



STATUS OF COUNSELING SERVICES IN ILALA MUNICIPAL'S PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: ISSUES NECESSITATING EFFECTIVE COUNSELING SERVICE PROVISION

Sweetbert Frank

Department of Community Development and Gender (CDG)

Moshi Co-operative University (MoCU)

Email: frankjunior47@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of a school is to develop academic domain, to build personal and social health and bring out the best person to the society. Promoting the efforts of improving students both academically, personally and socially requires investigating issues that may hinder healthy development of the person during education process. This study sought to evaluate the status of counseling services in public secondary schools. Specifically, the study evaluated counseling issues among students in Ilala secondary schools and examined strategies used to resolve the prevailed counseling issues. The study employed phenomenological design of qualitative approach with a sample size of 61 respondents including students and teachers who were selected purposively. Interviews and focus group discussions were methods of gathering data for the study. Data were thematically analysed to reveal counseling issues and strategies used to resolve them at school. The findings revealed that students were exposed to a variety of issues that need concrete definition in the process of resolving. However, the strategies used to resolve the students' counseling issues were found to be inadequate to curb the complexity of some determined issues. The study concludes that the prevailed situation among students results from the customary approach of counseling services provision in practice that do not cover counseling needs of students fully. Thus, the study recommends the need for matching students' counseling needs with appropriate approach hence, the demand of effective counseling services provision from qualified counselors with design programs.

Key words: Counseling, Counselor, Teacher-counselor, Counseling service

Paper type: Research paper

Type of Review: Peer Review

1. INTRODUCTION

Counseling in school is placed to provide a range of services to assist students to make the most of their experiences and help them manage academic and personal problems (Stallman, 2012). Counseling is a crucial service to learning institutions that prepare individuals who will serve the community and entire nation. This is due to the fact that, it give ease of access to knowledge of student issues (Stallman, 2012). Nkuba and Kyaruzi (2015) contended that counseling acts as a vehicle to human development as it changes and enhances life of individuals. Moreover, they reported that the service is currently becoming necessary to school learners because they are facing a number of challenges in their process of learning which affect them socially, psychologically and academically. It is from this essence, that counseling services in the school context is of a paramount importance. Failure to adjust properly to all psychological, social and academic facets may affect education of young people and expose students to either environmental or personal problems that may impede healthy development (Wako, 2016).

The Humanistic Learning Theory developed by Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and James F.T Bugental in the early 1900's contended that, a school needs to establish environment that help students feel comfortable and safe to focus in learning. They emphasizes that students as human beings are more driven by feelings than rewards and punishment; which means, when students are upset, sad or distressed, they are less likely to be able focus on learning. Therefore, the theory advocates that effective counseling service is a useful tool that can free students from self-deception about their problems and become motivated to work without problems whenever they happen (Purswell, 2019).

In Tanzania, school guidance and counseling services are among the recommended supportive services in the process of teaching and learning as stipulated in different education documents including the respective Education and Training Policy (2014), education curriculum and circulars on education provision including circular no. 11 of 2002. The recognition over provision of such service has long history since 1981; however, 2002 was a year that respective circular on provision of guidance and counseling in schools was disseminated in schools and teachers' colleges. Providers of the service are teachers appointed with agreement between heads of schools and teaching staff members. Since then, different studies were done on the effectiveness of the services including the modality of service, skills and competences, as well as extermination of behavioural malpractices among students.

However, findings from the reviewed studies particularly those conducted in Ilala Municipal in Dar es Salaam had revealed that the services are not satisfactory as the problems including those from behavioural malpractices seem to prevail. For instance, the massive student dropout due to early pregnancies, truancy, drug abuse and alcohol use as well as bullying behaviour at school have been reported by a number of studies and from official government documents (BEST, 2016; BEST, 2019; Yusuph & Negret, 2016; Manyerere, 2016). The study conducted by Masalu (2018) on students' indiscipline cases in secondary schools found that the perpetration of destructive behaviour turns into seriousness as students engaged with acts of alcohol taking, absenteeism, unsafe sexual relationship, indecent dressing and abusive language. On the other side, the Basic Education Statistics (2018) reported that although there is a rising of Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) pass rate from 2013 to date, the number of students who attain a good pass in Division I to III is still relatively small compared to majority of the students who only pass with division IV.

