



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ANALYSIS ON GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICE IN METTU COMPREHENSIVE AND PREPARATORY SCHOOL OF ILUBABOR ZONE

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ABSTRACT

Guidance and counseling service has essential role in supporting students take on suitable conduct in the school environment. The purpose of this study was to examine the status of guidance and counseling service in governmental public secondary schools in Ilubabor Zone, Mettu town, Mettu comprehensive and preparatory School in focus. The study employed a descriptive survey design. Target population was 1,375 which comprised of 1,327(Male=726, Female=601) grade 9-12 students and 48(Male=36, Female=12) teachers. From Non-probability sampling design, purposive type was used to select 133 students, 5 teachers and 1 school director. A thematic analysis was done after data's are transcribed and organized into their themes. The result of the study shows that, students encounter diverse academic and psychosocial problems that need the assistance of guidance counselor. Furthermore, the study showed that greater part of the school community are not accessing school guidance and counseling services primarily due to lack of Professional guidance and counseling service provider. The study concluded that guidance and counseling service have scantily contributed to students as a result of lack of professional personnel, inadequate facilities, and ineffective strategies of guidance and counseling were being used in the target school. The study recommended that guidance and counseling service established and strengthened by recruiting professional and facilitating suitable facilities.

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

One of the functions of education is to provide opportunities for each student to reach their full potential in the areas of educational, vocational, personal, and emotional development. Guidance is an integral part of education and is centered directly on this function. Guidance and counseling services prepare students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and grow in their ability to understand and accept the results of their choices (Gibson, 2008; Kauchak, 2011). The purposes of guidance and counseling provide emphasis and strength to the educational program. Some specific aims of the school guidance and counseling program include the following (Gibson, 2009):

To Provide for the Realization of Student Potentialities

To all students, the school offers a wide choice of courses and co-curricular activities. A significant function of education is

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to help students identify and develop their potentialities. The guidance-counselor's role is to assist students to distribute their energies into the many learning opportunities available to them. Every student needs help in planning their major course of study and pattern of co-curricular activities.

To Help Children with Developing Problems

Even those students who have chosen an appropriate educational program for themselves may have problems that require help. A teacher may need to spend from one-fifth to one-third of his time with a few pupils who require a great deal of help, which deprives the rest of the class from the teacher's full attention to their needs. The counselor, by helping these youngsters to resolve their difficulties, frees the classroom teacher to use her/his time more efficiently.

To Contribute to the Development of the School's Curriculum

Counselors, in working with individual students, know their personal problems and aspirations, their talents and abilities, as well as the social pressures confronting them. Counselors, therefore, can provide data that serve as a basis for curriculum

development, and they can help curriculum developers shape courses of study that more accurately reflect the needs of students. Too often, counselors are not included in curriculum development efforts.

### **To Provide Teachers with Technical Assistance**

Pre-service teacher training institutions typically provide very limited experience with the more technical aspects of guidance work. Thus, a need exists in most schools for assistance with guidance and counseling functions essential to the educational program. Specifically, the guidance counselor is qualified to assist teachers with selecting, administering, and interpreting tests; selecting and using cumulative, anecdotal, and other types of records; providing help and suggestions relative to counseling techniques, which teachers can use in counseling their students; and providing leadership in developing and conducting professional development of teachers in guidance functions.

### **To Contribute to the Mutual Adjustment of Students and the School**

Guidance has a responsibility for developing and maintaining a cooperative relationship between students and the school. Teachers and counselors must be cognizant of students' needs. Students also must make adjustments to the school. They have a responsibility to contribute something to the school. A major contribution of students is that of making appropriate use of the school's resources and working toward accomplishments. Such mutual adjustment of students and school is facilitated by providing suggestions for program improvements, conducting research for educational improvements, contributing to students' adjustment through counseling, and fostering wholesome school-home attitudes. The program objectives of school counseling fall into three domains: Educational, Personal/Social, and Career. The educational focus involves the knowledge of academic abilities and educational needs and interests. The personal/social involves the development of an awareness of self and others. The career domain involves the understanding of present and future life roles. These objectives are implemented through developmentally appropriate activities ranging from classroom activities; individual counseling; consultation with parents/guardians, and school personnel; and coordination with community agencies.

