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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NATURE OF TRAINING GIVEN TO TEACHER-COUNSELLORS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EKERENYO DIVISION IN NYAMIRA NORTH DISTRICT, KENYA

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#### ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to investigate the factors that affect provision of career guidance services in public secondary schools based on Ginsberg Theory of career development which states that career guidance is developmental but is very significant during adolescence. Based on the study, this paper examines the nature of training given to teacher-counsellors to undertake their guidance and counselling work in secondary schools. The study was conducted using survey research design. The participants were teacher-counsellors from 10 public secondary schools in Ekereny Division, Nyamira North District, Kenya. A sample size of 30 teacher-counsellors was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected through the use of teacher-counsellor career guidance questionnaire. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics: frequencies and percentages. The study found out that most guidance and counselling teachers had not received specialized training in guidance and counselling. It was therefore recommended that more teachers should be trained in guidance and counselling, especially in areas such as career guidance. The findings of the study are of great help to counsellors, teachers, parents, the whole community, curriculum developers and policy makers in education in developing programmes to strengthen the capacity of teachers to effectively undertake career guidance and counselling of students in schools.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Vocational guidance started as early as 1895 in the United States of America through the efforts of George Merrill of California at the California School of Mechanical Arts in San Francisco. The main emphasis of this was vocational information, planning and guidance. Merrill made the first systematic attempt to provide specific guidance service to pupils (Makinde, 1984). Frank Godwin in 1911 suggested six conditions which he regarded as necessary for successful vocational guidance in a large high school. According to Reed (as cited in Makinde, 1984), these are as follows:

- A director of guidance should be appointed and should have time for supervision.
- The organization of the school should allow close personal contact of every pupil to at least one teacher of the right type.

- This teacher should exercise intelligent and sympathetic helpfulness to the pupil.
- The characteristics of each pupil should be analysed logically.
- The relation of school work to life-career should be understood.
- School work should be adapted to the community's vocational needs.

However, those who are appointed may lack these qualities. Currently in America, career development is considered a lifelong process that can be fostered through education programmes at all levels. Career information and advice are everywhere: the internet, bookstores, colleges, universities, public schools, private agencies, the corporate world, the military, newspapers, magazines, professional journals, prisons and even signs on city buses (Maddy, 2000).

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## Career Guidance in Kenya

Formalization and integration of guidance and counselling services in the Kenyan education system began in the 1950s (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2007). Guidance and counselling is considered an integral part of the education process and plays the role of supplementing and complementing all other programmes in the schools. Since independence, there have been a number of recommendations and guidelines in various education commission reports, national development plans and government sessional papers. These reports are documented in the Teachers' Handbook (2003) as *The Ominde Report* of 1964, *The Gachathi Report* of 1976, *The Kamunge Report* of 1998 and *The Development Plan* of 1977-2000.

### The Ominde Report of 1964

This commission recommended that children should be given courses of education and training that are relevant to their needs, and that guidance on career openings for employment should be given. This led to the establishment of the guidance and counselling unit at the inspectorate headquarters.

### The Gachathi Report of 1976

The Gachathi Report recommended that all teachers should participate in guidance and counselling as one of their normal duties and that it should be integrated with other areas like careers, ethics, human relations, family life and sex education.

### The Kamunge Report of 1988

This report recommended that guidance and counselling should help pupils to appreciate their role as workers and develop right attitudes towards discipline and management of time. It also recommended that guidance and counselling should be delegated to the district level.

### The Development Plan of 1977-2000

The Development Plan recommended that education on counselling should be enhanced. As a result of the recommendations of the above documents, the government decided that guidance and counselling should be established in all learning institutions in Kenya. Therefore, the TSC appoints teacher-counsellors as heads of departments in schools. Despite all the government efforts, the services of guidance in secondary schools still leave a lot to be desired. The needs of the learners include human sexuality, peer pressure, drug abuse, inability to choose careers and many others that emphasize the need for effective guidance and counselling service in secondary schools in Kenya. Whereas there are those who have been appointed as counsellors in schools but lack the skills, it is also notable that not all schools in the country have been given teacher-counsellors to head this department. Some schools still lack personnel for the department and those that have them do not have all their guidance and counselling needs met (Nyong'a, 2005). The reason is that either they are not trained or lack enough personnel and time.

## Training of Teacher Counsellors in Guidance and Counselling

It has been noted that one of the main causes of poor provision of guidance services is ill-equipped teacher-counsellors who lack the know-how of guidance and counselling. The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (Republic of Kenya, 1976) says that teachers who have been conferred with the responsibility of providing guidance and counselling services in schools are ill-equipped for the job. The lack of training in guidance and counselling can negatively affect provision of guidance and counselling services in schools. According to a research by Nyong'a (2005), though many teachers acted as guidance and counselling teachers in their schools, most of them had not been trained. They were therefore doing the job bereft of professional qualification. This trend has persisted for so many years in Kenyan schools and the result has been the existence of defunct or ineffective guidance and counselling offices in schools. It is, therefore, important that guidance and counselling teachers are formally trained.

