

Perception, Awareness, Demand and Administration Support Of Guidance and Counselling Services in Public Teacher Training Colleges in Rift Valley Province, Kenya

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Abstract

Guidance counsellors are tutors officially appointed to be in charge of the planning, development and the implementation of the guidance and counselling services in the college. These professionals need to be appropriately equipped with skills and training in order to carry out these responsibilities. However, without the administrative support for their implementation and maintenance, guidance and counselling services may not survive in any institution. Moreover, the perception of these services by those who utilize it is also crucial. Perception is the process which involves a response to sensation. It results from an interaction of how an individual expects the world to be and how it is presented to us through our senses. The aim of this paper is to assess the perception, awareness and demand, and the administration support of guidance and counselling services in public teachers training colleges in Kenya. The paper is based on a study conducted in selected public teachers training colleges in the Rift Valley region in Kenya. The study adopted a discipline survey targeting all the 2,658 second year students. A random sample of 335 students was selected. Ten tutor-counsellors were purposively selected and included in the sample. Data was collected using two structured questionnaires, one for the students and the other for tutor-counsellors. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 for windows. The reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. The study findings indicated that the majority of the students had a positive perception towards guidance and counselling services. The tutor-counsellors had a positive perception towards the services being offered in public teachers training colleges. It was also established that majority of tutor-counsellors were not adequately trained to offer guidance and counselling services. Therefore, there is a need to improve the level of training of tutor-counsellors in guiding and counselling.

Keywords: Perception, Awareness, Demand, Administration Support, Guidance Counselling Services, Public Teacher Training Colleges, Rift Valley Province, Kenya

1. Introduction

Counselling began in the United States of America in 1980s with the social reform movement. Krumboltz and Clopin (2008) state that the factors that led to the development of guidance and counselling were the difficulties of people living in urban slums and the widespread use of child labour. It began with a simple role of matching people with jobs but later transformed to career development (Corsini, 1987). The social reformer Frank Parsons is credited as being the founder of the vocational guidance movement. His work with the Boston Vocational Bureau in 1909 helped outline a system of vocational guidance in the Boston Public Schools. The work of the bureau influenced the need for and the use of vocational guidance in the United States and other countries. Guidance and counselling was considered vocational in nature, but as the profession advanced, other personal concerns became part of the school counsellor's concern. Guidance and counselling in some African countries dates back to 1950s during which countries, such as Nigeria, had made great strides in the field whereas in other countries guidance services did not exist until the late 1960s (UNESCO, 2000).

1.1 Perception of Guidance and Counselling Services

Perception is the process which involves a response to sensation. It results from an interaction of how an individual expects the world to be and how it is presented to us through our senses. Perception is selective in terms of what is attended to and how it is interpreted (Wortman, 1999). The perception of an individual may also be influenced by the value that is associated with the service or object. Hartman (1999) observes that the individual's preferred way of doing things and perceiving in different ways leads to preferred perceptual and behavioural styles that are in turn responsible for attitude formation. Accuracy in one's perception has been looked at from the perspectives of emotions and personality traits. The extent to which an individual attends to his/her social surrounding has consequences on how he/she perceives himself/herself. The factors which enhance self awareness increase the extent of perception of one's self and behaviour (Schmidt, 1997). Perception therefore is formed from the information collected and the meaning assigned to this information. Likewise, tutors and students may have general perception about guidance and counselling but when they gather more information about it they may form a particular perception which would influence their attitude. These would

help them form an attitude which may expand or change depending on new meanings assigned to an object or event.

The perception of others may also influence one's perception such that a tutor or a student may change his/her perception to reflect the perception of others if he/she feels his/her perceptions are not consistent with the others likewise students. This is the reason why it is likely for a group of tutors or students to have similar perceptions (Wortman, Loftus & Weaver, 1999). How one perceives oneself is influenced by the relationship one has with other people and the meaning attached to it. Several factors may work either singly or in combination to affect tutors' and students' perceptions of guidance and counselling. These factors may include personality, culture, religion or gender. Gelso, Brooks and Karl (1975) indicate that a clear gap exists between perceptions held by students and those held by counsellors concerning the counselling process. He suggests that efforts to better the education potential of students about the current professional role of the counsellor could reduce this difference of opinion. Ducro, Beal and Moebes (1976) have found out that both written information and personal contact tend to reduce discrepancy between students' and counsellors' perception and thereby enhance counselling.

