

Assessment of Guidance and Counselling Services Offered to Students on Career Choice in Secondary Schools in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya

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Abstract

Success in life is largely dependent on an individual's wishes and aspirations. Guidance and Counselling comes in handy to assist students in schools to have a clear focus on their aspirations. This is mainly because students lead a life full of excitement, more especially on their future careers. Guidance provides direction on the subjects to take before a student makes a choice of a future career. This will make it possible for students to make a selection of market oriented and competitive careers. The objective of this study is to make sure that students understand the need to make career selection early in life when they are in form 3 to make sure that they don't take life for granted since they can be frustrated midway in their career choice and development. The future of a student's success in life depends on the type of career choice he makes early in life. In this study, forms 3 and 4 students (3rd and 4th grade of secondary school cycle in Kenya) in Nakuru Municipality were sampled. This was an ideal area of study as the population is multicultural and urban. Stratified random sampling was used in this study to select 120 students. Teacher counsellors were purposely selected. Questionnaires were the instruments used to collect data. Through data analysis with the use of SPSS the findings revealed that lack of satisfactory and effective career services offered in schools led to poor career choices and hence frustrations among school leavers. The study recommends provision of satisfactory resources in career guidance and counselling departments for effective service delivery, extra training for career teachers to be current with changing life styles, teacher counsellors' workload to be considered for reduction and an emphasis on careers in great demand in the market. School leavers should be assisted to become job creators rather than job seekers.

Keywords: Career, Guidance and Counselling, Career Counselling, Career counsellor.

Introduction

Research has demonstrated that comprehensive career guidance programme can provide students with basic economic understandings and skills in understanding themselves to search for educational opportunities to further their careers. These skills include, career decision making, basic academic skills especially in subject selection and reading skills all leading to job seeking, finding and holding Hyot (1984). Through collaborative efforts in career guidance counsellors can help parents influence their children's career development more effectively and wisely and together they may all succeed in turning the promises of research into reality Kurgat(2005).

Since the colonial Era, Education in Kenya has undergone many changes. When the racial oriented structure was started during the colonial era, it created class problem in the country. Europeans were given opportunities using the curriculum followed at that period of time to get education leading to white collar jobs. Asians got education which led them to become businessmen and middle class people while Africans got education to train in skills to do menial jobs. It became necessary to make changes for the better. The first move towards new changes was made when Ominde Report (GOK, 1964) recommended on the provision of career guidance to all students. This led to the establishment of an advisory guidance and counselling office in the ministry of education to oversee effective implementation of the programme. The Gachati Report (GOK 1976) realised the need of training teachers on guidance and counselling skills in addition to their teaching loads so as to be able to handle guidance services to students. The revision of the curriculum with time to fit the needs of the country as stipulated in Koech Report (2000) makes it necessary to guide and counsel students on career choice. This leads to the need for the production of manpower with competitive skills in the market in the current lifestyle. This further means that schools should have operational departments of guidance and counselling and make sure they counsel students on careers. The search for jobs based on chance and availability should come to an end so that students aim at choosing careers they like and qualify to study for. Students should not feel frustrated when they have made a career choice. Support is needed from various quarters such as head of a school, members of staff, parents and education officials to encourage and support students efforts to make a good career choice Mugenda and mugenda (2000)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which Guidance and Counselling is used to guide students to make good and useful career choices. Students' aspirations and wishes on what to become after school should

start at end of form in form 3 and 4. If a student would like to become an engineer or a doctor for example, he has to do well in science subjects such as maths, physics biology and chemistry. The career counsellors should help students realize their potentials by assisting them do well in subjects they have interest in and are able to perform well.

