

Assessment on the Effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling Practices among Selected PITA Project Schools in Meru District Council, Arusha Region

Authors

Joseph Mbawala ⁽¹⁾; Grace Mkawe ⁽²⁾; Hagai Maanga ⁽³⁾; Vumilia Lugakingira ⁽⁴⁾;
Bartholomew Basimaki ⁽⁵⁾; Doward Kilasi ⁽⁶⁾

Main Author's Email: josephmbawala51@gmail.com

Tumaini University Makumira, Kenya.

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Abstract

The purpose of this article was to assess the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling practices at selected PITA project secondary schools, which employed mixed-method research. Similarly, the study involved 25 teachers who received PITA project training on guidance and counselling practices, 5 heads of school, and 35 students, for a total of 65 respondents. Participants were selected through simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews. Likewise, quantitative data were analysed through descriptive statistics, and qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed low knowledge of counselling practices among teachers. In addition, the findings reveal a high level of guidance practices, reflecting their high effectiveness. Significantly, the study adds to the existing body of knowledge on the current need to deploy professional counsellors in secondary schools. Also, the study recommends providing frequent training, workshops, and conferences on professional counselling practices, as well as establishing dedicated counselling units within schools.

Keywords: Assessment, counselling, effectiveness, guidance, PITA project.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The persistent psychosocial challenges faced by adolescent students in secondary schools, including issues related to relationships, personal welfare, academic stress, and discipline, underscore a critical problem in educational support systems (Khurshid et al., 2024). Most of these challenges are related to social learning, where adolescents tend to imitate and adopt behaviours that can affect or reinforce their wellbeing (Bandura, 1977). Despite institutional efforts and training initiatives like the Participatory and Integrative Teaching Approach (PITA) project, there remains a significant gap between the provision of guidance and counselling services and how effective they are. However, the issue of counselling depends on the innate traits of clients in achieving certain characteristics for self-actualisation (Rogers, 1956). Thus, the client's willingness to seek counselling raises questions about the effectiveness of the existing counselling practices.

Assessment can be defined as the systematic process of gathering, analysing, and interpreting information about students' needs, progress, and outcomes to inform and improve both guidance and counselling interventions (Tontus, 2020). In secondary schools, teachers assess students' behavioural trends and provide guidance and counselling services when necessary. Experience shows that some teachers conduct group guidance and counselling, while others conduct individual guidance and counselling (Dianovi et al., 2022). Therefore, this assessment examines the extent to which the effectiveness of these services is evaluated.

The effectiveness of guidance and counselling practices is attained when clients are getting relief from psychosocial challenges they had earlier. This comes after clients taking deliberate measures to solve those challenges. MacDonald and Dobud (2024) maintained that the higher effectiveness reveals that adolescent students attained good academic performance, resilience to distraction, and acceptable manners, which they had not before. Thus, when counsellors and mentors play their role in counselling and guiding students, they are likely to influence the existence of good social, retention and moral conduct of students at schools (Nyutu, 2020). Likewise, soon after students accept and adhere to all directives from counsellors and mentors, they are likely to be good students with good moral and ethical characters; hence, the effectiveness of guidance and counselling exists in such a way.

In modern society, the concept of guidance and counselling is much more effective when utilised in an effective way; this is due to the fact that the community is full of psychological dysfunctions which need guidance and counselling as intervention mechanisms. The existing situation in secondary schools shows that most adolescents have psychosocial challenges that affect their welfare at school (Ampaire et al., 2025). Thus, the provision of counselling to them acts as a tool that strengthens academic trends, social skills and adaptation and emotional balance (Malik et al., 2024). Disappointingly, Daudi et al. (2023) posited that the degree of adolescent students seeking counselling is limited, but the magnitude of teachers providing guidance to adolescent students is much more interesting. Thus, the question of the effectiveness of the counselling practices depends on the readiness of the counsellor and counselee to implement mutual agreement during the counselling interviews.

