

Perceived Effects of Guidance Services on Students' Study Habits and Attitudes in Private Secondary Schools in Gasabo District, Rwanda.

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Abstract: Educational and occupational scenes are changing fast everywhere. As such, the students should adapt his or her study attitudes and study habits to those changes. The substantive aim of the study was to examine the perceived effects of guidance services namely educational guidance, vocational guidance, health guidance, social guidance and counselling services on students' study habits and attitudes. The mean and correlation was used to measure the level of effectiveness of guidance services. The results revealed that the five guidance services mentioned above, moderately affected the study habits and attitudes of secondary student's with an overall mean rating of 1.89.

Key Words: Guidance services, study habits, study attitudes

INTRODUCTION

Today's young people are living in an exciting time and with an increasingly diverse and mobile society. They are all expected to have basic study habits and attitudinal skills for optimum achievement, live and share facilities with others in the institution, and face new technologies and competitions (Kochhar, S K 2000).

In such circumstances, studying and achieving their academic goals must be a challenge. Thus, expert help is needed for the optimum achievement and academic adjustment in these varied life situations.

Every student needs support, guidance, counselling opportunities during adolescence, a time of rapid growth and change, which has an impact on their study

habits and attitudes.

Kochhar (2000) continues and state that, many students are shy, fearful, insecure and not skilled in managing their own affairs. They are unhappy because of a variety of reasons. These include feelings of failure, inadequacy, rigid, authoritarian rules, lack of study materials, financial constraints, and lack of meaning or purpose in life, among others.

As such, students require educational, vocational, health, social and counselling services so that they can cope with the various demands and adjust their attitudes and study habits.

According to Braddock (2001), the purposes of guidance and counselling services

for schools is to improve academic achievement, foster positive study attitudes and study habits, increase acquisition and application of conflict resolution skills, and decrease dropouts.

In 1994, UNESCO welcomed a proposal for guidance and counselling from the African Ministers of Education as a way of addressing new trends within the African cultural and educational context. Since then, they have continued their appeal to UNESCO to support their countries in implementing this program. The consensus reached was that guidance and counselling should be an integral part of the education of children and should be included in the teacher training programs. (<http://www.unesco.org/education/mebam/index.shtml>)

Rwanda, as a country addresses many issues related to psychosocial issues and concerns, career development, educational needs, and personal experiences faced by young people in and out of school (MINEDUC, (2003). These challenges were created by the impact of 1994 genocide, HIV/AIDS in most communities, poverty and related problems. In this regard, guidance services in secondary schools are helping the students to improve the students' study habits and attitudes. Furthermore, students find themselves faced with a complexity of choices, personal adjustment problems, and

low academic achievement based on their study habit, which results in creating anxieties and emotional tensions, and which, in turn, may lead to misbehaviour.

The government of Rwanda decided that guidance services should be put in place in Rwandan schools. This was necessary because of the events of 1994 genocide, which left the people of Rwanda with physical and psychological scars. It was believed that guidance and counselling services would be the solutions to many student problems, so that the students can be helped to adjust their study attitudes and habits. (Rwanda Ministry of Education, 2008)

Abid, (2006) conducted a research in New York on the effect of guidance services on academic achievement of secondary school students. The findings of his study as well as other similar studies conducted in this area revealed that guidance services are effective for the improvement of school instruction.

Another study was conducted by Hudesman et al. (1986) to compare the impacts of structured and non-directive counselling styles on academic performance of high-risk students. Results indicated that students in structured counselling condition had higher Grade Point Average (GPA) than those in non-directive counselling condition at the end of the semester.

In Rwanda, there is no research that has been conducted on guidance services at any level of education and many schools are still using informal guidance and counselling; that is why the current study intended to find out the effects of guidance services on students' study attitudes and study habits among private secondary schools in Gasabo district. This is because private secondary schools don't have enough supervision from government comparing to public schools.

Majority of secondary school students in Rwanda are faced with educational problems such as lack of academic information, wrong choices of educational courses, academic motivation, and loneliness among students, difficulty in taking notes and passing examinations, and problems emanating from the 1994 genocide. The above cited problems inhibit directly or indirectly the students' study attitudes. It is here that guidance services are needed to help students to adjust their study habits and attitudes so that they could cope with their academic pursuits.

The present study assessed the perceptions of students enrolled in private secondary schools in Gasabo district on the effects of guidance services on students' study habits and attitudes.

The study wished, therefore, to answer specifically the following questions:

1. How effective are the guidance services of private secondary schools in Gasabo district as perceived by the students?
2. How are the students study habits and attitudes in Gasabo District?
3. What is the relationship between guidance services and perceived effects on students' study habits and attitudes?

METHODS

The methods, tools and/or instruments that were employed in this study are presented. It describes, the conceptual framework; area of the study, study design, the population and sample selection methods, and instruments used in data collection and analysis as well as the procedure and limitations met.

Conceptual Framework

This part presents the scheme of concepts of variables that the researcher used to achieve the objectives. In this study, the independent variables would be expected to have a positive influence on the dependent variable. This is because the independent variables are treated as a whole and are understood in totality and not in isolation.