This situation brings an assumption that if other factors resulting into academic performance like school facilities and qualified teachers are available, then personal challenges might have attribution to the massive lower pass (Division IV).Salgong, Ngumi, and Chege (2016) contended that provision of guidance and counseling seek to help students comprehend and appreciate the life experience in healthy manner, being able to recognise the factors that cause problems and look for appropriate methods of resolving or avoiding the situations that may lead to unhealthy lifestyles. Abel (2016), Manyerere (2017) and Mduma (2017) in their studies revealed that guidance and counseling services in schools was not adequate as students claimed their problems to be not properly attended, which someone may assume to be due to the unclear definition on students' issues. Moreover, Mduma (2017) found the services to be slightly organised in its provision that could be due to little understanding on the diagnosing the challenges. This doubt of clarity in defining issues students are facing called for the study which revealed students' counseling issues and how those issues are defined and handled by teachers in schools. This study was conducted in Ilala Municipal since it was reported by BEST (2019) as the leading district in students' dropout due to indiscipline that might imply the indicator of inadequate counseling services. Therefore, the study specifically sought to evaluate counseling issues among students, and to examine strategies used by teachers to resolve counseling issues.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in five public secondary schools from Ilala Municipality, Dar es Salaam. Despite the fact that issues to students might be similar in all schools in Tanzania, Dar es Salaam is one of the regions in which most recent studies done on counseling provision revealed inadequacies of the services provided, and Ilala appeared the most to those studies (Mduma, 2017; Nkuba, 2012; Nkuba and Kyaruzi, 2015; and Said, 2015). Moreover, Ilala Municipal statistically leads other municipalities in Tanzania with students' dropout due to indiscipline among students (BEST, 2019). Thus, despite other factors mentioned, the trend might imply emphasis of inadequate counseling services in the study area. The study employed a phenomenological research design of qualitative approach in the process of generating data since it is believed to be effective in capturing the experiences and observations of situations by individuals from their own perspectives.

Quota and purposive sampling were used to sample schools and key informants of the study. Quota sampling was used to select schools on the basis of groups' representation by school types. The characteristics guided in the identification of school sub-categories represented in the sample were the public secondary schools located in the city center and those located in the peripheral, single sex schools (boys' only schools and girls' only schools) and boarding schools. Moreover, to capture the experiences from all levels of secondary school concurrently, the characteristic of sampled schools to have both ordinary and advanced levels were added. Thereafter, from each sub-category, one school was selected to form a sample of five schools from the research site.

Purposive sampling was used to select key informants involved in the study. Teacher counselors and heads of schools were selected by virtue of their position at school since they engaged in monitoring the moral behaviours and resolving maladjusted behaviours as directed by Secondary School Management Toolkit (2015), and Education Circular No. 11. Students' leaders from Form Six and Form Four were selected with justification that their long stay in the school context, working as teachers assistants in monitoring and supervising fellow students had given them exposure as well as experiences on students' issues. The sample size was 61 respondents, including head of school, two teachers, counselors and students from each school among the five selected. The sample size obtained provide adequate information depend the nature of the study approach. This is in line with Cohen, Manion and Marison (2007) who contended that for the qualitative study there is no clear-cut answer of the correct sample size, but it depends on the purpose of the study and the nature of the population under scrutiny.

Semi-structured interview was used to obtain information from teacher counselors and heads of school due to their available number. The focus group discussion of 10 respondents was used to students in five selected schools, however, in two schools the number was less than 10, students who were participated are 7 and 9 as they were only students' leaders found from the targeted class. Thematic analysis was used in analyzing the obtained qualitative data, followed six steps namely; data familiarisation, generation of the initial codes, searching for theme, review and refine the theme, define and naming the theme and the last was reporting as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) and supported also by Iwata (2021).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to evaluate issues that may call effective counseling provision in relation to the nature of counseling services currently given to students. The leading questions were: firstly, what are the students' issues that necessitate counseling services? Secondly, how are the teachers involved in resolving those issues? From the findings, the themes obtained generally revealed various students' issues that demand effective counseling services.

