulative Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers Evaluation of Counselors Effectiveness on Educational Services

N	Valid	114
	Missing	6
Mean		2.4152
Std. Deviation		.83985

Source: Primary data, (2015)

From the presentation above we can see that out of the 120 respondents six were missing, and 114 were valid, and the cumulative mean of the findings are (2.4152) which implied that the general evaluations of teachers on objective two of the study were positive evaluations, and the standard deviation of the findings (.83985) which is low implying that respondents had similar views and opinions about the findings.

Research Question 3. What are the teachers' evaluation of the effectiveness of counselors' personal/social services in secondary schools in Mbale Municipality?

Table 3: Cumulative Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Evaluation of Effectiveness of Personal/Social Services of Counselor

N	Valid	120
	Missing	0
Mean		2.3658
Std. Deviation		.70669

Source: Primary data, (2015)

Table 3 shows the cumulative Mean and standard deviation of objective three of the study, which answered the research question three that says: What are the teachers' evaluations of the effectiveness of personal/social services of counselors in government secondary schools Mbale municipality?

From the presentation above it revealed that all the 120 respondents are valid non is missing, and the cumulative mean of the findings are (2.3658) which implied that the general evaluations of teachers on research question three of the study is positive evaluations, and the standard deviation of the findings (.70669) which is low implying that respondents had similar views and opinions about the findings. And the finding shows that counselors' role in personal/social services are effective in government secondary school in Mbale municipality.

III. Discussion

Based on the findings it clearly indicates that career choice/vocational guidance are effective in Mbale municipality government schools. And the study was supported by a research conducted by Odongo and Njiru (2010). In Nyalenda secondary school in Kisumu, Kenya on the role of guidance and counseling in students' motivation, They reported that counseling programs though not well developed, had the propensity to motivate the girls to set clear social and career objectives after school. They further concluded that as an intervention program, guidance and counseling is supposed to influence an individual's views about his/her role in the world of work. The study also, is in line with another research conducted by Gysbers (2008) who reported that, classroom guidance can improve elementary school students' behaviors and ability to make career decisions.

And the result was in line with another research conducted by Racho and Ibrahim in Kenya who studied on the evaluations on the role of guidance and counseling programme on Kenyan secondary school students' career decision making. The results indicated that, there was a significant relationship between role of guidance and counselling for both form one and two ($X^2=1.440$, $df=2$, $P=.001<.05$) and form three and four ($X^2=3.263$, $df=2$, $P=.001<.05$). It was revealed by the analysis that students agreed that academic, personal and social competence were roles played by guidance and counselling in schools. Similarly, guidance and counselling helped them to attain spiritual growth, vocational, health and marital awareness.

And based on the above mean of the findings it is cleared that educational counseling services are effective in Mbale municipality government schools. And the findings are similar to that of Nyan, who conducted her research on students and teachers' evaluations. The study revealed a moderate positive relationship between teacher-students' evaluation, resource availability, talent availability and counseling services in secondary schools. From the findings of the study it was concluded that teacher-students' evaluation, were positively related with counseling services in secondary schools. And the study was supported by a research conducted in United State by Beesley (2014), who studied 300 k-12 teachers about their evaluations of the effectiveness of school counseling services within their school settings. He used a stratified sample of 300 teachers from across the southwestern United states. Questionnaires were sent to randomly selected high school teachers throughout the state. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the data. Overall, it was found that teachers were satisfied with their school counseling services and reported strengths in several areas. These areas included classroom guidance, individual and group counseling, consultation, and coordination of special education services.

Beesley (2014) believed that counselors' strengths were most clearly seen and best utilized when there were more opportunities to perform classroom guidance lessons, facilitate individual counseling or group counseling sessions, provide consultative/collaborative activities, and work with special education services to meet the needs of all students

The study also backed with that of Mikaye(2012) who studied influence of guidance and counseling on students' discipline in Kenyan public secondary schools, kabondo division Kenya. The study findings revealed that guidance and counselling services were offered in the schools and 82.4% of the principals considered it important. From the literature review it is found that character formation is achieved through intense formal and informal programmes for guidance and counselling. It is through guidance and counselling that students remain disciplined and focused in life. Gibson (2007) as cited by Mghweno et,al (2014) also indicates that through guidance and counseling students are assisted to be disciplined and become able to deal with challenges and realities they face in their academic, social and physical environment.

IV. Conclusions

Sequel to the findings above, it is concluded that teachers evaluations of effectiveness of counselors in vocational/career choice counseling are effective in Mbale Municipality. Same conclusion was equally arrived at about evaluation of educational services in schools, by implication counselors educational services conducted in those schools were effective. Finally, the research concludes that counselors' personal/social services were effective in those schools as perceived by the teachers.

V. Recommendations

In regard to the summary of findings and drawn conclusions, the following recommendations were made;

- i. Though the findings showed positive evaluation of the effectiveness of counselors among the teachers of Mbale government schools, still there is need to assign professional counselors to oversee counseling services in all Ugandan schools, because in some schools the counselors were untrained.
- ii. There is need to strengthen the issue of orienting students on the importance of guidance and counseling in all schools, because of its great impact to them.
- iii. School counselor should remain only on counseling of students, that is should not be assigned a class to teach.

- iv. Individual counseling needs to be given consideration with the aim of helping students facing educational problem.
- v. School counselors should consider classroom guidance for the purpose of reminding students of their obligations.
- vi. School manager or head teacher should help and give chance to school counselors in helping those students facing psychological problems in their schools.

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