1.2 College Administrators' Support for Guidance and Counselling Services

Guidance and Counselling Services may not survive without the administrative support for their implementation and maintenance. Gerler (1992) observes that many administrators are less impressed by psychological development among students as a result of counselling. But they are more impressed by improved academic performance. Gibson and Mitchell (2003) claim that teachers' and administrators' support of guidance and counselling services is significant to the success of such programme. Administrators on their part can contribute to the success of guidance and counselling services by providing the necessary materials. According to Sharma (2007), counselling practices need to find a more explicit emphasis on the timetable and in the activities of the college. Supervision of the services and the curriculum in general is therefore an essential role of the administrator. If administrators do not supervise the implementation of the curriculum, guidance and counselling programme may not achieve its objective. Lack of adequate resources and facilities can hinder effective guidance and counselling services. For the services in institutions to succeed, there is need for adequate and proper facilitation of the services in terms of finances and materials in addition to the training, qualifications and method of appointment of tutor counsellors.

1.3 The Role and Functions of Counsellors

Guidance counsellors are tutors officially appointed to be in charge of the planning, development and the implementation of the guidance and counselling services in the college. He/she needs to be appropriately skilled and trained in order to carry out these responsibilities. He/she is a resource person and consultant (Gibson & Mitchell, 2003). Generally, counsellors design guidance and counselling services that address the needs of students. These needs include educational, career, personal and social. Some students' needs are inhibited due to social or personal difficulties that need to be addressed by counsellors if students are to experience success in colleges (Schmidt, 1997). Kameen *et al.* (1985) state that to effectively play their role, college counsellors must examine the objectives and purposes of the overall services and systematically design a plan of action that will best accomplish these goals. In educational development role, counsellors assess students' abilities and provide services for parents to learn their children's development and progress (Schmidt, 1997).

Hartman (1999) views counsellors to assist students in sequencing of educational experiences and the acquisition of skills deemed essential to their individual achievement and academic performance. The counsellor assists the student to improve their study habits and attitudes so that they can realise their potentials. Counsellors play a significant role in career development. The counsellor provide students with experiences that increase knowledge of occupation, training, life style, employment seeking skills, decision-making strategies and knowledge of self (Hartman, 1999). Besley (2002) states that the main role of effective college counsellors is to provide students with personal counselling as a means of removing barriers to learning. Thus the counsellor plays an important role in students' personal and social development. The counsellors guide students in making personal choices about their lives, and development. Tatar (1995) observes that counsellors assist students with social or emotional adjustment problems to reach self-understanding. From these, one can deduce that counsellors assist students in achieving appropriate personal adjustment and the development of appropriate international relationships. According to Singh (1994), guidance and counselling is a continuous process that requires time and patience from counsellors. Prompt dissemination of the necessary information is important. Makinde (1987) observes that the college counsellor is concerned with facilitating the optimum development of students.

The tutor-counsellor serves as interpreter of the guidance and counselling services to the administration. He/she works closely with the administration in planning, implementation and participating in in-service training and other programmes designed to maintain and promote professional competence of the entire staff in

curriculum development, adapting learning activities to student needs and in affecting positive student behaviour. McDaniel (1965) notes that the tutor-counsellor serves as a liaison between the guidance and counselling staff and the college administration by preparing pertinent information regarding students' needs and abilities. Tutor-counsellor should be aware that any statement on the role and function of the college tutor counsellor does not supersede nor is it in direct conflict with legislation dealing with confidentiality, privileged communication of contact, agreements between counsellors and administration. Bor, Laudy, Gill and Brace (2002) observe that an adequately trained tutor counsellor is able to provide a healthy environment for assisting students in their personal, social and academic struggles. Durojaiye (1980) adds that all tutor counsellors should acquire competency in guidance and counselling to enable effective planning, developing and organising viable service that can assist in addressing the challenges facing students. Professional training equips tutor counsellors with appropriate skills and psychological knowledge necessary to enable them to assist their clients.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Implementation of guidance and counselling services in higher learning institutions was aimed at assisting students cope with challenges they face. However, there has been an increase in cases of indiscipline among students in these higher learning institutions. This casts doubts on the service providers and students themselves. This study investigated the perception of tutor-counsellors and students on guidance and counselling services in public teacher training colleges in Rift Valley province of Kenya.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

Participants were asked to reveal their perceptions which might not have been honestly provided. The study limited itself to issues that pertain to guidance and counselling services only.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in all five public teacher training colleges in Rift Valley Province. These colleges are: Kericho TTC, Mosoriot TTC, Tambach TTC, Baringo TTC and Narok TTC. These colleges are spread all over Rift Valley Province and were chosen for the study due to the available evidence of low demand for guidance and counselling services due to the fact that students are still facing various challenges. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population was 2,658 second year students who were chosen because the researcher felt they would provide required information since they have been exposed to guidance and counselling services for a longer period of time compared to first years. Proportionate stratified sampling was used in selecting the 335 participants from the college. This ensured that the sample was proportionately and adequately distributed among the colleges according to the population of each college.