Specifically, according to South Carolina Guidance and Counseling Writing Team (2008), the key aspects of the job description of professional-based guidance counselors in high schools include:

- Helping to set up and in-service a Guidance and Counseling Committee that looks after the day-to-day management of the guidance and counseling program in the school;
  - Provide academic, career, college access, and personal and social competencies with developmental classroom lessons and planning to all students, and individual and group counseling for some students and their families to meet the developmental needs of adolescents (Hatch & Bowers, 2003, 2005, 2012).<sup>1</sup>
  - Providing, where possible, one-on-one counseling for pupils and arranging appropriate referrals;
  - Helping to mobilize resources (books, stationery, space etc) for use in the guidance and counseling program.
- The main goal of high school counseling is to help every student develop abilities of self-understanding, decision-making, life planning and action-taking to be able to adjust in the career options he or she decides to pursue (Herr, p. 2001) as discussed in Auma, 2004. In our country Ethiopia, guidance and counseling services are provided from primary to secondary educational settings while it has a very short history. It also designed in the educational curriculum of the country.

### **Background and Geographical Location of the School**

Mettu comprehensive and preparatory School was established and began services in 1963 E.C aimed to serve the communities of mettu town and its surroundings through providing high-quality education. The school is located in Mettu town, the capital of Ilubabor zone, Oromia regional state. Based on the interests of the communities of the town and the increased number of students from year to year, school is growth and transformed to both high school and preparatory program. Currently, there are about 1,327 students and 48 teachers in the school.

### **Statement of the problem**

School Counseling Services are an integral and essential component of the educational process for all students as they progress through the educational system. The need for these services is dictated by the complexity of the human growth process, the demands on youth and the ever changing nature of society. The primary mission of a school's guidance and counseling program is to provide a broad spectrum of personnel services to the students. These services include student assessment, the information service, placement and follow-up, and counseling assistance. These four areas should constitute the core of any guidance program and should be organized to facilitate the growth and development of all students from kindergarten through post high school experiences (Erford, 2010; Erford, 2011; Neukrug, 2011). Bearing in mind these facts, Guidance and Counseling workforce are being educated in our country higher education institutions to deliver services. Even though extensive assets are spent to train these professionals, no data have been collected to describe their programs and activities. There is a need, therefore, to assess the Guidance and Counseling services rendered by school guidance and counselors. However, as many studies agreed up on it, in Ethiopia, the school guidance and counseling services were poorly utilized due to different factors. For example, a research conducted on school guidance and counseling in some high school of Harari region and East Hararge Zone of Oromia region showed that the students had little awareness about its existence of counseling services in the school fence. And also there is no professional counselor equipped with all necessary professional knowledge and skills. Hence, the researcher attempted to analyze the status of guidance and counseling services in Ilubabor zone, with focus on Mettu comprehensive and preparatory School.

### **Rationale of the Assessment**

The high school years is a periods of academic, social, personal, psychological, emotional and intellectual growth for most adolescents and needs special care, support and

assistance. The transition from elementary school to high school and from puberty to adolescent may be associated to several inappropriate and risk behaviors, such as alcohol drinking, chewing khat, smoking, unsafe sex; quarrelling and they also faced to different other social, emotional, psychological behavioral problems which impede their overall well-beings. By resolving physical, emotional, social and academic difficulties of the students and by helping students understand their learning strengths and weaknesses; their academic achievement can be improved and their overall development can be enhanced.

High school students play a great role on the overall development of the country and they are the future owner of their country. Therefore, it is important to invest on youths in order to help them to be competent, visionary and effective member of the society via protecting them from different problems, such as, drug abuse, sexual abuse, poor classroom discipline, low learning motivation, and poor academic performances. The primary mission of a school's guidance and counseling program is to provide a broad spectrum of personnel services to the students. These services include student. Moreover, high school is the most strategic and right place to take decisive action is the school as education has been deemed the 'social vaccine' in as far as it offers the most sustainable means of solving social and cultural ills. To come up with the challenges they faced, professional based counseling service is fruitful and play paramount role among many others, need to be addressed to create healthy well-adapted future generations. Therefore, the rationale or objective of this paper is to analyze the status of guidance and counseling in Mettu comprehensive and preparatory School with respect to the following specific objectives.

### Objectives of the study

- To identify the availability of guidance and counseling center along with services.
- To identify the major students' related problems in school compound.
- To identify the way schools are solving students' problems.
- To identify the common challenges in solving the students' problems.

### Significance of the study

This analysis is very important, because, once problems are investigated; the findings are beneficial for the members of the school (students, teachers, family of the students, and others) in general. This study gives an insight on the major problems under consideration. In addition, the results of the assessment can be used as a beginning point for further investigation on the status of professional-based guidance and counseling along with its services in different high school of our country. This assessment also have significant importance to clearly identify the major problems of the students and then it helps the concerning body to take appropriate measures. Generally, this assessment provides some insight about the importance of professional-based guidance and counseling services in high school programs.