Participatory and Integrative Teaching Approach (PITA) is a project which aims to help secondary school teachers acquire an alternative teaching and learning approach which aims to raise the academic performance of students in community secondary schools, specifically those found in vulnerable conditions and selected ELCT (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania) schools found in the Meru district. Through the PITA project, the end-of-project evaluation (2021) shows that most of the selected secondary school teachers had studied guidance and counselling as part of teacher training. These teachers have also attended the in-service programme specifically for the guidance and counselling course, and the training conducted by PITA in enabling them acquire professional skills in guidance and counselling practices.

There are efforts of the government to provide training for the teachers and directives for employing counsellors in the secondary schools for the sake of rendering professional guidance and counselling (Education and Training Policy, 2014, revised 2023). Meanwhile, the PITA project, as an educational stakeholder, provided guidance and counselling training for the teachers. Despite the efforts made, there are still challenges, specifically in the aspect of low achievement of the guidance and counselling in the aspects of relationships, personal welfare, domestic violence, study skills and career goals (PITA Project End of Project Evaluation, 2021). Thus, this study aims to fill the existing gap by assessing the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling practices among selected PITA project schools in Meru District Council, Arusha region, Tanzania.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The Cognitive Behavioural Theory (CBT)

The study is underpinned by the Cognitive Behavioural Theory (CBT), which is a psychological theory developed by Aaron T. Beck in the 1960s. According to this theory, emotional distress and problematic behaviours are influenced by maladaptive thought patterns, and people can change their negative behaviours by altering these thought patterns. CBT offers a useful and research-based framework for addressing students' academic, emotional, and social difficulties in the context of guidance and counselling practices among students. It does this by guiding students on how to identify and reframe negative thoughts and create more constructive coping mechanisms.

The structured and goal-oriented nature of CBT makes it relevant to this study since it can improve guidance and counselling in educational settings. Recent research (e.g., Smith & Johnson, 2023; Lee et al., 2024) has shown that Cognitive Behavioural Theory (CBT)-based interventions in schools dramatically enhance students' academic performance, decrease anxiety and depression, and improve their problem-solving abilities. The overall efficacy of counselling and guiding practices can be increased by using CBT principles to help counsellors in the PITA project schools support quantifiable gains in students' mental health and decision-making skills. CBT is therefore a strong theoretical basis for assessing and improving school guidance and counselling programs. Therefore, there is a direct link between CBT and literature review since it reflects adolescent traits in performing various behaviours which need interventions from guidance and counselling. Thus, the literature reviewed expresses the effectiveness of counselling and guidance practices among adolescents.

Empirical Review

Effectiveness of Counselling Practices at Secondary Schools

Chilewa and Osaki (2022) conducted a study focused on the effectiveness of the counselling practices on students' career development in secondary schools in Temeke municipality. A study employed mixed-method research with a sample size of 138. The findings revealed that there were no specialised counsellors who rendered counselling services at secondary schools, no counselling rooms, no confidentiality during counselling interviews and a tight timetable which prohibited the opportunity for the students to seek counselling. Thus, the study highlighted the low effectiveness of the counselling practices due to the failure to apply professional counselling skills at schools.

Meanwhile, the effectiveness of counselling practices leads to the development of coping mechanisms, enhances interpersonal abilities, and aids in the management of stress, anxiety, and depression, according to recent studies. According to research by Ladan and Ibrahim (2023), school counselling services greatly improved students' academic performance and emotional health in secondary schools. On top of that, Koya (2019) conducted a study focused on the counselling practices and their effectiveness (the case of Amanuele Mental Health Specialised Hospital and Jimma University Teaching Hospital). The study employed mixed-method research and a sample size of 123. The finding reveals that counselling is more effective in the treatment of depression and substance abuse; thus, counsellors are playing an effective role in helping people who are experiencing mental or emotional problems to get their lives back on track.