Objective of the study

The following objective guided the study:

i To examine the extent to which Guidance and Counselling services are offered in secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality Kenya

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions

i To what extent are guidance and counselling services offered to students in schools?

ii To what extent are the teachers qualified to handle guidance and counselling programme in schools?

iii Do secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality have well established and properly run career departments?

iv Are schools in Nakuru Municipality gender sensitive

Importance of the Study

The study on career counselling was to find out whether students in secondary schools are guided and counselled early enough in their career choices. This could be done effectively once they make early subject selection which they would do at the end of form four examination in Kenya. The study was to encourage schools to make sure that they have functional departments of guidance and counselling. It was necessary to carry out the study to encourage heads of schools to make sure that they have enough reference materials in career departments. As the head teacher makes sure that he has enough reference materials, he should invite various guest speakers to address students on various careers so that they can make their choice

Literature Review

This section covers the literature which discusses areas related to the study. The literature strengthens the study as it indicates the need of students making career choice which fits the student's choice, interest and ability to perform his duties well.

A number of education commissions formed by the government of Kenya specified the aims and objectives of education and its eventual production of the necessary manpower the country needed at that time.

The first commission was Ominde Report of 1964. Its main objectives were to reform the education system inherited from the colonial government to make it more responsive to the needs of independent Kenya. The commission proposed an education system that would foster national unity and the creation of sufficient human capital for national development. The Ghachati Report (1976) focused on redefining Kenyan Educational policies and objectives giving considerations to national unity, economic, social and cultural aspirations of Kenyans. Mackay Report of (1981) made a big stride forward and led to the start of 8.4.4 system of Education. It also led to the start of Moi University which was a way of creating more training opportunities for school leavers. Koech Report (2000) also called Commission of Inquiry into Education system of Kenya was mandated to look for new avenues of expanding education opportunities to provide school leavers with new openings of skills which can allow for adaptation to changing circumstances. A Working Committee set by the Ministry of Education on Guidance and Counselling in schools improved information flow to students on the future available opportunities available for training after school. The information produced in a career booklet gave students opportunities for future training. The requirements of each career training opportunities were made clear for ease of selection. Students are advised to select careers they qualify for and work hard towards achieving the best.

Ndambuki and Mutie (1999) say that lack of guidance and counselling services in some schools, many students go to school and leave without any idea of the kind of job they should train for. Some school leavers move from one job to another trying to discover where they fit to work. The teachers handling guidance and counselling need training on current needs of society so that they provide the right guidance to students in schools.

Methodology

The research was conducted using a survey research design. Kathuri and pals (1993) stipulates that the purpose of the survey is to explore and describe the nature of a situation as it is at the time of the survey and in some cases establish the causal relationships of variables. The researcher found this design ideal as it was possible to establish on the ground how students visited were guided and counselled on career choices while in form 3 and

form 4. Career masters picked for the study presented a well balanced representative sample. The students picked from each stratum that is form3 and form4 covered both sexes and were selected at random since all of them had equal chances.

Sample

Out of a population of 4000 students involved in the study, the researcher picked 3% which was 120 students. From 12 schools covering all types: National, Provincial, District and Private. The schools were mixed boarding and day.

Instrumentation

The researcher used questionnaires as the main instrument to collect data. Two questionnaires were set, one for career masters and the other one for students. They were self administered and collected by the researcher for analysis. The questionnaires were tested for validity and reliability by research experts before being administered

Data Analysis

After collecting data from the field, the researcher went further to analyse it to be able to make necessary discussions and recommendation which will be necessary for future studies. The researcher used Pearson Coefficient of Correlation method to interpret and understand correlations of careers guidance and the students' responses. The SPSS software was used to show the interpretations on information rates and responses.

Research Findings.

This section deals with the research findings and their interpretations. The study targeted form3 and form4 students and career masters in secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality. Questionnaires distributed and received from respondents were 117 out of 120. The data was coded and analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) Percentages were used for data analysis. The results were discussed as follows:

Students preparation for counselling

The following tables shows information on how students in form3 and form4 in secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality are organized to benefit from counselling services offered in schools.

Table 1:
Counselling Preparation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	67.0	57.3
No	50.0	42.7
Total	117.0	100.0

The percentage of 57% showed positive part of preparation by school administration on the general set up of the counselling programme. This indicates the readiness of students to get counselling services.

Class counselling sessions at a percentage of 55.6% as shown in table 2 below showed the need for individual attention to be given to every student for effective counselling to take place.

