Guidance and Counselling Need in Tanzania: Needs Assessment for Primary School Pupils of Iringa Municipality

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to identify the guidance and Counselling needs for primary school pupils. This study applied a Cross-sectional study design. Data were collected through questionnaires, structured interviews, and focus group discussion. The study involved 205 respondents; 155 primary school pupils, 26 primary school teachers, four guidance and counselling teachers, 10 educational administrators and 10 parents. The findings showed that pupils experienced some problems/needs and communicated them to their significant people and received help. The findings also revealed that pupils had some problems/needs which did not receive any help from the significant people although they were communicated to them. Likewise, the findings revealed that pupils had problems/needs which they found difficult to communicate to their significant people. Also, it was clear that the significant people around the primary school children were aware of the guidance and counselling needs of the pupils. The study concludes that social problems were the most outstanding problems/needs which primary school pupils experienced and shared easily with their significant others; psychological and developmental problems/needs are the most outstanding problems/needs which did not receive appropriate help from the significant people although they were communicated to them. The study recommends that guidance and counselling programmes in the schools be strengthened by employing trained professional counsellors to meet pupils' problems and needs.

Key Words: Guidance, counselling, pupils needs, primary schools, needs assessment

INTRODUCTION

Guidance and Counselling was initially found in Europe in the nineteenth century. It started as occupational counselling, which aimed at helping people acquire jobs, but later on, it developed to various areas of specializations namely family counselling, school counselling, adolescent counselling as well as career counselling (Mutie, 2005). In Africa, guidance and counselling existed informally in the communal societies; it involved every individual in the societies. Children and youths were guided along the knowledge of their respective cultural norms, values and traditions (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). This type of guidance and counselling, within the indigenous African societies, also created self-awareness and growth among members of the group (Thompson & Lago, 2003). In the Tanzanian traditional context, like in other African traditional societies, guidance and counselling involved educating individuals, usually children and youths, about the traditions and cultural norms of the community. This type of education was not given in the classrooms by trained teachers, but took place naturally throughout childhood as children went about their daily occupations (Castle, 1991). This was carried out (from generation to generation) by elders who considered it their social responsibility. Parents and all adults were regarded as teachers of the young generation not only by being role models but also by insisting on obedience to tribal customs and on good manners. In most of the Tanzanian tribes, guidance and counselling was provided during hunting, cultivation of crops, domestic work and crafts. However, it was provided intensively during the initiation ceremonies (Kyomo & Selvan, 2004). The main objective of guidance and counselling was to mould the individuals in such a way that they fitted in the society as responsible members of the community. This type of education provided the recipients with skills, which enabled them to live productively. It involved the total development of the recipient; the recipient was guided on how to grow up, what to be, what to do what to know and how to consolidate his/her virtues (Mutie, 2005). In this way the child acquired the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills which were the basis for the development of a balanced personality. It was through this

traditional guidance and counselling that children learned the use of appropriate language, respect for elders, life skills, and self-defence.

In Iringa region, like in other parts of Tanzania, guidance and counselling was provided to the children and youths as they grew up. They were guided to the understanding that each person existed as part of the community and had roles, responsibilities and duties to fulfill in the community according to his/her age, gender, health and abilities (Kyomo & Selvan, 2004). In Iringa Municipality, guidance and counselling existed informally amidst ethnic groups including the Hehe, Bena, and the Kinga tribes which lived in this area. Despite this mixture of tribes, there was a similarity in the way children received guidance and counselling from the adults around them. The guidance and counselling took place among members of the same family or community. For example, children would be brought together for instruction, guidance and corrections during special occasions when it was noted that some of them misbehaved. Beyond the family members, the community members could also offer help to the troublesome children if it was proved that the particular family had failed to correct the behaviour of the children. In this way, children learned how to relate with their peers because they shared the same problems. Even if their problems seemed difficult they were taught how to help one another within the group. Sometimes, one of the members would share something positive which could help others. This encouraged them and motivated healthy growth and development. Currently, with formal schooling, children at a very early age leave their parents and spend most of their life in schools. In this regard, the guidance and counselling which parents and elders used to provide to their children in the traditional settings is now left in the hands of teachers. These teachers may neither be competent in the traditional guidance and counselling nor in the formal guidance and counselling as they lack training in the area of guidance and counselling (URT, 2006). Although the practice of guidance and counselling in Tanzania may not be as precise as what is practiced in the Western world (Goss & Adebowale, 2014), pupils have needs which require attention of their teachers.