3.1 Determinants of Counseling Services

This was the first objective aimed to evaluate counseling issues among students. Evaluating those issues are meant to determine the counseling services needed to be effectively focused in addressing the students' needs in schools. From the study findings, the following issues were revealed to be determinants of counseling services:

3.1.1 Socio-emotional challenges

The challenges related to socio-emotional was identified to be one of the issues facing students. Majority of the interviewed teachers reported having witnessed students with challenges related to socio-emotional issues. This is due to related socio-emotional characteristics reported by teachers on students including some students' preferred to disengage from others, lack of self-control as some students were seen to be aggressive to fellow students; disrespect behaviour to elders especially teachers and lack of care for others. During the interview, one respondent teacher associated the fighting behaviour of some students due to lack of feelings about others that signify socio-emotional challenges as TC1¹ School A reports: *"...cases of students' fighting happen now and then, this shows how some of our children lack feelings about others..."* (Interviewed TC1, school A).

Other students seemed perplexed and frustrated with too much thinking related to the life situations, demonstrated unhappiness mood at school, hence disengage with others. The cause of socio-emotional challenges was associated with the nature of parenting, domestic violence among parents or sometimes against children and life hardship. The study found that, the majority of students with socio-emotional challenges lived with single parents; others lived with either step parents or under the care of grandparents and some were those neglected by their parents. Such life situation has been associated with triggering of socio-emotional challenges exhibited by the students as it was revealed in students' complaints to their teachers during the counseling sessions, as the following respondent reports: *"Majority of students lives in vulnerable situations including home hardships. Those in single parenting are gloomy not well interacting with fellow students"* (Interviewed TC2², school D).

Another interviewed teacher from school C commented that the persistence of related socio-emotional challenges could result in school dropout among students:

"...Sometimes, students' truancy is not caused by their preference to stay home, but can be caused by a lot of things in their minds. Failure to get appropriate psychological counseling makes them quit from school" (Interviewed CT1³, school C).

In focus group discussions, students concurred with teachers' views regarding socio-emotional challenges among students. However, students explained that the socio-emotional challenges with maladaptive behaviours, some students encounter resulted from examination performance and individual life experiences. Students reported that differences in performance caused other low achievers regard themselves as non-significant persons. Other students reported the experience of emotional challenges as a result of life experiences. In one of focus group discussion, students reported life experiences of missing parental support in their studies. The situation was claimed for individual student to lose personal worthiness by devaluing his or her significance of continuing even with studies as complained in a statement during focus group discussion:

¹ First interviewed teacher counselor from sampled school

² Second interviewed teacher counselor from sample school

³ First interviewed class teacher from sampled school

"...Students may come to school every day, even by being forced by parents. But sometimes the parental support for school needs is very poor. The school needs bus fares every day, something to eat; text books but parents may pretend not concerned. It reaches a time you are tempted to do wrong things like quitting from school..." (FGD with students, school A).

Therefore, the revealed findings in the psychological perspective might have implications on the likely growth of complications in self-esteem, peer relationship, social interaction, but also engagement in drugs and gangs among the affected one. These findings are in tandem with findings by Harris and Orth (2019) who found that social relationships have a prospective effect on self-esteem in all phases of human life span and the link is truly reciprocal. Currently, education systems around the world acknowledge the need of education setting to understand and deal with socio-emotional wellbeing among students. This is due to the fact that consequences of socio-emotional health may lead to challenges in learning processes. This concurs with Berger, Alcalay, Torretti and Milicic (2011) who remarked that socio-emotional wellbeing plays a significant role for student to engage well in learning and have determination on the academic achievement. It is also in line with humanistic learning theory which advocate student as human being is driven by feeling (emotions) and that needs to feel safe mentally, physically and emotionally in order to be able to focus on learning (Purswell, 2019).

3.1.2 Lack of self-determination among students

Experience from students revealed the incidences of some students who arrived at school with high commitment to studies, but they suddenly changed and dropped completely their primary mission after being influenced by their peers who did not have a clearly defined mission to study. The scenario marked inability of some students to make choices and manage their own life direction. The study associated such changes and variations of students' mission at school with different backgrounds which needed counseling to make students from every background become self-determined and motivated to attain a common goal at school which is learning. This was evidenced from one focus group discussion by students who commented that:

"...After arriving to school, some students begin associating with friends who change their behavior completely. We meet different people from different backgrounds at school, but unknowingly we get forced to imitate the behaviours of others. I think there is a need to shape students by letting them know who they are, what should be done and the kind of people they need to interact with..." (FGD with students, school B).