The Effectiveness of the Guidance Practices

Korugyendo et al. (2022) conducted a study focused on the effectiveness of the guidance on the students' discipline in secondary schools in Ruhinda North, Mitooma District, Uganda. The study employed mixed-method research and also employed a total sample size of 234. The findings revealed that counsellors collect and keep up-to-date students' records and disseminate vital information concerning academics to students. Thus, the results indicated that guidance is statistically significant for disciplining students in secondary schools ($r=0.159$, $p=0.024<0.05$). The findings suggest that the existence of a conducive environment and expertise that render guidance is effective for enhancing acceptable students' social and ethical conduct at schools.

Guidance practices in Tanzania are primarily implemented in secondary schools, higher learning institutions, and some community settings. The Tanzanian Education and Training Policy (2014, 2023 edition) emphasises the integration of guidance to enhance students' academic performance, career development, and psychosocial well-being (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2024). According to Mwamwenda (2020), school-based guidance helps reduce dropout rates, teenage pregnancies, and substance abuse among students. Mfaume and Bilinga (2022) revealed that guidance practice in Tanzanian schools has been linked to better learning results, motivation, and student discipline. These results imply that guidance practices are essential for fostering mental health and personal development when they are provided effectively and sufficiently.

Various studies conducted focused on the effectiveness of guidance and counselling; however, some of them focused on the effectiveness of the guidance in students' discipline and career development, like

those conducted by Korugyendo et al. (2022) and Chilewa and Osaki (2022), respectively. In contrast, the current study focused on the assessment of the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling practices in secondary schools.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-method research approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches during data collection and analysis. Meanwhile, the study employed a convergent research design. It involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time, analysing them separately, and then merging the results to compare and draw a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Both probability and non-probability sampling were used to select participants in this study. Researchers used purposive sampling to select 30 respondents who were heads of school, teachers, and discipline teachers who participated in the PITA project trainings, workshops, seminars and conference on guidance and counselling. Also, the study employed simple random sampling to select 35 students. Generally, the study involved total number of 65 as a sample size of respondents from five selected PITA project schools.

The data used in this study were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. The purpose of using these tools was due to their efficiency in ensuring that the data provided is accurate, based on the objectives of the study. For quantitative data, researchers analysed data descriptively. For qualitative data, researchers assessed the information from focus group discussions and interviews using thematic analysis. In their views, Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a technique for systematically locating, categorising, and evaluating meaning patterns (themes) in a dataset.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Effectiveness of Counselling Practices at Selected PITA Project Schools

The findings in this study were based on exploring the effectiveness of counselling practices at selected PITA project secondary schools, which were presented on the basis of four Likert scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. On the basis of the qualitative data, the findings were thematically analysed into themes.

Table 1: Participants Frequencies and Percentage on Practices Counselling (N=25)

	SA		A		D		SD	
	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)
Always I build rapport before counselling practices	4	16%	6	24%	7	28%	8	32%
I understand client's problem before time for counselling	2	8%	5	20%	14	56%	4	16%
After understanding client's problems, I prepare an action plan	4	16%	4	16%	11	44%	6	24%
I guarantee conducive environment before starting counselling	3	12%	5	20%	9	36%	8	32%
I put a door at jar before counselling practice	2	8%	3	12%	14	56%	6	24%
In counselling interview, I always learn at the high level	1	4%	5	20%	13	52%	6	24%
I always learning forward to the clients in counselling practices	4	16%	2	8%	12	48%	7	28%
I sit near to the client in counselling practices	2	8%	4	16%	14	56%	5	20%
I confront client during counselling practices	3	12%	5	20%	12	48%	5	20%
I encourage clients to speak more in counselling practices	3	12%	8	32%	6	24%	5	20%
I always familiarize cases during counselling practices	5	20%	4	16%	12	48%	4	16%
I always empathetic with clients' problems	3	12%	4	16%	9	36%	9	36%
I always take my clients problems as mine	1	4%	6	24%	14	56%	1	4%
Sometimes I confront clients during counselling interview	2	8%	4	16%	14	56%	5	20%
I always minimal encouraging clients during counselling interview	4	16%	2	8%	16	64%	3	12%

