

Management Practices That Affect Guidance and Counselling Services in Public Secondary Schools in Itezhi-Tezhi District, Zambia

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Abstract

This study explores the management practices that affect the provision of guidance and counselling services in public secondary schools in Itezhi-Tezhi District, Zambia. Despite the existence of guidance and counselling services, schools continue to experience challenges such as substance abuse, teenage pregnancies, school violence, absenteeism, and other forms of deviant behaviour among learners. The study aims to identify school management practices influencing guidance and counselling services, determine the extent of their impact, and examine the benefits of these services in secondary schools. A qualitative descriptive survey design will be employed, involving head teachers, heads of departments, and teachers from selected public secondary schools. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions and analysed using thematic analysis. The findings are expected to provide insights into challenges affecting guidance and counselling implementation and contribute to improving policies and management strategies for effective service delivery in schools.

Keywords: Guidance and Counselling Services, School Management Practices, Public Secondary Schools, Educational Management, Learner Behaviour, School Counselling, Educational Administration, Student Support Services.

1. INTRODUCTION

Overview: This chapter focuses on the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives and significance of the study. It also presents delimitation, limitation of the study and operational definitions of terms.

Background: Internationally, School Guidance and Counselling services provisions dominate the educational discourse because they have proved to be a panacea for most of the myriad of challenges experienced by both children with disabilities and those 'without' disabilities (DeRosier, 2004, Cobia, 2007, Morgan & Brand, 2009). In Zambia, guidance and counselling has been there in the society; counselling was manifested in the relationship between elders and young people. Counselling was seen in ceremonies such as initiation ceremonies. The idea of setting up guidance and counselling in Zambia was initiated around 1967. However this did not materialise as planned. It is only in 1970 when secondary schools were directed by the Ministry of Education to start running a guidance unit in the schools by nominating teachers to take up the responsibility of careers work in each school in order to get started in guidance and counselling service provision to pupils. Thus in 1971 a careers guidance unit was established with the appointment of career guidance officers (MoE, 2001). These officers worked under the administration of Psychological Services at the Ministry of Education Headquarters. The main duties of the careers guidance officer were to co-ordinate, organise and inspire the work of careers teachers in all secondary schools.

The functions of the Psychological Services Units were later transferred to the Examination Council of Zambia in 1981. In 1990, the Unit at the Ministry of Education was then renamed School Guidance Services, responsible for career guidance, issues related to HIV and AIDS, child abuse, psychological life skills and many others as an integral part of its operations (MoE,2003).

UNESCO (2000) states that Guidance services in schools have for a long time been left in the hands of teachers who are overloaded with classes to attend to and in most cases have no formal training in guidance and counselling. The question is, to what extent do these factors affect the provision of Guidance and Counselling Services in schools? The recent opportunities for free and universal education have brought in new dimensions of problems in schools and the nation at large. Africa in general and Zambia in particular have not been spared from these problems. It is common to see children going to school without knowing what they are supposed to do and leaving school with little or no idea on what type of jobs to find on the labour market, what training programmes are available and career path to follow. This has led to many school leavers today ending up in streets and quite a number, move from one job to the other trying to explore which jobs meet their interests and capabilities. (Tuchili, 2008).

The essence of incorporating guidance and counselling into the school system was to eliminate overwhelming ignorance of many young people on their choices of career prospects and personality maladjustment among school children. Based on these and more, career officers and counsellors were appointed to take the responsibilities in sensitizing learners on the needs for effective career choice. In Zambia, despite career guidance services being provided in schools, learners are seen leaving school with little or no idea on the type of job to find in the world of work. This situation made the researcher wonder how guidance and counselling services are provided in schools.

The importance and existence of guidance and counselling in our educational system is recognized in the 2011 Education Act. In addition, the 1996 Educating our Future Policy Document states in part that ‘the Ministry will strengthen school guidance and counselling servicing, and through career teachers, it will disseminate information relating to post basic education training and employment opportunities’ (MoE, 1996).

The Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education attaches great importance to the need of having an effective guidance programme aimed at preparing youths for future roles and productive lives.

It is against this background that this study seeks to explore management practices that affect guidance and counselling services in public secondary schools in Itezhi-tezhi district of southern province of Zambia.