Proportionate stratified sampling was also used to select male and female students from the proportion allocated to each college. The sample comprised of 198 males and 137 females. This ensured that the sample was proportionately and adequately distributed between male and female students in the colleges. Data was collected by use of questionnaires. The data collected was analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.5 for windows. Descriptive statistics using percentages and frequencies were used and results presented in tables and pie-charts to summarize and, organize data to describe the findings.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Perception of Tutor-Counsellors and Students

The study sought to assess the perception of tutor counsellors and students on guidance and counselling services in Public Teachers Training Colleges.

Table 1: Indicators of Students Perception towards Guidance and Counselling Services

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
The tutor-counsellor is too young to confide in.	49.8	39.2	3.7	3.3	4.0
There are many benefits of seeking guidance and counselling service	41.8	47.3	10.6	0.0	0.4
Help students to adjust and cope with life in the institution	41.4	46.2	0.7	5.1	6.6
Guidance and counselling office lacks privacy and confidence comfort	46.7	19.2	17.05	0.0	17.05
The programme has no consequences in my life.	5.6	13.8	6.9	21.7	52.0
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Tutor counsellors are people of good morals	39.2	47.6	4.0	2.9	5.9
I cannot trust tutor- counsellor with my personal life. problem	4.0	18.3	15.4	23.4	38.8
Enhanced the image of the institution in the community	25.0	47.0	18.5	4.1	5.4
Cultivated positive interpersonal relationship among the students. i students	41.8	47.3	10.6	00	0.4
Has been poor publicized in the institution	11.0	12.5	16.2	36.2	24.2
Peer counsellors can perform better than tutor- counsellors.	9.3	22.6	19.9	36.1	11.2
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Worsened the respect and responsibility of the tutor-counsellors.	6.6	10.7	7.2	34.1	41.1

From Table 1, it can be observed that majority of the student respondents were aware and appreciate the services offered by the guidance and counselling tutors in the institution. This was demonstrated by more than 70 per cent of the students agreeing with seven statements and disagreeing with five. However, they seemed to be undecided on the difference in performance between peer counsellor and tutor counsellors. This could be attributed to the fact that some of the respondents understand the different roles played by peer counsellors and tutor counsellors. The respondents to each statement were scored on a scale of 1 indicating least level of perception to 5, indicating highest level of perception.

The individual statement scores were added up to form an overall perception score for each respondent. The respondents' overall score varied between 15, indicating the least overall level of perception and 75, indicating the highest overall level of perception score. The overall score was coded into two categories in order to differentiate between the levels of perception among the respondents. From the results, 87.8 per cent of the respondents recorded a positive overall level of perception towards guidance and counselling services. Only 12.2 per cent of the respondents recorded a negative perception towards guidance and counselling services.

Table 2: Indicators of Tutor-Counsellors Perception towards Guiding and Counselling Services

Statement	Always Never	Never	Rarely	Means	Rarely
Helping students with study skills	90.6	1.8	7.6	2.90	
Assisting students with personal/social problems	92.7	2.5	4.8	2.90	
Offering parental guidance	92.2	3.0	4.8	2.89	
Report back to the principal on guidance and counselling	83.6	6.8	9.6	2.77	
Group discussions with parents and tutors on students' problems	54.5	21.6	24.0	2.33	
Organizing and implementing guidance and counselling services	51.5	30.5	18.0	2.21	
Marketing guidance and counselling services	38.5	13.6	47.9	2.08	
Handling students' discipline	46.7	19.2	34.1	1.87	
Offering in-service to tutors	24.9	62.9	12.6	1.50	

To determine the perception of tutor-counsellors towards guidance and counselling services, a series of 9 statements were used. The statements were to seek respondents' agreement or disagreement with various aspects of guidance and counselling services in their colleges. Responses to these statements were measured on a three point Likert-Scale ranging from 1 to 3. The higher the score, the more positive the perception of the tutor counsellor towards guidance and counselling services and vice versa.

Table 2 shows the distribution of the responses of the tutor- counsellors on the statements. From the table, tutor counsellors rated the first eight out of nine statements above the mean score of 2.00. This shows that they were actively involved in guidance and counselling and were interested in their responsibilities. From these nine statements, four recorded an approximate mean score of about 3.0 indicating that the respondents perceived the service they offer positively. The individual statement score were added up to form a perception index score for each respondent. The index score was coded in to two ordinal categories in order to differentiate between perception among the respondents. This included a score below 26 (12-25) indicating negative perception, a

score of 26 (27-42) meaning positive perception. The results indicated that 80% of the sampled tutor counsellors had a positive perception towards guidance and counselling services. This may be attributed to tutor counsellors' determination to give quality services even though they lack professional counselling qualifications.