Wango and Mungai (2007) suggest that there are several ways of achieving this training. These include enabling teachers to attend relevant seminars, conferences and workshops; undertake specific courses; providing relevant reading material and organising school-based in-service training for the guidance and counselling committee or for all members of staff. Other methods suggested include inviting facilitators from the guidance and counselling unit of the MoE or from counselling training institutions. Kipnusu (2002) presents a strong argument for training of teacher-counsellors saying that any persons who must be involved in guidance and counselling programmes of pupils ought to receive necessary training to be able to do the job properly and more efficiently. Counselling in its more technical sense requires more intensive training or else "more harm than good" will be done to the pupils (Kipnusu, 2002, p. 3).

According to Musyoki (2007), counselling teachers should have a postgraduate diploma or degree training in the field of guidance and counselling with exposure to some research in this field so that they can offer proper services. However, as Makinde (1984) puts it, apart from training, the process of selection is equally important; it helps to identify those individuals with the greatest potential for effective counselling. According to Musyoki (2007), the desire to work with people or to assist others should be paramount for any effective counsellor. Indeed, counsellors should be those who are committed to helping people. Therefore, selection of the right personality is as equally important as training. In some of the developed countries, there are career guidance technicians who are responsible for soliciting, collecting, organizing and distributing career and educational information which is received by the school. They may publicize and promote the use of the career centre and schedule special presentations and speakers. They also work closely with career counsellors to develop and operate comprehensive career guidance and education centres by gathering job information from schools and employers. They, therefore, form the link between this information and those who use it, such as students, job seekers,

displaced workers, counsellors, teachers, administrators and parents (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and European Union [OECD/EU], 2004). If Kenyan schools are going to improve on their provision of career information to students, such professionals need to be trained and be placed in institutions of learning so that they assist students in career choices and placement.

According to OECD/EU (2004), the problems that besiege the provision of career guidance in schools include the following:

- Those who provide career education and guidance in schools are often not career guidance specialists because they lack specialised training.
- They combine career guidance with other roles such as teaching other school subjects and providing guidance and counselling for personal problems and study difficulties. These problems show that the teachers in charge of career guidance in schools are not doing their work effectively.

### Statement of the Problem

The importance of career guidance in schools cannot be underestimated. This has been emphasized by studies by Makinde (1984), Rao (2003), Mutie and Ndambuki (1999), Lutomia and Sikolia (2002); those published in *Teachers' Handbook* (2003); the works of Wanjama *et al.* (2006), as well as Wango and Mungai (2007). The Ministry of Education's policy documents point out that career guidance should be part of the guidance and counselling support services given to learners (MoE, 2007). Many schools have teacher-counsellors whereas others even have career teachers (MoE, 2007). However, it has been noted that provision of career guidance services in schools is still below bar (Aduda, 1997; Lutomia and Sikolia, 2002; MoE, 2007).

According to Kendagor (2007), a small percentage of people have succeeded in picking and taking up professions according to their career choices and conscience but majority of them fumble and stumble in the wrong careers either consciously or unconsciously. Kendagor (2007) attributes this to misconceptions of what certain careers hold, the wrong perceptions of those careers and/or being misinformed either by peers, family members or friends. Without effective provision of effective career guidance services students continue to have problems in choosing careers and this greatly impacts negatively on their future lives and happiness. Despite this, little research has been done to find out what affects the provision of career guidance services in schools. The study, therefore, investigated the type of professional training given to teacher-counsellors as one of the factors that affect the provision of career guidance services in public secondary schools.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research study was carried out in Ekerenyo Division of Nyamira North District in Nyanza Province, Kenya. The study was conducted using survey research design. This research design is usually used "when one is collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety

of education or social issues" (Orodho and Kombo, as cited in Kombo and Tromp, 2006, p. 71). There were 20 public secondary schools in Ekerenyo Division at the time of the study. The study population consisted of teacher-counsellors in 10 selected secondary schools. The teacher-counsellors were selected because they were in the best position to discuss and identify the factors that affect the provision of career guidance services in secondary schools.

To get a representative sample of the research population, a total of 10 schools were randomly selected from the 20 secondary schools in Ekerenyo Division. This represented 50 percent of the total number of schools in the division. This percentage figure was in line with what Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) say; that 50 percent of the research population should be used to represent the rest of the population. This sample size was quite representative. Ten heads of departments were purposively selected and 20 teacher-counsellors were randomly selected from each of the 10 schools, totalling to a sample size of 30 teachers. The research used the Teacher-Counsellor Career Guidance Questionnaire to collect data. The data collected was first coded and the items put into various relevant categories. The data was then tabulated using frequency distribution tables and percentages. These were done using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### RESULTS

The research sought to establish if teacher counsellors in Ekerenyo Division were trained in guidance and counselling. To ascertain this, the teacher-counsellors' career guidance questionnaire was administered to the participants and their responses were computed. The first item sought to find out the basic training of the teacher-counsellors in teaching. This was meant to find out whether or not the teacher-counsellors had learned the basics of guidance and counselling that are incorporated in teacher-training courses.