Statement of Problem

Despite the availability of management practices in the provision of guidance and counselling services in Secondary Schools, deviant behaviour among learners has been escalating. As a result, the school system has been grappling with a number of deviant behaviour patterns among pupils including substance abuse, riots, teenage pregnancies, abortions, vandalism, crime, class boycott, demonstration, violence, use of abusive language, lack of adherences to school rules and school authorities, examination malpractices, absconding from school, writing or painting graphics on school walls and many other vices perpetrated by pupils. However, this study seeks to explore management practices that affect guidance and counselling services in public secondary Schools in Itezhi-tezhi District of southern province of Zambia.

The Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore school management practices that affect the provision of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Itezhi-tezhi District of Southern province.

Specific Objectives

The study is guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To explore school management practices that affect the provision of guidance and counselling services in public schools.
2. To determine the extent to which school management practices influence guidance and counselling services.
3. To examine the benefits of guidance and counselling services in public secondary schools.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the school management practices that affect the provision of guidance and counselling services in public secondary schools?
2. To what extent are the school management practices influence the provision of guidance and counselling in public secondary schools?
3. What are the benefits of guidance and counselling services in public secondary schools?

Significance of Study

The results of this study may help shed more light on the challenges facing providers in the provision of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. In addition, it may provide vital information to education planners which can be used to come up with a policy on how to strengthen guidance and counselling programmes in secondary schools. The results of this study may also assist education administrators to understand fully the need for having trained guidance and counselling teachers as well as the need to support guidance and counselling programmes in secondary schools.

Delimitation of Study

This study will be focused on two (2) public secondary schools in Itezhi-tezhi District. Targeted Schools are Itezhi-tezhi boarding Secondary School, and Uphill Day Secondary School.

Operational Definition of Terms

Counselling: process of helping an individual to accept and use information and advice so that he/she can either solve his present problem or cope with it successfully.

Guidance: Guidance is leading the person psychologically, emotionally and even spiritually to some newer ways of meaningful living.

School Guidance and Counselling Services: refers to those services that are offered to pupils besides their formal lessons with the school environment. These include personal, emotional social, education and vocational aspect.

School Guidance Counsellor: trained school staff that provides individual and group counselling for students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review has been presented according to the following subheadings, types of guidance services offered in inclusive secondary schools, challenges in the provision of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools, roles of guidance and counselling services in schools.

Types of Guidance Services Offered in Schools

The purpose of GCS in schools is to help pupils in the selection of educational courses and profitable occupations; help to place pupils in jobs and in the next stage of education and training. They also serve to improve pupils study skills and maintenance of mental health (Phiri and Ndhlovu, 2006). This section reviews literature on the different types of guidance services that are expected to be found. Experts agree that guidance and counselling are made up of three major components; educational, vocational and personal-social services (UNESCO, 2002).

Vocational Guidance

Nkhata (2010) defines Vocational guidance as the process of assisting the individual to choose an occupation, prepare for it, enter upon it and progress in it. It is concerned primarily with helping individuals make decisions and choices involved in planning a future and building a career. The purpose behind assisting the youth to choose, prepare, enter and progress in a vocation is the optimum growth of the individual. Vocational guidance services help learners to select suitable vocations after they have considered their strengths, limitations, preparation, educational and professional qualifications. These are meant to prepare learners for a particular career by selection of relevant course and programme. Therefore, through vocational guidance services, learners are supposed to be provided with detailed information on cut off points, subject combinations, duration of training, and the application procedures and training commencement dates for courses at institutions of higher learning. With respect to vocational planning, Lapan *et al.* (1997) on the impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students, have attributed guidance and counselling programmes with improving the preparedness of students for the future and increasing the information they received on careers and colleges when compared with schools that did not run effective guidance and counselling programmes.

A study conducted by Mwamba (2011), in Zambia on guidance services in high schools, reports that the objectives for vocational guidance services include the clarification of the type and extent of the decision the learners with visual impairment make and the goals they seek to attain.

Pupils can commit themselves to discovering more about themselves in terms of their interests, needs and abilities through vocational guidance services in order for them to make progressive choices. Another study by Mukhwana (2005), in Kenya, reports that secondary school learners joined institutions of higher learning without proper course choices, leading to poor performance and constant career changes in university and working life. Lack of career guidance and counselling programmes provision in secondary schools has hampered professional development of many learners and youth. Dunford (2003) emphasizes the importance of career guidance to those who want to go for training since it has financial implications. Vocational guidance services therefore assist learners (both with disabilities and those without disabilities) to select suitable vocations according to an individual's strengths, limitations, educational and professional qualifications.