### Instruments of Data Collection

An interview guide and focus group discussion leading question was used to collect data. The school directors and

students were asked about the availability of professional-based guidance and counseling services, major problems faced by the students, measure taken in solving problems and etc. Eventually, document records regarding the proportion of students, teachers, and the background of the school.

### Review of related literatures

According to Ndambuki and Mutie (2003), a student is faced with many difficult situations in today's life. Students have to make wise choices that could help them achieve in both academics and co-curricular activities and also socially adjust to peers, teachers and parents. A study by Bichanga (2005) on students' attitude towards guidance and counseling in seven public secondary schools in Ngong Division, Kajiado District (Kenya) revealed that students seek help more frequently from teachers and counselors of their gender. However, Kelleher (2003) maintained that counselors were responsible for an individual's positive choices and should try to create a favorable environment to attract the client. Stone and Dahir (2006) report that professional school counselors are employed in elementary, middle, junior, high schools, in district supervisory positions and counselor educator positions. They also establish school counseling curriculum that consists of structured lessons designed to help students achieve competencies and also to provide all students with knowledge and skills appropriate for all development levels. Counseling methods and points of view have developed from research and theories about how individuals grow and develop, change their behavior, and interact with their environment. These counseling methods are generally classified into three broad types or schools of thought: directive, nondirective, and eclectic (Neukrug, 2011; Parsons, 2009a; Parsons, 2009b; Parsons, 2009c). The directive counselor is said to be more interested in the problem than he is in the counselee. The directive counselor, however, focuses attention on identifying and analyzing the problem and finding an appropriate solution to it. *Directive counseling* is the method most commonly used by counselors in school settings (Coleman, 2009). The aim of *nondirective counseling* is, according to Rogers, to help the student "to become a better organized person, oriented around healthy goals which [he] has clearly seen and definitely chosen". It aims to provide the student with a united purpose, the courage to meet life and the obstacles that it presents (Rogers, 1942).

*Eclectic counseling* is the result of selecting concepts from both directive and nondirective approaches. Thus, the eclectic counselor uses whatever approach seems best suited to the situation (Coleman, 2009; Parsons, 2009c). In USA, Guidance and Counseling started with the Vocational Guidance Movement. In 1908, Frank Parsons, founded a Vocational Bureau in Boston. Parsons concern and belief was that if individuals can understand their strengths and weaknesses, such knowledge can be used to choose vocational opportunities. This pioneering effort played a great role in the evolution and practice of modern Guidance and Counseling. The vocational guidance movement was an attempt to reduce problems of unemployment, want and poverty among underprivileged Americans. This experiments started by Parsons yielded positive results in that many youngsters benefited tremendously from the services rendered by the bureau (Shertzer and Stone, 1976). Other pioneers in the advancement of counseling associated with the vocational guidance movement are Meyer Bloomfield, who succeeded

Parsons as director of Boston's Vocational Guidance Bureau, Frank P. Godwin of the Cincinnati School system, Jesse B. Davis, Eli Weaver in New York, George Merrill in San Francisco and Hugo Munsterberg of Harvard University. Each of these guidance pioneers put in their best to see to the growth of the service. For instance, in 1910, Meyer Bloomfield single handedly promoted the first National Conference on vocational guidance in the United States of America. Eli Weaver, on the other hand, promoted the Second National Conference on vocational guidance in 1912 while George Merrill was the first American to practice counseling within the school system when he was a tutor in 1895 at the Californian School of Mechanical Arts, San Francisco. Hugo Munsterberg also pioneered the development of career guidance in industry with the publication of his text titled "Psychology and Industrial Efficiency" (NOUN, 2006).

### School Guidance and Counseling Services

Each school provides the following guidance and counseling services to all students:

1. Academic guidance which assists students and their parents to acquire knowledge of the curricula choices available to students, to plan a program of studies, to arrange and interpret academic testing and to seek post-secondary academic opportunities.
2. Career guidance which helps students to acquire information and plan action about work, jobs, apprenticeships and post-secondary educational and career opportunities.
3. Personal/social counseling which assists a student to develop an understanding of themselves, the rights and needs of others, how to resolve conflict and to define individual goals, reflecting their interests, abilities and aptitudes. Information and records of personal/social counseling will be kept confidential and separate from a student's educational records and not disclosed to third parties without prior parental consent or as otherwise provided by law. Parents may elect, by notifying their child's school in writing, to have their child not participate in personal/social counseling.

### Sampling and sample size

In this chapter, the methods and procedures employed to carry out this study are described. First, the type of research design employed is indicated, and then the research site and population of the study are stated followed by sample and sampling techniques and the instruments used to collect data. Finally, ethical considerations and the data analyses techniques are discussed.