Source: Field Data, 2024

The findings from Table 1 reveal that 4(16%) strongly agree, 6(24%) agree, 7(28%) disagree, and lastly, 8(32%) strongly disagree on whether they always build rapport before counselling practices. Hence, the majority of the respondents, who consisted of 15(60%), disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively on building rapport during the counselling process. This means that they began to conduct counselling without developing a friendship between counsellors (teachers) and clients. This hinders the freedom of expressing information because clients do not feel a sense of friendship between them and practitioners (teachers).

To assess the effectiveness of guidance and counselling practices, the frequencies were run for all 15 items of counselling practices. The primary aim was to assess the effectiveness of guidance and counselling practices, whether there was high effectiveness (high percentages), moderate effectiveness (moderate percentages) and low effectiveness (low percentages). The interpretation of the score ranged from 1-2.01 as a low level of counselling effectiveness practices, 2.1-3.0 as a moderate level of counselling effectiveness practices and lastly 3.01-4.0 as a high level of counselling effectiveness practices. The results indicated that 62.20 per cent revealed that there was a low level of effectiveness of counselling practices, 23.50 per cent found that their effectiveness was moderate, and lastly, 14.30 per cent revealed having a high level of effectiveness of counselling practices. Generally, the results show that there was low effectiveness of counselling practices in the selected schools.

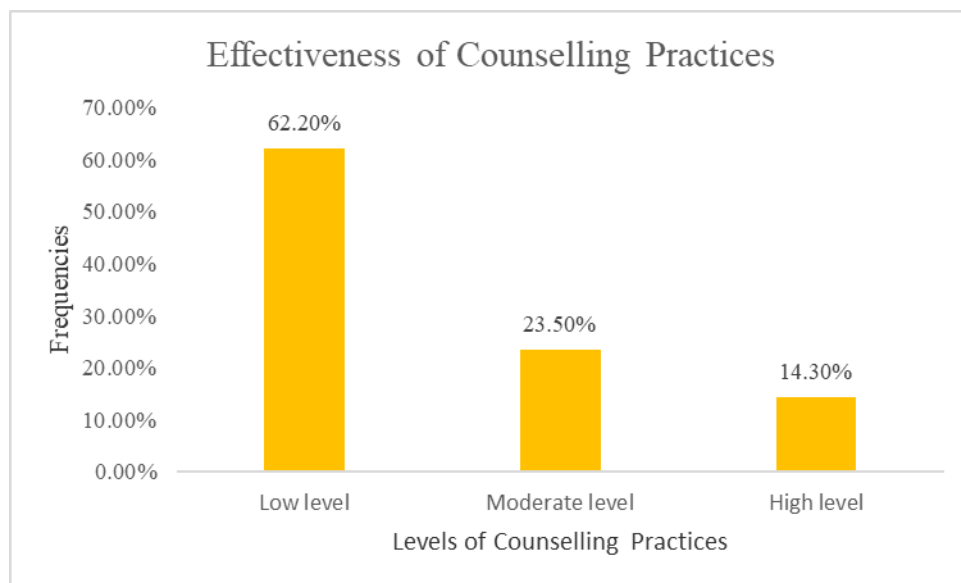


Figure 1: Effectiveness of Counselling Practices
Source: Field Data, 2024.

The findings in Figure 1 reveal the effectiveness of counselling at schools; the findings entail that there was a low level of guidance and counselling practices, which encompasses 62.20 per cent, followed by a moderate level, which encompasses 23.50 per cent and lastly a higher level, which encompasses 14.30 per cent. Consequently, there was low effectiveness of the counselling practices at secondary schools. The results reflect that counsellors did not adhere to basic skills and supportive skills of conducting counselling, hence failing to understand clients' problems, misconceptions, failing to diagnose the root of clients' problems, and failing to create an action plan for further remedy.