Mcwhirter, Rasheed and Crothers (2000) in Finland on career development, found that there was an increase in career decision-making and vocational skills self-efficacy when high

school learners were provided with vocational and guidance services. They indicated that learners felt better able to make career-related decisions and perform career-related tasks than those who never received guidance services. The findings further revealed that learners exposed to guidance services also increased their expectation of pursuing and obtaining a satisfying career.

A study to examine what factors led to young adult's decision-making on career path was undertaken by Meyer, et al (1995) in Netherlands. It consisted of 586 enrolled learners with visual impairments in high schools aged between 15 and 19 years with 50% males and 50% females. The study revealed that most pupils with visual impairment in high schools received little or no vocational guidance services outside the home. It also revealed that 56% of the learners did not find anyone to assist them in the school on career prospects or options while 20.6% and 18.3% of the learners found teachers and counselors helpful respectively. The study further revealed that 16.1% of them felt the school had assisted them with career choices. This implies that most of the school counselors were not trained to handle learners with disabilities and most of vocational information was not written in braille. Majoko (2013) reported that there is a shortage of formal professionally prepared and trained school counsellors. Some of these pupils are therefore; likely to be deprived of guidance and counselling services provisions.

Therefore, provision of guidance and counselling services is necessary to help both pupils with and without disabilities investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions. The above revelation is of great concern because the school counselor is supposed to assist all learners with career choices.

Educational Guidance

This is advice given to learners helping them make suitable decisions regarding education. Mwamba (2011) reported that educational guidance services are important as a means to mitigate problems faced by pupils. It should also be provided at crisis point when pupils with disabilities have difficulties in making choices on which subject combination is right and what mode of communication to use (Braille or Large prints). Educational guidance services have an essential role to play in making sure that pupil's educational decisions are grounded in sound decisions and pupils are helped to develop effective self-management in education and career path.

The importance of educational guidance services was highlighted in a study by Hatten (2001) who investigated the effects of educational guidance on the pass rate at 'O' level for pupils with visual impairment in Texas school for the blind. The findings were that those learners who were subjected to guidance and counselling services did well at 'O' levels results. According to Bhatriagar and Gupta (1994) for better learner achievement, it was necessary to help learners make progress in their education by developing good study skills. Kochhar (2006) also found that guidance services can guide learners in developing good study habits by providing study skills which reduces stress in learners for them to adequately prepare to sit for examination.

In the process of guiding both, learners with disabilities and without disabilities, educational guidance services play a very important role in removing or alleviating problems that would otherwise have impeded on their academic performance. This is confirmed by Kochhar (2006) who found that there was better learner achievement with a healthy educational guidance system in schools for learners with visual impairment. Learners who passed through the hands of a guidance services provider to assist in developing good skills and choice of subjects had reduced stress in them.

The importance of educational guidance services was highlighted in a study by Omoegun (2006) who investigated the effects of educational guidance on the academic achievement of the adolescents in the Lagos state secondary schools in English comprehension. In the study the experimental group was exposed to educational guidance services in the group counselling while the control group was not. Ten standard comprehension passages were used to generate pre-and post-test scores, and t-test statistics was employed to analyze the generated data. The results of the study revealed that the educational guidance intervention was effective and thus promoted adolescents' academic achievement in English comprehension. Despite the importance of educational guidance services elaborated above, examination performance in Zambia is still poor. Therefore, the study sought to explore factors affecting Guidance and Counselling Services in secondary schools.

Personal Guidance Services

Hatlen (2001) states that personal guidance services are directed at assisting both learners with disabilities and those without disabilities on problems of social and personal nature. These problems may spring from family, friends, teachers and society relationships at large. The learners with disabilities in high schools might feel insecure and frustrated when they fail to meet their personal, parental and societal set goals. They are sometimes affected by the feeling of inadequacy, jealousy of their siblings, domination of adult, lack of love or affection from people around them. Furthermore, difficulties in mobility and inferiority among others add to their feelings of inadequacy. The above revelations is of great concern as personal guidance services are meant to help learners realize that it is natural to experience periods of turmoil and that they should work to the limit of their capacity with full knowledge that they may not be as capable as other pupils.