### Research Design

In this study non- probability sampling specifically purposive sampling method is used. Sample from Mettu comprehensive and preparatory School were taken on the basis of their availability.

### Research Site and Population

This study was conducted in Ilubabor Zone in Oromia regional State. Ilubabor Zone contains 14 Weredas. Mettu town is

serving as a seat and administrative center of the Zone. It is located at a distance of 600 kilometers from the capital of the country, Addis Ababa. The populations of this study were Mettu comprehensive and preparatory School teachers and students.

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

Target population was 1375 which comprised of 1,327 grade 9-12 students and 48 teachers. From Non-probability sampling design, purposive type was used to select 133 students, 5 teachers and 1 school director. Accordingly, data were collected from 133 students, 5 teachers and 1 school director through the use of interview guide and focus group discussion. The data from the interview and focus group discussions were used to elaborate on the issues under discussion.

### Research Instruments

In order to collect data for this study the following data collecting instruments were used.

1. Interview guide
2. Focus group discussion questions
3. Document analysis

### Ethical Considerations

The research participants were asked to give their informed consent prior to looking for their responses. They were informed that information obtained from them would be presented anonymously and used for the purpose of the specified study by ensuring the participants to use the collected data solely for the academic purpose or research purpose.

### Methods of Data Analysis

The data were processed using descriptive on the basis of their appropriateness for answering the research questions. In this study qualitative research method with case study design was used to conduct the study. Data were gathered through interview and focused group discussion tools. The data and information obtained through interview and focused group with teachers, students and school director were used. The total number of populations involved in study was 139.

## RESULTS

One of the specific objectives of this analysis was identifying the accessibility of guidance and counseling services based on professional orientation. However, as the information obtained from the school director, there is no professional oriented guidance and counseling services for students as well as staff members.

### Major student related problems

- Students' misbehavior in the class. i.e.,
  1. Side talk
  2. Poor attention of students
  3. Entry to the class without the consent/permission of the teacher teaching in the class
- Absenteeism

- Poor academic achievement
- Drug abuse/Addiction
- Late coming
- Conflict with teachers and each other (bullying) etc.

### The way the school is solving students' problems

As evidence from the director shown, though there is no professional counselor, they solve students' related problems through considering different hierarchies such as class representative, class attendant teacher, unit leader, discipline committees and families of misbehaved students. In addition, they are also solving students' late coming problem through staying them out of the compound till the brake time as punishment. Generally, they highly focus on guiding students based up on the rule and regulation of the school; they don't give much attention in solving the students' personal, psychological, behavioral, social problems, such as failing in love, drug use, etc.

### Conclusion

The main objective of this analysis was to assess the accessibility status of professional based guidance and counseling program along with its services in Mettu comprehensive and preparatory School, the major problems the students faced, and the way through which the school is dealing/solving student's problems. As information gathered from the research participants, there is no professional-based guidance and counseling programs along with its services. Therefore, the school is solving students' problems, such as misbehavior in the class, absenteeism, being late, conflict between each other etc, through collaborating with the class monitor, class attendant, discipline committee, and school board who participates selected families of the students. Specifically, for students who are being late, the school solving through staying them out of the compound till brake time. In addition, the school highly intended in solving the students' academic problems in line with the rule and regulation of the school, and gives less consideration in solving the personal, social, psychological, behavioral problems of the students.

### Recommendations

As far as this assessment concerned with assessing the availability and function of professional based guidance and counseling services in Mettu comprehensive and preparatory School, different results were obtained from this process. Hence, based on the result of the assessment, the following recommendations are made. This school has 1,327 students and 48 teachers, but there is no professional counselor who provides guidance and counseling services for this community. Therefore, it is better if they recruit professional counselor.

- There is no professional-based guidance and counselor who is important figure in solving physical, psychological, social problems solving of the students. There is no counseling center which serves for guidance and counseling services. So that it is better if facilitated.
- Mettu University/Mettu Collage of Teachers Education also has to have contact with school by facilitating and sending voluntary professionals who want to help students.
- Following the absence of professional service, the school merely focuses on the rule and regulations of the school i.e. do not consider their social, psychological, vocational and adjustment aspects. Therefore, the school has to deal with concerned government body to facilitate recruitment of professional.
- The way they treat late comer student is not good, for example, a student who come late stay out of the compound until the break time, but this leads students to get involved in inappropriate behaviors such as drug abuse, gambling and etc. Here, the researcher strongly recommend that they need to use appropriate negative reinforcement such as assigning to certain work in the compound until the student stop coming late behavior.

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