As a matter of fact, counselling is a vital service in all spheres of human beings where students in particular are faced with a myriad of problems related to physical, mental and spiritual development. Yusoff and Abdullah (2021) posited that counselling is effective in maximising students' success and behaviour. In their views, Nkechi et al. (2016) maintained that counselling practices are necessary services for teachers to

attain and adhere to the purpose of building confidence in the child to trust them to be able to provide him/her with the rightful information needed in counselling practices.

The findings of this study are consistent with those conducted by Nuroniah et al. (2019), who depicted that counselling teachers have low effectiveness in their job since they are irrelevant, fierce, undergoing favouritism and lacking attention to their work. Thus, they fail to practice well-counselling skills as recommended by the British Association of Psychology. Accordingly, Robert and Kinga (2015) found that teachers' counsellors could not effectively deliver counselling services due to their low level of training, heavy workload, lack of resources and facilities. Thus, there is doubt about the way they adhere to a professional way of conducting counselling.

The findings align with those conducted by Mabula and Edna (2015), who found that there is ineffectiveness of counselling practices in secondary schools, and less training for school counsellors. Meanwhile, it was noted that though some school counsellors attended some training, their knowledge, skills and awareness of counselling practices are very limited. Therefore, the demand for undergoing professional counselling is unavoidable for the primary aim of helping students to get rid of their problems. These findings are consistent with those conducted by Kazimoto (2020), who found that counselling is not prevalent (not effectively existing) in most secondary schools due to the fact that the infrastructure and aspects related to counselling services do not exist in most schools.

Likewise, through interviews, observation and focus group discussions with respondents, they had various information to tell regarding the effectiveness of the counselling practices in the PITA project schools. Generally, counselling services were practised by discipline teachers who got directives from the PITA project workshop, and most of the time discipline teachers provided counselling for cases of truancy, sexual relationships, students' academic performance, theft cases, social and family problems, insults/aggression, and violations of school rules. However, respondents had various genuine reasons to report on the whole process of how counselling services were practised at schools, as highlighted by just a few of them.

Low Knowledge of Teachers on Counselling Practices

It was a great dialogue on whether teachers were practising counselling as principled or not. Most teachers had low knowledge about the principles of counselling practices despite practising them at schools. This justifies that they were performing the counselling services unprofessionally. This led to three hypothetical questions. Firstly, are teachers aware of counselling? Secondly, if they have low awareness about the principles of counselling practices, what quality of services did they provide to the students? Thirdly, how effective are the counselling practices at school? Eventually, the findings revealed that most of the respondents were using the words guidance and counselling interchangeably, while some of them failed to differentiate the two terms. Through interviews with teachers, they openly agree that they used to meet with students and provide services to them, but they are not sure what kind of services they provided, whether it was guidance or counselling services. This justifies the low knowledge of the teachers on either guidance or counselling. Through an interview with one of the teachers, it was said;

I keep advising students to study hard once they get bad results in the exams. Sometimes I welcome my staff mates to advice students, but because they have developed closeness to me, they often ignore my requests. During talks with students, I used to show them examples of how difficult life is in our community and urged them to study hard (Interview with teachers from school A: 2024)

Similarly, the teacher from school E had different scenarios on how teachers have low knowledge of counselling practices. Through interviews, teachers agree that they actually prefer to use harsh language during counselling, which results in most students feeling uncomfortable. Likewise, due to the harsh language they use, it results in creating a gap between teachers and students; hence, students feel comfortable sharing with peers but not teachers. Another teacher reported that;