Although there have been struggles in establishing guidance and counselling services in schools and colleges, there is low achievement. This has led Tanzanian children to develop complicated behavioural problems which include truancy, alcohol and drug abuse, early sexual affairs, and violence (URT, 2006). The government introduced circular number 11 of 2002 which aimed at strengthening guidance and counselling services in schools and teachers colleges so as to help school learners in their social, academic and psychological concerns (URT, 2002). According to education and training policy, Tanzanian education is expected to provide pupils with skills, competence and ability to confront the requirements which arise from the labour market and life in general (URT, 2014). Through the primary school education, pupils are expected to learn how to appreciate their national identity, personal integrity, cultural and moral values, customs, traditions and civic responsibilities and obligations. However, it is argued here that there is difficulty in achieving these goals due to behavioural problems which affect pupils' focus as they pursue their education (URT, 2006; URT, 2010; URT, 2011). Fundamentally, theories of human development focus on the sequence of patterns that occur such as biological, cognitive, moral, affective, interpersonal and occupational. One of the famous developmental theories is Erick Erickson's psychosocial theory which offers a basic framework of understanding the needs of children in relation to the society in which they grow, learn, and later make their contributions. His emphasis is that development passes through a series of stages, each with its particular goals, concerns, accomplishments, and dangers. He sees that the stages are interdependent; accomplishments at later stages depend on how conflicts are resolved in the earlier years (Woolfolk, 2004). At each stage, the individual faces a developmental crisis which is a conflict between a positive alternative and a potentially unhealthy alternative. It is argued that the ways in which an individual resolves each crisis will have a lasting effect on that person's self-image and view of the society. Due to conflicts which occur at different stages of growing,

children manifest various behaviours which may be healthy or maladaptive (Berk, 2014).

One important thing to remember is that in every type of behaviour, the child expresses a need. All the time, and quite unconsciously, children are striving towards their next stage of growth. They have needs they want to secure and this is the natural urge that makes growth possible (Castle, 1991). It is the duty of the person who is to provide guidance to discover what these needs are, and supply them or help the child to supply them for himself. Biswalo (1996) argued that educational, vocational, and personal/social guidance and counselling services are needed in the primary schools as in any other educational institution. He argues that as children enter school, they need to be guided and counselled along the school compound, school curriculum, and the school community to allow them to develop a positive attitude toward learning, and toward school as a community. He emphasizes that educational guidance and counselling programme in primary schools should identify the needs and problems of pupils regarding the school experience especially the learning process. He affirms that optimum learning for the pupils requires that guidance and counselling services be integrated with a relevant educational curriculum (Biswalo, 1996). He holds that there is a need to integrate Guidance and Counselling with a relevant educational curriculum due to the fact that the curriculum provides the experiences that individual pupil needs whereas Guidance and Counselling helps pupils to succeed in these experiences. He believes that educational institutions have twofold crucial responsibilities: to nurture students who have varying abilities, capabilities, capacities, interests, and unlimited potentials; and to prepare these individuals to become effectively functioning members of their changing societies. He suggests that the school guidance and counselling programme for primary school pupils should include occupational exploration to arouse pupils' interests in various fields. In connection with the persona/social guidance and counselling programme for primary schools, he suggests pupils to be guided and counselled on issues concerning

emotional problems, intellectual disabilities, motivational inadequacies, moral defects, physical ailments, and social maladjustment. Children have their dreams, objectives and aspirations and they have plans and ideas on how to achieve their goals. Some of their ideas may be potentially good, however, they may lack proper way to achieve them due to inexperience and lack of guidance (Omari, 2006). It is noted here that the same ideas and aspirations may cause some social problems if they are misused. Therefore, there is the necessity of guiding pupils as they struggle to achieve their goals. It is from this perspective, this paper sought to assess, analyse and document pupils' problems which need guidance and counselling services in Iringa Municipality. The study was guided by the following five objectives:

1. To identify guidance and counselling problems/needs which pupils can easily communicate and receive help from their significant others.
2. To identify guidance and counselling problems/needs which pupils communicated easily to their significant others but did not receive help
3. To identify guidance and counselling problems/needs which pupils cannot communicate easily to their significant others
4. To explore the pupils', teachers' and parents' awareness of guidance and counselling problems/needs of primary school pupils
5. To identify support providers whom the pupils rely on when they face problems which need guidance/counselling services

Methodology
The study was conducted in Iringa Municipality. Iringa Municipality has one division, 14 wards, and 162 sub-wards. The size of the wards and the sub-wards differs significantly. The study was conducted in only four primary schools in Iringa Municipality namely schools **W**, X, **Y**, and **Z**. Schools **W** and **X**, located at the city centre, were selected

because they have urban features while school **Y** and **Z**, located in the periphery of the city, have rural features. The selection was intended to get a sample with respondents from both urban and rural settings in order to get insights from both settings (Iringa Municipal Socio-Economic Profile, 2011). The population for this study included Municipal education administrative officials, heads of primary schools, primary school teachers, primary school guidance and counsellor teachers, and primary school pupils. The actual population of primary school pupils in the Iringa Municipality was 25,896 and primary school teachers were 851 (Iringa Municipal Socio-Economic Profile, 2012). Data were collected from a sample of 205. Considering that in descriptive statistics, any large sample size suffices (Hair et al, 2006); the sample size of 30 or above is said to be adequate for the purpose of descriptive study (Kar and Ramalingm, 2013, Creswell 2014, Snedecor & Cocran, 1989). In this study the researcher intended to have a large sample size of 30 plus margin of non-response of 10 pupils for each school, making a total of about 40 pupils per school. For four schools the researcher aimed at reaching 40x4 = 160 pupils. However, in two schools the researcher could not meet the expected number of pupils as shown in Table1.

Table 1. Sample Size

Sampling area	Sample Size
Pupils from W primary school	37
Pupils from X primary school	40
Pupils from Y primary school	38
Pupils from Z primary school	40
Primary school teachers and guidance counsellors	30
Educational administrators& school heads	10
Parents	10
Total	205

Source: Research Data

Pupils were randomly selected, ten pupils from each class of standard four, five, six and seven, to give a presentation of the classes. Individual pupils were chosen arbitrarily and in an unstructured manner. This kind of sampling gave the pupils equal chance of selection (Mlyuka, 2011). Purposive sampling was used to select education administrative officers, heads of schools, primary school teachers, and guidance and counselling teachers. Convenient sampling was used to select parents who were not necessarily the parents of the pupils selected in the sample. Questionnaires, structured interviews, and focus group discussions were used to collect data. The questionnaires were distributed to the pupils and teachers of the four primary schools. Structured Interviews were used to collect data from administrative officials, guidance and counsellor teachers, and the heads of the four primary schools. The Focus group discussion was conducted to parents who were obtained from non-teaching staffs of **W** primary school and therefore it was easy to bring them together and manage the discussion.

Findings

Objective 1: To identify problems/needs which pupils can easily communicate and receive help from their significant people. Table 2 presents problems/needs which pupils communicated them easily to their significant people and received help.

Table 2. Problems/Needs easily communicated and received help

Problems/Needs	Frequency	Percentage
Social(relationship with family, friends)	66	42.6
Behavioural-Alcohol, drug abuse, theft	41	26.5
Health	30	19.4
Economic	33	21.3
Academic	40	25.8

Psychological	40	25.8

Source: Research data

According to the findings, social problems/needs (issues of relationship with friends and family) ranked highly 66(42.6%) while health and economic problems/needs had a low rank 30(19.4%) and 33 (21.3%) respectively. Other problems/needs which pupils shared easily with their significant others and received help include behavioural 41(26.5%), academic 40(25.8%) and psychological 40(25.8%). The results suggest that social, behavioural, academic and psychological problems/needs are the most outstanding problems/needs which pupils can easily communicate and received help from their significant people.

Objective 2: To identify problems/needs which pupils communicated easily to their significant people but did not receive help. Table 3 presents problems encountered by pupils and shared easily to their significant others but did not receive help.