According to Mutie & Ndambuki (2003), adolescent students in secondary schools worldwide face numerous social, personal and academic problems at school and at home today than before. Many adolescent students are stressed and affected by HIV and AIDS pandemic as they care for the ailing and dying parents or relatives (Johnson, 2002), while some are coming from distressed families where parents are divorced or separated and where there is constant conflict within the family. According to Ndong (2004), it is evident that some adolescent students in secondary schools experience child abuse, pressures from peers to concede to sexual practices before marriage, experiment with drugs and sex while at the same time parents and teachers expect them to excel in academic work. These conflicting pointers and problems affect students' academic schooling to the extent that some drop out of school. School drop-out is considered a source of bigger future problems that include prostitution, drug abuse, crimes that lead to murder and unemployment. As a result of these foreseeable problems, there is need for effective implementation of Guidance and Counselling services in schools. Failure to provide guidance and counselling services may promote increased numerous antisocial behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse, irresponsible sexual behaviours, teenage pregnancies, gangsters, truancy, prostitution, increases in school dropouts and outbreak of school violence among many other problems (Nziramasanga, 1999).

A study conducted by Tompson (2006) found that in most American schools social and personal guidance and counselling led to significant and sustainable reduction in suicidal tendencies and withdrawal syndromes in learners with visual impairment in high schools.

A study by was conducted Egbochuku and Aihie (2009) on the influence of peer group guidance and counselling and school influence on the self-concept of adolescents in the Nigerian secondary schools. Sixty-eight high school learners from three schools, one for boys, one for girls and the other one for co-educational school in Benin City formed the

sample. Using the pretest- post test control group experimental design, the findings revealed that social and personal guidance increased the learners' self-concept.

In United Kingdom, Wagner and Macgowan (2006) found that social and personal guidance led to significant and sustainable reduction in abuse of alcohol and marijuana among the high school pupils. In their study a sample of 289 pupils were referred for school based substance abuse counselling. Of these 180 were exposed to group counselling while 109 of them were offered treatment as usual for substance abusing pupils in the school system in which the study took place. The findings supported the contention that school-based group counselling could lead to significant and sustained reductions in pupils' alcohol and marijuana abuse in secondary schools. On the social level students who participated in school guidance and counselling programmes reported a sense of belonging, safety and a more positive school environment (Lapan, Gysbers & Sun, 1997). They also had higher expectations in life (Mau, Hitchcock & Calvert, 1998) and more effective social skills.

Therefore, provision of personal guidance and counselling services should help learners with and without disabilities to better understand their opportunities, make appropriate adaptations and decisions based on this insight further, this could lead to accept personal responsibility for their specific choices and adhere to courses of action which are in tandem with their uniqueness and potentialities. But what is not known is whether social and personal guidance is provided effectively as there is still evidence of pupils in secondary school portraying anti-social behaviour.

Many challenges affect the provision of guidance and counselling services in schools at global and national level exist.

Guidance and Counselling Not Being Time Tabled

Globally time is among the critical resources affecting provision of school guidance and counselling services for children. In Ethiopia, Alemu, (2013), found that school counsellors do not have adequate time to holistically address the educational, personal and vocational concerns of children. Similarly, in the USA, Smith et al. (2001), school counsellors perform clerical duties, carry out administrative tasks and are totally responsible for Special Needs Education case management and assessment work. In Kenya, school counsellors administer SGC services provisions for children during evenings and weekends because they have obligations just like

other teachers leaving them with little time to guide and counsel children (Karangu & Muola, 2011). Consequently, children in Kenya are likely to receive poor SGC services as school counsellors are unlikely to establish and reinforce warm and trusting relationships with them. Denga (2001) reports that lack of clarity on the guidance counsellors' roles in schools cuts across virtually all spheres, from counselor preparation to counselor duties in schools. For instance, in most universities and counselor-training institutions in Nigeria, the training process may be somewhat confused. The argument of some counselor trainers is that the counsellor in training should first be a teacher for that would assist him/her in getting to know the pupils. School counsellors have traditionally been expected to fill diverse and often conflicting roles. They have been called to act in the capacity of confidant, disciplinarian, consultant, scheduler, politician, administrator, psychologist and academic helper. The ambiguity about counselors' roles and expectations has created confusion among teachers, support staff, parents, and students.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the proposed methodology to be used in the study, it presents the research designs, the target population of the study, sample and sampling procedures, procedures for data collection, research instruments, and it also presents the methods of data analysis.