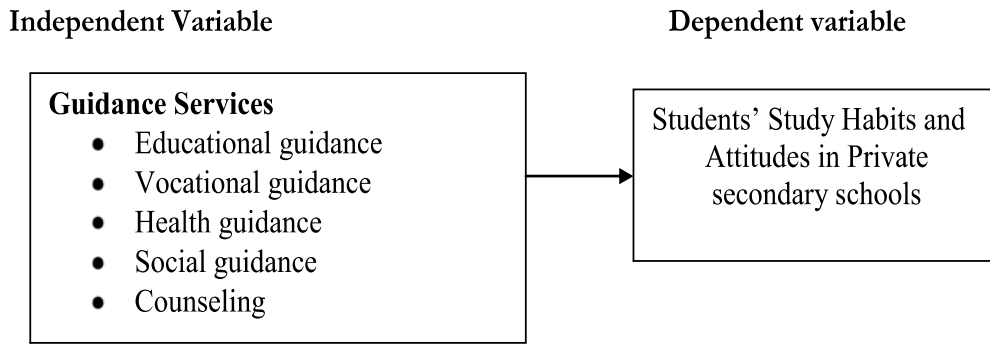


Figure1: Conceptual framework showing the independent and dependent variables that were used in the study.

Population and Sample size

The sample of 133 students was taken by using 30% of 443 students of the 4 selected private secondary schools in Gasabo district which are APAER, APADE, ADEB, and AIPER-Nyandungu. The sample members were selected from Senior 6 students of those selected schools by using systematic sampling.

The reliability coefficients was Alpha equal to 0.8438 and 0.7773 which is found to be reliable

After this pilot study, all research instruments were administered without any problem because the reliability of the instruments was bigger than .7

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to organize and analyze the data collected.

It was also converted into levels of effectiveness and improvement in study habits and attitudes.

Scale	Range	Interpretation	Interpretation
4 -Strong Agree (4)	3.26-4.00	Very effective	Much improved
3 -Agree	2.51-3.25	Effective	Improved
2 -Disagree	1.76-2.5	Moderately effective	Moderately improved
1 -Strong disagree	1.0-1.75	Least effective	Least improved

Moreover the relationship between the independent and dependent variables was done by the use of the scale below

Range	Interpretation
Above 0.91	Very high relationship
0.70-0.91	High relationship
0.41 – 0.70	Moderate relationship
0.21 – 0.40	Low relationship

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data solicited from the respondents are placed in tabular form together with the corresponding analysis and interpretation.

Summary on the Effectiveness of the Five Types of Guidance Services

The results show that the effects of the five guidance services on the students' study habits and attitudes. Specifically, the findings present the average mean of each type of guidance service, and identify the overall mean, which is equal to 1.89. This proves that guidance services are moderately effective. It appears, therefore, that some guidance services are more effective than others. The most effective are counselling services with an average mean of 2.39. This is

followed by vocational guidance with an average mean of 2.39. The one with the lowest average mean of 1.53 is educational guidance services. In general, the findings confirm that guidance services have the significant effects on students study habits and attitudes.

Braddock (2001) states that the purposes of guidance services for schools are to improve academic achievement, foster positive study habits and attitudes, increase acquisition and application of conflict resolution skills, and decrease dropouts.

Table 1: Summary on the Effectiveness of the Five Types of Guidance Services

Types Of Guidance Services	Average Mean	Descriptive
1. Educational guidance services	1.53	Least effective
2. Vocational guidance services	2.19	Moderate Effective
3. Health guidance services	1.76	Moderately effective
4. Social guidance services	1.56	Least effective
5. Counselling services	2.39	Moderate Effective
Over all mean	1.89	Moderately effective

Students' Study Habits and Attitudes

To answer specifically question 2 of the study, subsequent paragraphs contain the corresponding tables with its analysis and interpretation. This specific objective was

concentrated on study habits and attitudes of secondary school students after being given guidance services.

The findings reflect how students' study habits and attitudes are described.

Specifically, each item mean and the average mean of all items is equal to 2.30. This means that students study habits and attitudes are moderately improved.

Going into the specific items the top three that describe students' habits and attitudes are: existence of genocide related problems, in their classes due to the lack of social guidance services (item mean =3.30). This implies that their study habits and attitudes relative to genocide related problems have been much improved due to their decreased association with concerned persons.

Another item which describes study habits and attitudes is that they no longer feel lonely due to the counselling services given to them (item mean =2.56). Also they are healthy because health guidance services are provided (2.74). The above item means that they have improved their study habits and attitudes due to the fact that they no longer feel lonely and are also healthy. The students' fight against HIV/ AIDS got a computed mean of 1.33, which is described as least improved. This may be due to the concept that HIV/ AIDS is a disease that is incurable.

Rao (2006) concur that students need to be guided in order to develop good study habits; they also need adequate preparation that they can develop self-confidence to sit for their examinations. Special guidance has to be provided at crisis points; for example, if

students find difficulty in following certain subjects, they lack concentration, obtain poor grades; as such they have to be guided to overcome these difficulties.

Correlation between all Guidance Services Grouped and Student's Study Habits and Attitudes

The combination of all guidance services gives a general image of the relationship between guidance services and students study habits and attitudes.

By this correlation, $r = .78^{**}$, $P = 0.00$, we realized that the students of private secondary schools in Gasabo district, are aware of guidance services and accept that these services are very important. These services may improve their academic performance and may promote relationships in and out of class among students through social guidance services. Also, guidance services may ameliorate the health status of students by providing health guidance services; vocational services may allow students to identify their potentials in order to make good career choices. This correlation ($r = .787^{**}$ and $P = .000$) shows that all these services have a positive impact on students' study habits and attitudes.

Students at secondary level face many problems, which are likely to hinder the development of positive study attitudes and study habits. The results revealed that

guidance services have significant positive effect on students' study habits and attitudes and may inturn improve students' academic performance.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicate that there is a need for guidance services. Specially, the secondary school students enrolled in private schools of Gasabo district disclosed that guidance services moderately affected their study habits and attitudes, particularly the counselling services. The respondents described their study habits and attitudes as moderately improved. A highly positive significant relationship exist between guidance services and students study habits and attitudes.

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