**Table 1. Teacher-counsellors' Basic Training in Teaching**

Training	Frequency	percentage
BEd (Arts)	12	46.2
BEd (Science)	5	19.2
BA or BSc	1	3.8
BA or BSc with PGDE	1	3.8
Diploma in Education	7	26.9
Total	26	100.0

The results of the descriptive statistics of the item were as presented in Table 1. Table 1 indicates that only one teacher-counsellor had no basic training in teaching. Twelve (46.2%) teacher-counsellors had Bachelor of Education Arts, five (19.2%) had Bachelor of Education Sciences, one (3.8%) had a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education while seven (26.9%) had Diplomas in Education. These results show that out of the 26 teacher respondents, 25(96.18%) had basic training in guidance and counselling. The reason is that some units on the basics of guidance and counselling are incorporated in the training of teachers since they are compulsory. This means that every teacher who has gone through teacher training in education has learned some basic skills in guidance and

counselling unlike those who take Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BSc). For this latter group, learning the basics of guidance and counselling is not mandatory unless they do them voluntarily by taking some other courses outside their area of study. The second item in the Teacher-Counsellor Career Guidance Questionnaire aimed at finding out whether or not the teacher-counsellors had received specialized training in guidance and counselling. The responses were as presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Specialized Training in Guidance and Counselling**

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	26.9
No	19	73.1
Total	26	100.0

Table 2 shows that out of the 26 teacher-counsellors who responded, only 7(26.9%) had received specialized training in guidance and counselling while the rest (73.1%) had not. This supports the findings of a survey by Ministry of Education in 2006 (MoE, 2007). In the survey, the Ministry admits that teachers cannot provide career guidance well because they lack adequate specialized training in guidance and counselling. This also shows that some drastic action needs to be taken by the Ministry of Education to ensure that all heads of departments of guidance and counselling in schools are given specialized training in guidance and counselling, including career guidance. The third item in the Teacher-Counsellor Career Guidance Questionnaire aimed at finding out the level of specialized training that the seven teacher-counsellors had received. The results were as presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3. Level of Specialized Training in Guidance and Counselling**

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma in guidance and counselling	2	28.6
BE in guidance and counselling	3	42.9
ME in guidance and counselling	1	14.3
Peer counselling	1	14.3
Total	7	100.0

Table 3 indicates that three (42.9%) teacher-counsellors had received Bachelor of Education degrees in guidance and counselling, two (28.6%) had received a Diploma each in guidance and counselling; one (14.3%) had a Master's degree in Education in guidance and counselling while one (14.3%) had only trained as a peer counsellor. The findings show that few teachers (seven out of 26) had trained in guidance and counselling. One of the factors that could be contributing to this is the teachers' employer in Kenya: the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). It does not employ teachers who take only a degree in guidance and counselling without two teaching subjects in which they have trained and can teach (Teachers Handbook, 2003). This discourages students in the university from taking the guidance and counselling degree because they will fail to get jobs. The findings also show that the efforts by the government to ensure that heads of guidance and counselling departments in schools are skilled have not attained their objective.

## DISCUSSION

From the results of the study, it is clear that even though all the teacher-counsellors, except one, had basic teacher-training courses at various levels of training, only seven teachers out of twenty-six had taken specialised training in counselling. Among these seven, two had studied Diploma in counselling, three had Bachelor of Education degree in counselling, one had Master of Education in counselling and one had trained as a peer counsellor. These results prove that training of teacher-counsellors is still a factor that is affecting provision of career guidance in public secondary schools. These findings agree with those of the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2007) which aver that these teacher-counsellors are ill-equipped to carry out career guidance because of lack of proper training. The findings also agree with the research findings by Nyong'a (2005). He found out that although many teachers acted as guidance and counselling teachers in their schools, most of them had not been trained. They were therefore doing the job without professional qualification. Even for the few who are trained in counselling, they are still ill-equipped because the type of training they get does not prepare them for specialised career guidance.

According to OECD/EU (2004), qualifications in psychology or pedagogy pay little or no attention to career guidance competencies. Kenyan training institutions only train counsellors in psychology and give only very little knowledge on career guidance. In Kenya, trainers talk only of guidance and counselling teachers in schools. However, countries in the developed world such as those that are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have different categories such as counsellors, guidance teachers and career guidance practitioners or career technicians (OECD/EU, 2004). This means that career guidance practitioners and career technicians get the relevant training to enable them carry out career guidance effectively.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the research findings, it was concluded that many teacher-counsellors did not have specialised training in guidance and counselling. It is, therefore, recommended that more teachers should be trained in guidance and counselling. Specialised training in career guidance should also be introduced in Kenyan institutions of higher learning.

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