Research Design

This study will use a descriptive research design, particularly a survey design, which is a scientific method used for observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way. According to Bless and Achola (1988), a research design may be understood as a programme which guides the researcher in collecting, analysing and interpreting observed facts.

In using a descriptive research design, a qualitative approach was taken. A qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. However, the merits of using a qualitative approach in this study will be that, it is less expensive and also permits flexibility in the research, meaning, the researcher is always prepared to engage in field research, whenever required.

Target Population

According to Andrewartha and Birch (1984), population is all cases or individuals that fit in a certain specification. This study targets teachers, head teachers, and heads of department.

Sample, Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

In this case, a purposive sampling procedure will be used to select teachers, head teachers, and heads of departments because of the qualitative nature of this study.

The sample consisted of two (2) head teachers from each of the secondary schools, four (4) heads of departments (HODs), and ten (10) teachers, all picked from the two secondary schools of the Southern district of Itezh-tezhi District.

Heads of department were sampled because they are part of management in the school.

Methods of Data Collection

Creswell (1994), explains that data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on themes, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions and evaluate outcomes. This study uses the qualitative methods of collecting data.

Primary Data Collection Instruments

Primary data is said to be a set of raw information that is collected by the investigator conducting the research. This research will use a semi-structured interview guide and a focus group discussion guide to collect primary data.

Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a pre-determined set of open questions, these are questions that prompt discussion with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further. A semi-structured interview however, does not limit respondents to a set of pre-determined answers

and it allows respondents to discuss and raise issues that the researcher may not have considered (Robbins, 1974).

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted so as to collect qualitative data from the head teachers and heads of department. Using the interview guide, one-on-one interviews were conducted and tape recorder will be used to supplement the interview guide to collect data on management strategies. Due to its flexibility, both open and closed ended questions will be included in the interview schedules to collect in-depth information so as to get a complete and detailed understanding of the issue at hand.

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Focus Group Discussions will be conducted and the researcher will write down all the responses from the respondents. Questions will be prepared to get more detailed understanding. Focus Group Discussion will be conducted with teachers. The discussions will be facilitated by the researcher to ensure that the informants focuses on the topic at hand. According to Cowling (1990), when properly planned and facilitated, Focus Groups can produce a lot of information quickly and are good for identifying and exploring participants' beliefs and perceptions. Focus Groups are aimed at discussing a fairly tightly defined topic and the emphasis is on interaction within the group (Kogo, 2002).

Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data collection refers to a set of second hand information initially collected and compiled by someone else apart from the current user. In the case of this study, secondary data will be gotten from different school records including the school log book as well as the head teachers' diary. This will be done in order to collect more information related to the topic in case some were left out during the interviews.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration will be taken into account in this study. All the data collected will be strictly treated as confidential and will not be used for any purposes other than the intended one. Consent will be asked from the respondents and the researcher ensures that the subject participants voluntarily participates in this study and maintains an open and honest approach to the study. The names of the participants will be protected and kept confidential and if the participant wishes to withdraw, they will be free to do so. The researcher will also ask for an introductory letter from the university so as to enable the researcher collect data. The researcher will also get permission from the District education Boards office so that the researcher can be allowed to collect data from the selected schools.

Data Analysis

According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999), data analysis has been defined as the process of reducing large amounts of collected data to make sense of them. In this study, data will be analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis which is an analytic method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns and themes within data. The qualitative data will be analysed from the information recorded in the discussions, interviews and document. Data will be classified in major themes and sub themes and critically analysed. Expressions will be infused in major views with a view to gaining deeper insights into the subject matter.

Limitations of the Study

This study will be done primarily on a purposive sample and its generalization is limited. Further, due to the small sample size, that is few people from selected schools in Itezhi-tezhi

District, the analysis on the management practices that affect guidance and counselling services in public secondary schools in Itezhi-tezhi district of southern province of Zambia will be limited to those particular schools.

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