When students come to my office, first of all, I ask them why they decided to commit a mistake. I fail to know what exactly to do when I see a student trembling and fearing to express themselves before me. Generally, I listen to the student's case, and then I draw a conclusion and command the student not to repeat the mistakes he/she committed (Interview with teacher from school E: 2024)

The above quotations reveal that teachers had low knowledge of counselling practices and didn't understand the principles of counselling. Equally, the findings reveal that teachers fail to maintain rapport, to use non-verbal and verbal techniques for motivating clients to speak on, to explore clients' problems, and so on. These findings are concurrent with those conducted by Verma (2024), who found that there is a high demand for counselling in secondary schools, but unfortunately, teachers have low knowledge of rendering counselling services. Thus, the need to equip teachers with basic and supportive counselling skills is necessary.

Counselling Practices Conducted at Staff Offices

Through interviews with discipline teachers, they provided scenarios on how counselling services were practised at schools. Therefore, as soon as students' misconduct is reported, they are usually called to the staff office, and then the teachers and any other staff members start to counsel the specific student regarding the cases committed. The act of counselling in the office is based on the teacher's decision to call specific students who have been involved in a particular case or misconduct, and then to provide them with counselling. Likewise, through observation, it was revealed that the selected PITA project schools had no counselling rooms that teachers could use to facilitate counselling services. This possibly necessitated the teacher to opt for the staffroom as the place for practicing counselling services. Through an interview with one of the discipline teachers, they had this to report;

We (discipline and non- discipline) use our staff office to provide counselling services openly to the students. This tendency results in most of the students fearing coming to the staff office due to an uncondusive environment in providing counselling to them (Interview with discipline teacher from school A: 2024).

Similarly, through focus group discussion (FGD) with students, they reported that they received services from their teachers, but most of the time, teachers were using their normal offices for service rendering. During the practices of the services, most of the students were feeling guilty due to the tone of language that the teachers used. Likewise, the practices of counselling were done by all teachers at the same time, and every teacher had words to narrate to the specific students who committed the mistake. Therefore, the students quoted that;

Once students are found with disciplinary issues, teachers are called to the staff's office. Then, one teacher can start to discuss with a student, and another teacher can also intervene in the discussion with the students. Always, all teachers who will be in the office will discuss the student who committed mistakes (FGD with students from school B: 2024).

The above quotation reveals that the practices of the counselling services are done in the normal offices and openly. Sanders and Lehmann (2018) maintain that counselling is supposed to be conducted in a special room with maximum privacy and confidentiality, from which both counsellors and counselee can be flexible in the overall process of the counselling interview. Meanwhile, Tefera (2019) found that counselling is insufficiently practised in secondary schools because of a shortage of resources for rendering the services. Thus, the way teachers practised counselling interviews was based on principles that guide professional counsellors to undertake counselling. Hence, it proves ineffectiveness in the practices of the counselling that PITA project teachers are expected to conduct.

The Effectiveness of the Guidance Practices at Selected PITA Project Schools

The data based on the effectiveness of the guidance practices at selected PITA project schools were presented on the basis of four Likert scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The respondent's responses are summarised in Table 2. On the basis of the qualitative data, the findings were thematically analysed into different themes.

Table 2. Effectiveness of Guidance Practices among Teachers (N=25)

	SA		A		D		SD	
	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)	(F)	(%)
I always provide advice to my students	14	56%	5	20%	4	16%	2	8%
Whether they want or do not want I keep advising them	20	80%	2	8%	2	8%	1	4%
I know a good time of guiding my students	12	48%	5	20%	4	16%	4	16%
I conduct guidance to my students anywhere	16	64%	5	20%	2	8%	2	8%
I guide my students without considering their readiness	18	72%	5	20%	1	4%	1	4%
After provision of guidance to my students I remain calm	14	56%	7	28%	3	12%	1	4%
During provision of guidance I do not consider privacy of my clients	20	80%	1	4%	2	8%	22	8%
During guidance practices students keep listening without responding	21	84%	2	8%	1	4%	31	4%
I continue to provide guidance to my students	17	68%	4	16%	2	8%	2	8%
I adjust students' socio-academic issue during guidance practices	15	60%	4	16%	3	12%	3	12%