The teacher counsellor should make it a point to arrange for individual counselling sessions with students

Table 2:
Class Counselling

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	65.5	55.6
No	52	44.1
Total	117	100.0

Table 3
Individual counselling of students by the teacher

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	72.0	61.5
No	45	38.5
Total	117	100.0

At individual level, the percentage of students attended by career masters was 61%. The rest had no opportunity to meet their counselling counsellor on their future careers. This is an indication that more time should be created on the time table so that all students have an opportunity to meet the teacher counsellor for counselling services .

In the section of teacher counsellors, the following tables explain the level of their involvement in student sensitization and how much they are qualified to handle the students' needs in counselling services.

Table 4
Students sensitization on career guidance and counselling services.

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	11.0	91.7
No	1.0	8.3
Total	12	100.0

Table 5
below shows the teacher counsellors' qualifications in handling guidance and counselling in schools.

<u>Qualification</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Degree	8.0	66.7
Diploma	4.0	33.3
Total	12.0	100.0

The figures reveal that there are more teacher counsellors with degree than there are with diplomas.

Table 6
Status of departments' level of equipment

The table below shows the levels at which career departments are equipped to meet the counselling need of students.

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Moderately	8.0	66.7
Poorly	4.0	33.3
Total	12	100.0

At 66.7% it means the departments are fairly equipped to effectively handle guidance and counselling services. This shows that a lot more needs to be done to have better services.

Table 7
: Parents' visit to career masters

<u>Response</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	37.0	31.6
No	80.0	68.4
Total	117	100.0

The table above shows that although parents/guardians pay fees for these students, the level of their involvement by way of consulting the career masters in the respective schools was at 31%. The rest of the parents never had time to meet career masters and discuss their children's future career choice.

Students are aware of the subjects they need to read to join careers of their choice. Whoever the response to counselling services is not very encouraging. This is clearly shown in the table below.

Table 8:
students' level of awareness on subjects to read for careers of their choice.

<u>Response</u>	<u>frequency</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	93.0	79.5
No	24.0	20.5
Total	117	100.0

Discussions, conclusions and Recommendations

This section presents discussions, conclusions and recommendations of the study carried out in guidance and counselling in career choices in Nakuru Municipality. With the use of questionnaires as the instrument for collecting information, the researcher found out that although some services on guidance and counselling were provided in schools, a lot more needs to be done such as involving parents and guardians to intensify the guidance and counselling services (Kinai 2005). Factors which have affected performance of various stakeholders are here below discussed and suggested areas to be improved on are also indicated. Further research will be necessary in the proposed areas to strengthen and improve future service delivery on guidance and counselling.

Discussions

As can be seen in tables presented students' level of motivation and interest towards guidance and counselling on career choices is not impressive. This is possibly because of their attitude towards certain careers as seen in tables. Despite the fact that counselling covers both sexes making it gender sensitive, students have a tendency towards certain careers Mugenda and Mugenda (2000) Girls go for arts based careers like Law and Commerce while boys go for science based careers like Engineering and Medicine. Some students show little interest to go for counselling on careers indicating that they are ready to go for any job which comes their way as they will be out for money and not job satisfaction. The levels of motivation of teachers has affected service delivery. Some teachers take long in one grade before they are promoted to the next grade. This slow rate of promotion does not motivate teachers and eventually affects service delivery.

Conclusions.

The following conclusions have been drawn on the basis of this study. The major hindrances in enhancing career counselling are: lack of enough reading and reference materials in guidance and counselling departments in schools, the working spaces or rooms are not satisfactory and conducive for career masters . Records on students counselled and those who need counselling are not all kept Students need personal attention and this means that they need personal files. Teachers handling counselling need further training to update their counselling skills for effective service delivery. The Ministry of Education needs more input in form of materials and in-service courses for improved services.

Recommendations

- 1 Schools should look for more resource materials to equip resource centres.
- 2 Teacher counsellor's workload needs to be considered to be made light
- 3 Teacher counsellors need further training to meet the current challenges in the world of work.
- 4 More support is needed from parents, Education officials and well wishers to equip schools with resource materials.

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