From the student's quote above, it was observed that some students failed to achieve their education goals not because of their intellectual incapability in the subjects but lack of self-determination; and especially when such a state of affairs is left unattended. In addition, the assertion implies that students in their school life are experiencing the influences of peers that exceed their internal locus of control that render them to be confronted with incapability of controlling themselves with external drives. Furthermore, lack of self-determination was referenced by the students with the state of students to be in school but failed to realise the purpose of being in school, the strategy of success to go with and type of good friends to interact with. This challenge was not realised by teachers, maybe they overlooked or counted this as usual individual difference, thus counseling has less significance to work on that. Moreover, this challenge may be considered by the teachers as the issue that need elders' guidance of reaching the destiny and not the concern of counseling for developing personal autonomy for self-control.

It was also deemed important to assess the significance of being self-determined. Through interviews, the findings showed that a person needs to have control over the choices he or she makes and the success

though autonomous is psychologically explained to motivate a particular individual towards life's goal achievement. However, the study found that autonomy among students is mostly interfered with influences of peers which someone may also refer as being overwhelmed with world information. Results on students who are influenced by peers and lose proper self-determination correspond to ASCA (2017) which declared that, adolescent students are mostly influenced by peers in their evaluation of strengths, skills and ability. This implies that in developmental process of maturity, individuals may deviate from the right direction in the search for self-identity. That is mostly happening to adolescents in which most of secondary school students are falling into, hence a need for counseling that could outline the aspects that students fail to realise and improve their self-determination.

The provided guidance and counseling services at school might also engaged with this, but the persistence of this issue may implies the challenges on systematic diagnosis of obstructs to self-determination. Promotion of self-determination at school can be through designed school guidance and counseling programmes and life skills education programmes. Improvement on self determination to students may have impacts in educational outcomes and in assuming other life responsibilities in future as adults. This was also connoted by Hui and Tsang (2012) who reported that students who are regulated by autonomous and intrinsic motivation are the one most to experience more positive educational outcomes and school satisfaction. Moreover, Evers (2013); Hui and Tsang (2012) concur with this finding that students have to be developed in the skills of controlling one's life choice by knowing themselves, setting goals and selecting supportive people; but also autonomy, value acquisition and ethics are items to be internalised through effective counseling. Therefore, there should be counseling services that builds sense of competences and intrinsic motivation over choices of who to be among students.

3.1.3 Early sexual behavioural practice/ Sexual orientation and Sexual Identity

Early engagement in sexual behaviours among youths may be counted as obvious practice as resulted from developmental challenges, and moral decay due to negative impacts of science and technology. However, in this study, it is counted as an issue that requires attention as it appears to prevail despite the efforts teachers place in guiding students to abstain from sexual practices. Pertaining to sexual behaviours, respondents were required to state how early sexual behavioural practices affect their academic progress and sexual orientation. Through interviews, one of the heads of schools reported to experience a consecutive trend of sexual behavioural cases including some of the students especially girls to move from their homes and cohabit somewhere for some time. Moreover, in one of the schools, one teacher mentioned the incidence of other students engaging in misbehaviors like homosexuality. This is supported by various teachers as exemplified hereunder:

"...Last year, five female students were reported at school that they disappeared from their home and stayed with their lovers for about two months. One can imagine how serious this issue was. Moreover, parents could take initiatives to report but after the child appeared at home, no parent came to give feedback and see how we could stay with the child..." (Interviewed HS⁴, school D).

The quote was corroborated by teacher counselor at school C:

"...The problem of sexual relationship is also a big challenge among students, because some of the students have started even same sex relationship secretly. It is bad and sad. May be if proper counseling is given to such students, it could possibly change their mindsets and curb the situation..." (Interviewed TC1, school C).

⁴ *Interviewed Head of school from sample school*

Information provided by the head of school and teacher counselor may imply the existence of over control on sexual orientation and sexual identity among students. This is due to the fact that majority of the students in secondary schools are at age falling under the transition period of sexual latency to mature sexual behaviour. There is a psychological construct that at age of youth sexual orientation is directed on recreation, source of status and achievement and learning about close relationship (Santrock *et al.*, 2008). This marks the significance for guide personnel to extinct such mentality and fills the original courtship function of sexual relationship.