Source: Field Data 2024

The data from Table 2 reveals that about 14(56%) strongly agree and 5(20%) agree on providing advice to their students; however, about 4(16%) and 2(8%) respectively disagree and strongly disagree. This justifies that most of the teachers were involved in the provision of advice to their students. Likewise, about 20(80%) and 2(8%) strongly agree and agree on the provision of the guidance to the students, whether students want or do not want. However, 2(8%) and 1(4%) strongly disagree and disagree. Thus, the findings mean that the act of giving advice does not depend on the willingness of the students, and it is based on the will of the one who wishes to give advice to the students, upon certain action seems to be necessary to him/her.

The interpretation of the score ranged from 1-2.01 as a low level of guidance practices, 2.1-3.0 as a moderate level of guidance practices, and 3.01-4.0 as a high level of guidance practices. The results indicated that 67.13 per cent revealed that there was a low level of guidance practices, 21.52 per cent found that there is a moderate level of guidance practices, and lastly 11.35 per cent show there is a high level of guidance practices. Generally, the results show that there were high levels of guidance in PITA project schools.

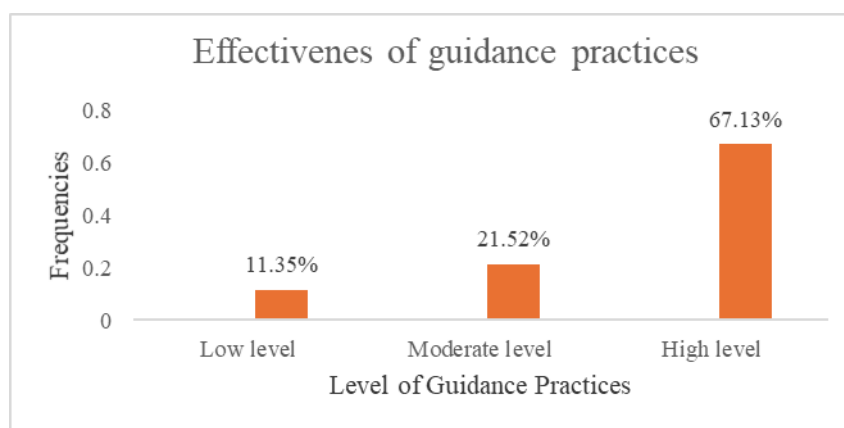


Figure 2: Effectiveness of Guidance Practices
Source: Field Data, 2024.

Figure 2 reveals that there is 11.35 per cent of low-level practices of the guidance, while 21.52 per cent revealed as moderate level of guidance practices, and 67.13 per cent indicated as high level of guidance practices. Therefore, the findings suggest that there were high levels of guidance in the PITA project schools. Thus, students were receiving guidance frequently after being noticed due to the needs and demands of the teachers.

The findings of this study are consistent with those conducted by Parveen and Akhtar (2023), who found that there is a high level of guidance practices in secondary schools, which helps students to identify and address their social, emotional and behavioural needs, thus improving their academic performance and career awareness. Thus, in the secondary school, guidance is vital for academic prosperity among students. Likewise, through interviews and FGD with respondents, they had various information to tell regarding the effectiveness of the guidance practices in the PITA project schools.