Table 3. Problems/Needs communicated and did not receive help

Problems/Needs	Frequency	Percentage
Developmental	35	22.6
Economic	29	18.7
Psychological	36	23.2

According to the findings, the problems/needs which were communicated but did not receive help included developmental 35(22.6%), psychological 36(23.2%) and economic 29(18.7%). This indicates that pupils encountered some problems/needs but they did not get help from their significant others despite the fact that they communicated the problems to them.

Objective 3: To identify guidance and counselling problems/needs which pupils cannot communicate easily to their significant people**.**

Table 4 presents problems/needs which pupils cannot communicate easily to their significant others.

Table 4. Problems/needs pupils would not communicate easily to significant others

Problems/Needs	Frequency	Percentage
Violence	12	7.7
Health	25	16.1
Academic	23	14.8
Behavioural	32	20.6
Sexual abuse/Harassment	40	25.8

The findings suggest that problems/needs which pupils could not communicate easily to their significant others include Violence 12(7.7%), health 25(16.1%), academic 23(14.8%), behavioural 32 (20.6%), and Sexual abuse 40 (25.8%). This suggests that there are some problems/needs which pupils in primary schools encountered but would not want to communicate them to anybody. The most outstanding problems were sexual abuse/harassment and behavioural problems.

Objective 4: To explore the awareness of pupils and teachers concerning guidance and counselling needs. Table 5 below summarises the findings.

Table.5 Pupils' and Teachers' awareness of Guidance and Counselling needs

	Yes	No	Total
Pupils	96(61.9)	59(38.1)	155(100)
Teachers	22(84.6)	04(15.4)	26(100)
Total	118(65.2)	63(34.80)	181(100)

The findings show that 65.9% (pupils 61.9% and teachers 84.6%) of all respondents reported that they were aware of the guidance and counselling needs/problems of primary school pupils. The findings suggest that the teachers have an outstanding awareness (84.6%) of the problems/needs of primary school pupils. The results from the structured interview showed that the administrative officials namely the Municipal officials, the school heads and the guidance counsellor teachers were all aware of the common problems/needs that pupils encountered and which needed guidance and counselling. The problems/needs which were mentioned included academic, social, economic, family, health, time management, career, sexuality, relationship, and self-management. One of the administrative officers said:

> *Our students have a lot of problems, especially psychological problems like stress and trauma, which need professional counsellors; but they are nowhere to be found! It would be helpful if the government through the ministry of education would train and employ professional counsellors in the schools.*

The findings from the Focus Group Discussion showed that the parents were also aware of the pupils' problems and needs which included economic, health, social, behavioural, family, relationship, time and self-management. These results from the structured interview and the focus group discussions complemented the results from the teachers and the pupils.

Objective 5: To identify support providers whom the pupils rely on when they face problems which need guidance/counselling services

The findings showed that when pupils encountered problems and needs, they received support and service from various significant people. Table 7 summarises the significant people consulted by pupils for support and services when they encountered problems/needs.

Table 7. Response from pupils as to whom they consulted for support and service when they had problems/needs mentioned below:

Needs/Problem	HoS	%	CT	%	ST	%	GCT	%	Parents	%	No one	%
Academic	06	3.9	17	11	75	48.4	09	5.8	47	30.3	01	0.6
Relationship	07	4.5	12	7.7	04	2.6	22	14.2	70	45.2	40	25.8
Developmental changes	02	1.3	05	3.2	02	1.3	23	14.8	88	56.8	35	22.6
Economic difficulties	20	12.9	15	9.7	03	1.9	33	21.3	52	33.5	32	20.6
Health	05	3.2	07	4.5	03	1.9	88	56.8	45	29.0	08	5.2
Family	05	3.2	04	2.6	01	0.6	13	8.4	88	56.8	44	28.4
Behavioural – Alcohol and drug abuse	04	2.6	03	1.9	04	2.6	53	34.2	39	25.2	52	33.5
Sexual abuse/ harassments	06	3.9	07	4.5	05	3.2	25	16.1	61	39.3	51	32.9

Key: HoS: Heads of Schools; CT: Class Teacher; ST: Subject Teacher; GCT: Guidance Counsellor Teacher

From Table 7, it is clear that, except for the issues related with academic and health, most students consulted their parents for almost all of their problems. Yet, other pupils did not consult anybody for service or support when they experienced problems.