In focus group discussions early sexual behaviour practice was reported by students with the claim that the early engagement in sexual relationships among students reduces the concentration on studies; and that the behaviour has been increasing day after day. Although, students admitted that the school management makes efforts to cast off the persistence of such behaviour, cases are still counted day to day as remarked in one of the focus group discussion:

"...we do not know why students are still involving in early sexual practices, but the situation is real jeopardizing academic prosperity although teachers make efforts to stop this..." (FGD with students, school B).

The management of early sexual behaviours might have different mechanisms depending on the root causes of the problems. This is because factor drove certain student might be different from the other, hence, other challenges into early sexual practices may need intensive individual attention in counseling rather than a thorough intervention. Early sexual behaviours might also be the result of low self-esteem, challenges with locus of control and self-concept of which counseling have significant impact to bring back the consciousness of individuals. This is in line with Farid, Che' Rus, Dahlui and Al-Sadat (2013) in their study who found that sexual initiation among youth were initiated with multiple factors including permissive attitude toward premarital sex, sexual abuse in childhood, inability to control sex drive, perception of sex as expression of love and previous use of alcohol and illicit drugs. It was also echoed by Laddunuri (2013) who observed that students' engagement factors to sex practices have relation with family structure (polygamy and separated), parents' level of education, peer pressure and engagement for fun.

The observed multiple causes of early sexual behaviours and the approaches currently applied implies the need of comprehensive sexual education and alteration of mind in relation to sexual behaviours to students. The comprehensive guidance and counseling services on sexual education may help to resolve the confusion over the conflicting message they receive either internally (in mind) or externally on sexual orientation and sex identity. Strengthening the services either through designing qualified curriculum-based sexual education or hiring qualified counselors may help students to navigate over sexuality messages and develop efficacy in making decision about their sexuality and life style.

3.1.4 Panic and generalised anxiety

In interviews and focus group discussions with teachers and students, panic and generalised anxiety among students was revealed to challenge students' academic prosperity. This is due to their reports on the experiences of tensions and fear among students particularly when closer to examinations. In order to know how panic and generalised anxiety affect students, respondents were asked to state how they experience the causes. Through interviews with teachers, it was revealed that panic and generalised anxiety affect many of the students in maintaining their academic performance. To represent the majority, one teacher was quoted saying:

"...Sometimes we are fascinated to notice that some students who were intellectually capable during normal class assignments failed in examinations, although were also busy with exam preparations. It could be because of the examination tension..." (Interviewed CT1, school C).

From the quoted response of CT1, panic and generalised anxiety might be attributed to examination failure among students due to excessive tension that cause loss of confidence to attempt perfectly exams. Nevertheless, other interviewed teachers viewed the tendency of panic behaviour as resulting from poor preparations due to multiple engagements in non-academic activities. As one quoted,

"...other cases to students is because our children (students) today like to engage with irrelevant issues..." (Interviewed TC1, school A).

Panic and generalised anxiety further emerged during focus group discussions as students reported the experience of unnecessary worries on studying natural science subjects and mathematics. Others raised the experience of unnecessary fear about examination and admitted that sometimes they performed poorly in examinations not because of inadequate private preparation but the fear related to examinations. However, students directed their excessive fear on the national examinations and linked it with examination performance. This was evidenced by students in a focus group discussion as exemplified by one of them:

"...Sometimes this mass failure of students in the final examination like NECTA is not only caused by poor mastery of the subjects by the students, but happens the moment close to examinations. Students tend to forget what they have learnt that could be used to answer in exams. Moreover, one may experience abnormalities like stomach ache and frequent headache as the examinations approach, or sometimes trembling in the examination room. All these happen sometimes due to future expectations and self-commitment. May be this recurrent worry and fear can be resolved if students get enough psychological preparation..."(FGD with students, school D).

The quote above shows that sometimes students experience psychosomatic symptoms resulting from fear and worry of examinations. However, students linked their poor performance in examinations with psychological dysfunctional constructs developed in individual student that make him/her fear exams and perceive themselves as incapable. Additionally, the study found that students' expectations established by perhaps student themselves or parents were the causes of anxiety and fear in learning. This happens especially when the challenges of those particular subjects were perceived to be hard and jeopardized the desired goals. The state of anxiety found among students corresponds with findings by Yusuph (2016) in his study of anxiety and academic performance in Tanzania found that majority of students experienced anxiety. However, in that study teachers' practices and behaviours, corporal punishment, rules and students' irresponsibility were found to be the causes of anxiety among students.