Guidance Conducted During Start of Academic Year

The findings through the interview and FGD reveal that teachers were practising guidance during the start of the new academic year; hence, students were receiving directives from the teachers on how they had to abide by the school's by-laws, regulations, and code of ethics. In line with that, other teachers were providing guidance to the students on how to pass their exams. Through the interview, one of the teachers had this to say:

At the beginning of academic terms, I used to provide guidance to my students because I knew the situation of my students due to my eight years of working experience in this school. The guidance which I provide to them helps them to abstain from risky sexual behaviours and other unethical behaviours. This enables students to get to know the importance of having good manners at school and home settings as well. (Interview with teacher from school C: 2024)

The quotation above justifies the way teachers were practising guidance at schools. The finding further reveals that the experience of teachers made them practice guidance for shaping students' behaviours for the sake of being good academically and ethically. Moreover, through the FGD with one of the students, it was reported that;

Teachers are guiding us on how to be good students when we start a new academic year, and every subject teacher guides us on how best we can understand the lesson and attain our target. Also, class teachers are doing a wonderful job of guiding us. (Focus Group Discussion with students from school E: 2024)

The above quotation reveals that guidance is an essential tool in helping students to achieve their goals. Subjects and class teachers were the ones who provided the services at the start of the academic year. More interestingly, the services offered were very helpful to the students. These findings are consistent with those of Amat (2019), who found that the practice of guidance at the beginning of the student's semester marks as a roadmap for planning a good schedule which students adhere to throughout the semester. It also motivates students to study hard, which results in good learning outcomes in the summative assessment. Hence, it is better to build a culture of practising guidance in the education institution frequently and not only at the beginning of the academic year.

Guidance Conducted When Students Disobey School Laws and Regulations

It was a tendency of teachers to provide guidance services to the students once they revealed that students had committed a mistake that violated the school's rules and regulations. Through interviews and FGD, it was revealed that some of the students were having sexual relationships, while others were engaged in drugs and substance abuse, such as using cannabis and drinking alcohol, just to mention a few. Experience shows that teachers were calling those students who disobeyed school laws and regulations to guide them toward the right path while motivating them to abstain from sexually risky behaviours and substance abuse. Through the interview with one of the teachers, it was revealed that;

Before offering punishment for students' misconduct, I opt to provide guidance to them. After guidance, some of them are modifying their behaviours while others are repeating the same behaviours. Generally, I prefer to guide students before taking further disciplinary measures against them. (Interview with a teacher from school A: 2024)

The findings show that the practices of guidance at PITA project secondary schools were active when students made mistakes, where students received guidance before further disciplinary measures were taken against them. Through FGD with students from school C, they had this to add.

Some teachers were directing us to adhere to the school's laws and regulations once we seemed to conduct violence at school. They take their time to educate us on the consequences of disobeying the laws. While a few teachers are punishing us, they also give us guidance on the importance of obeying school laws and regulations. (FGD with Students from school C: 2024)

The above quotations reveal the way guidance was practised at PITA project schools. The findings further reveal that some of the teachers were providing guidance when students committed a mistake, while some teachers were punishing students, and then they provided guidance to them as well. Generally, the importance of adhering to school laws and regulations was part and parcel of the guidance which teachers provided to the students. The findings of this study are in line with the study conducted by Onyango et al. (2018), who found that there is a correlation coefficient of $r=0.503$ between guidance and the management of students' behaviour. Likewise, Oteng (2020) found that guidance coordinators play a major role in prescribing disciplinary actions for students who go against school rules and regulations. Thus, guiding students towards the right moral grounds helps to create a fear of doing improper behaviours.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: To conclude, the findings revealed that there was a low knowledge of counselling practices among teachers, and likewise, counselling was ineffectively practised. Luckily, the findings reveal that there was a high level of guidance practices, reflecting the high effectiveness of guidance practices. Similarly, the findings indicated that guidance was effectively practised by teachers in secondary schools.

Recommendations: Following ineffective counselling practices, the researchers recommend that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) deploy professional counsellors at schools who will provide professional counselling to students. Likewise, the PITA project should frequently carry out professional counselling training and workshops for teachers for the sake of refreshing and helping teachers to attain/maintain professional counselling skills and practices. Moreover, MoEST have to construct the counselling rooms which will help to maintain privacy during counselling interviews, and establish the school counselling units for serving counselling services among students.

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