3.2 Students' Awareness and Demand for Guidance and Counselling Services

The study further sought to assess the students' perception awareness and demand for guidance and counselling services in public teacher training colleges. Perception of students towards guidance and counselling services determine the level of students' awareness and demand for the services. Students with a positive perception are more likely to appreciate and value the services offered and therefore seek for the services whenever they have a counselling need. From the results, 189(56.4%) of the respondents were aware of the services offered by guidance and counselling departments in their institutions while the remaining 43.6% were not aware of the services. This suggests that guidance and counselling departments had not created adequate awareness and publicity of the guidance and counselling service they offered to all students. In view of such a substantial number of students not being aware of the services offered, the programme had not reached all students. Guidance and counselling problems of such students were likely to go unresolved.

The study also revealed that out of the 189 students who were aware of the services offered by guidance and counselling programme only 22 per cent had at least sought for help from the department of guidance counselling. The remaining 148(78%) had never sought help from the department. This suggests that few students sought assistance from the guidance and counselling department. This, therefore, means that the positive perception and attitude of students towards guidance and counselling services in the institution did not translate into high demand for assistance from the counsellors.

3.3 Tutors and Administration Support of Guidance and Counselling Services

The study also sought to establish the extent to which tutors and the administration supported guidance and counselling services in public teachers training colleges in Rift Valley. This objective was based on the fact that the enormous role of guidance and counselling services in colleges cannot succeed without adequate support of all the stakeholders involved. Stakeholders include; the college administrators, members of staff, parents and students themselves. The support of the college administration is of paramount importance. All the tutor counsellors reported that they received support from their principals in discharging their responsibilities. The support of the principal is very crucial to the success/failure of guidance and counselling services. Table 3 depicts the kind of support that the tutor- counsellors received from the principals.

Table 3: Administration Support of Guidance and Counselling Services

Kind of support	Frequency	Percentage
Provided a room/office	10	100
Facilitating referral services	8	80
Facilitating attendance of seminars and workshops	5	50
Availing students records	10	100
Inviting guests speakers	3	30
Providing reference materials	2	20
Financial resources	6	60
Supervision of the implementation of guidance and counselling	7	70

3.4 Tutors' Support of Guidance and Counselling Services

In a college situation, the tutor-counsellor works in collaboration with other tutors toward the realisation of students' potential. Therefore, in addition to the support of the institution administration, other tutors play a very important role in guidance and counselling services. All the respondents reported that, other tutors in their colleges supported their work. Table 4 summarizes the support that tutor counsellors received from other tutors.

As indicated in Table 3, it is clear that the tutor counsellors or departments of guidance and counselling received assistance from the administrators. In all of them, the principals provided offices, made referrals, organized seminars and workshops and gave financial support. Such support, if well utilized, can provide a good working environment for the tutor counsellor. The MOEST (1977) supports this by observing that principals, by virtue of their positions, have the authority and responsibility to establish guidance and counselling services in their institutions. The principal is responsible for planning, executing, appraising and facilitating various activities of the college. Therefore, guidance and counselling will only flourish when the principal recognizes and supports its objectives and activities. Apart from providing the environment within which the counselling services thrive, the principal also appoints the tutor counsellor or recommends him or her for appointment. The principal lays the foundation upon which the tutor counsellor provides the counselling services. Wanjohi (1990) adds that the principal as the chief executive officer in a college is responsible for the planning, execution and interpretation of the various activities in the college. Hence, guidance and counselling can succeed when the administration

recognizes and supports its objectives and activities.

Table 4: Support of other Tutors to Guidance and Counselling Services

Kind of support	Frequency	Percentage
Consultation in counselling cases	10	100
Monitoring the progress of clients	6	60
Referring students with counselling needs to the tutor	8	80

From Table 4, all tutor counsellors consulted with other tutors on various students' counselling cases to get a complete and clear picture of the student undergoing counselling. Sixty per cent was the support by other tutors in monitoring the progress of those students being assisted by tutor counsellors, while 80 per cent noted that they made referrals of identified students with counselling needs to the tutor counsellor. Such support encourages and helps the tutor appreciate that all tutors are responsible for the welfare of the students. This can also enable one to effectively meet his/her professional obligations.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the study findings, more than half of the students were aware of the services offered by guidance and counselling programme but only a minority of them had sought for assistance from guidance and counselling department. Guidance and counselling tutors received various kind of support from college administration and other tutors in undertaking their responsibilities. It was thus recommended that tutor counsellors should take advantage of the positive perception of the students to enhance guidance and counselling services in their institutions. Moreover, institutions should provide all the resources needed for effective implementation of guidance and counselling services. Administrators and other tutors also need to continue supporting guidance and counselling services.

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