Furthermore, the findings portrayed that, panic and generalised anxiety works too as factor for deteriorating academic development among students. These findings concur with findings by Gichohi (2019) and Yusuph (2016) in the study of influence of anxiety to academic performance who found that levels of learning anxiety and study skills deficit reduce chances of student excelling academically. However, the concerns and psychological perspectives of teachers and students on panics and anxieties imply the prevailed state require students to be equipped with knowledge on anxiety and effective anxiety management skills during their schooling. This is in line with Yusuph (2016) and Thompson, Robertson, Curtis and Frick (2013) who suggest that proper counseling programs are the effective means of reducing anxiety among students.

3.1.5 Learning difficulties

In focus group discussions, students were required to state the challenge in learning process that need proper counseling. In the findings, they presented that they were experiencing difficulties in mastering

certain subjects that resulted into individual students not to be committed to such a subject despite the significance to desired future career/ occupation. The explanations given by students identified that learning difficulties that students faced could be solved through proper counseling done step by step. As remarked from students in one of focus group discussion:

"...Another challenge is difficulty in learning some subjects like chemistry or mathematics. Sometime a student may find that a certain subject is difficult in a sense that even the courage to attend class decreases. For instance, here boarding school student may decide not to enter in the class and sleep in the dormitory, or hide somewhere because he does not know what to do. Sometime he may remain in a class but decide not to engage in that subject, he just wait to do exam and fail. This is because every time such a student scores below pass mark on that subject ..."(FGD with students, school B).

The reported challenge in a quote could be viewed as just the subject teacher's responsibility in assisting students while teaching. However, learning processes need more than emphasis to learn. It also includes motivation building to individual students who face challenges. It means in resolving such a challenge, there is a need to overcome contradictory thoughts (cognitive dissonance) individual student encountered when looking for the options of mastering such subject. Although sometimes individual failure to master or accomplish certainly assignments may be referred to as laziness, in the process of learning, the encountered learning challenges may result into psychological dysfunctions that may inhibit foresight of solution. These findings are similar to those of Gad (2016) who depicted that scoring lowest test scores by a student despite of extensive studying in particular subject, trigger the experience of anger, frustration, anxiety and stress to individual student, making it difficult for them to master such particular subject. Learning difficulties should not be looked at a single dimension. This is similar to the explanation provided by psychologists who contended that the situation may originate from a family in particular subject or problems during prenatal development or delivery, or the influences of learning environment which could be personal or originate from external forces (Sanrock, 2007). Therefore, the consequences and some undefined causes of learning difficulties made the situation to prevail. This make the essence of strengthening the counseling services in schools that may identify different types of learners and the approaches of enabling them to learn including resolving psychological obstructs and advise teachers proper way of handling learning difficult students. Gad (2016) underscored that intensive counseling can be helpful for students to develop coping mechanisms to manage the difficulties and any other emotional issues.

3.1.6 The subjects' selection and career choice

This theme was raised from both interviews with teachers and focus group discussions with students. The prevailed state in subjects' selection and career choice showed that students had a tendency of joining a certain stream of subject combination without referring to their strengths, talents or even career goals but rather relying on recent subjects' performance results. During the interview with teachers, some of them claimed that many students had a tendency of choosing certain subjects combination following the influence of fellow students or relying on the recently obtained exam results. However, teachers tried to guide students to pursue the subjects that were relevant to their ability as remarked by one interviewed teacher to represent others:

"...Majority of the students choose the subject combination as a result of either the influence from their fellows or referring to the present examination results. We try to convince them to take the

subjects that we are sure of their ability but many do not understand, though we discovered that some failed to perform well in their final exams..." (Interviewed CT2⁵, School C).