Discussion

This study sought to identify pupils' specific needs in primary schools for the purpose of establishing guidance and counselling services in schools. The first objective of this study was to identify problems/needs which were communicated easily by pupils to their significant others and received help. It is clear in this study that social problems related to interpersonal relationships with family members, teachers and peers were the most mentioned problems/needs which pupils shared easily with their significant others. When interpersonal relationships with significant people in the life of learners are not

taken care of, they may contribute to poor teaching and learning environment (Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015).

This is due to the fact that in teaching/learning environment, pupils would likely want to have their academic problems solved and their economic needs facilitated so that they can achieve positive learning outcomes. The second objective of this study sought to identify problems/needs which pupils communicated to their significant others, but did not receive any help. It is clear in this study that psychological and developmental problems/needs were communicated but did not receive any help from the significant others. One would assume that the significant others whom the pupils reported the cases did not have the required guidance and counselling knowledge to offer the needed professional help. This argument is based on the fact that it is not possible for one to address an issue which s/he is not well informed of. A similar observation was reported by Magwa and Chindanya (2017) Mushi and Malusu (2017). The third objective of this study was to identify guidance and counselling problems/needs which pupils encountered but could not communicate them easily to their significant others. As seen in the data, the majority of pupils found it difficult to communicate issues of sexual abuse/harassments and behavioural problems/needs to their significant others. Failure to communicate issues of sexual abuse/harassments and behavioural problems/needs to the significant people can be associated with cultural traditions which often attach a social stigma to the victim or her family. Ngiloi (2007) asserts that one of the possible reasons against disclosing information on child sexual abuse is the social stigma attached to the child and the family. There is a culture of silence and secrecy on sexuality. Child sexual abuse is still being associated with shame, threat, fear, or taboo by many families and societies (Kimbavala, 2018). The fourth objective of this study explored the awareness of pupils, teachers, counsellors, administrative officials and parents concerning guidance and counselling needs of primary school pupils. As observed from the data, majority of pupils and teachers were aware of the guidance and counselling needs of pupils. Also, the Municipal officials, school heads and counsellor

teachers, who are significant people in the pupils' lives, were all aware of the common problems/needs that pupil encountered. It is argued here that the awareness of these significant people towards pupils' needs/problems can motivate them to stay around the children for care and support, which would result in pupils' feelings of safety and security.

It is noteworthy that children feel safe and secure when their parents or care givers are around them (Nyangarika & Ngasa, 2020). The fifth objective of this study identified support providers whom the pupils rely on when they face problems which need guidance/counselling services. The findings show that pupils sought support and service from heads of schools, class teachers, subject teachers, guidance counsellor teachers, and parents. However, others did not want to seek support and service from any of these. It is clear from this study that some pupils received help from the identified support and service providers, others did not receive support and service while others did not want even to seek support and service from the identified providers. Having pupils who miss the support and service for any reason, calls for other interventions which might be more helpful. Ekman et al (2011) explains the importance of using counselling therapies, suggesting the use of Person-Centred therapy for holistic understanding of the learners and their problems which highlights the importance of listening to each individual pupil.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Based on the findings the study concludes that:

i. Social problems related to interpersonal relationships with family members, teachers and peers are easily shared by pupils and received assistance.

ii. Psychological and developmental problems/needs were shared, but pupils did not receive any help from the significant other.

iii. Issues related to sexual abuse/harassments and behavioural problems/needs were not shared. Pupils found it difficult to communicate these issues to their significant people.

iv. Majority of the participants were aware of the guidance and counselling needs of pupils in primary schools.

v. Pupils sought support from heads of schools, class teachers, subject teachers, guidance-counsellor teachers, and parents. However, some pupils did not opt for any support and service from these significant people.

This study recommends the following:

i. It is recommended that guidance and counselling programmes in primary schools should be strengthened by employing trained professional counsellors to meet pupils' problems and needs.

ii. School guidance and counselling programme need to involve pupils' families and the community around for psycho-education which would help them to provide the nurturing environment in which pupils would learn to grow as they interact with the world around them.

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