On the other hand, students reported the same situations, claiming that many were choosing the subjects that were later found to be incongruent with their abilities or ambitions. In addition, students had the courage that there would be changes in future, and the currently studied subjects were the bridge to their admired career. This is supported by the assertion from one student from a focus group discussion:

"...Every student is at school with a target to reach his or her particular desired destiny. But majority fail to know the appropriate way and subjects to study in order to reach the desired destiny. Finally, students decide to study whatever subject combination with the faith that later they will get to know what to do..." (FGD with students, school B).

The portrayed transcripts from both interviewed teachers and students in focus group discussions suggest the presence of students' challenge in identifying their strengths and talents, and which subjects to study for future career. The other interview with teacher counselor in one of the schools indicated that some students establish a focus or perceived status and marketability of certain occupation but with no regard to ability and talents. This implies that schools need to have a designed program of counseling services that will provide opportunity of recognising the ability, talent and interest among students in building proper career.

For instance, in a focus group discussion, students expressed their dilemma in knowing the career route to take them into admired future occupations, thus brought them to abide with the alternative given by their parents which later was found to be incongruent with their ability. May be, students were brought to believe grades as a determinant of career prosperity which is contrary to Humanistic Learning Theory. The theory emphasizes that in learning, self-evaluation is the most meaningful way to evaluate how the person's ability in certain practice, grades not real matter and should not disappoint person to progress toward desired career (Purswell, 2019).

The revealed significance of counseling to identify students' aptitude, interest and attitude with future career implies currently the given assistance end up with only guidance. That could also be the reason for some students to regret the advice given by teachers as they failed to get concrete information about their aptitude and interest with some subjects and their future career. The founded prevailing career choice challenge among students was also revealed by the study done by Nkuba (2012) who found that students in particular government schools were experiencing inadequate career information. The author recommended the need of qualified counselors in government schools to assist students in career identification and choice making. The given recommendation could probably due to the fact that revealing someone career is beyond the examination scores as might be influenced by many factors. Biswalo (1996) suggested that, apart from subject learning, students need to know their abilities, aptitude, attitude, interest and their limitations in subjects in the way of attaining their appropriate career and occupation. All those might be done through the respective psychometric tests from counseling psychology expert who in practice not present in schools.

3.2 Strategies Used to Resolve Counseling Issues

In the response to ascertained counseling issues, the second objective was to know how teachers resolved such issues when they emerged from their students. The study found that many students were reluctant

⁵ *Second interviewed class teacher from sampled school*

to fully disclose their situations to their teachers, but their behaviours implicated that they had counseling issues that need attention. However, on dealing with socio-emotional challenges, the study found that some of the students who volunteered to report their challenges especially financial constraints like bus fares, teachers assisted them by giving money for them to reach home. Moreover, there were few teachers who reported to have tried to encourage those students, however, the success of resolving seemed to be challenging as some were in the critical state that needed intensive exploration. This is supported by the assertion from the interviewed TC in school C:

"...Those students seem to demonstrate the loneliness behaviour and/or deep thinking but when they are asked to explain the reason for that behaviour the majority do not want to disclose. But even when disclosing, some of their issues are somehow complex, though we try to remind them to cope with them and stick to their studies..." (Interviewed TC2, School C).

From above quote, the significant observation of some students who were confirmed to exhibit socio-emotional behavioural challenges being reluctant to fully disclose their difficulties to teachers implies the need for trained and qualified counselors whom on the basis of their profession, the students may have trust on. This observation is also backed by the report from the quoted teacher counselor who declared their failure to manage students' socio-emotional problems when they were at critical state due to what one may conclude as lack of professionalism or adequate competence. These findings aligned with findings by Nkuba and Kyaruzi (2015) who found none among counseling providers in schools had undertaken professional training in guidance and counseling. As such, the need for intensive counseling in schools to resolve these issues for the betterment of students in learning becomes obligatory. This observation supports the views from GHGH (2016) which advocated that the school needs to give healthy emotional development support to students through qualified counselors who could increase positive thinking of belonging, increase attendance and education expectation among students. It is also in line with Miller (2013) who stipulated that building socio-emotional attitude to youth helps to thrive and obtain happiness in life as could assist to resolve conflict, gain confidence and reach goals. On the other side, observation of the study of few teachers to engage on issues related to socio-emotional and the emphasis reported implies that school teachers are quite focusing to the goal of education as cognitive development only. However, academic achievements have great association with socio-emotional wellbeing (Berger, Alcalay, Torretti and Milicic, 2011). This was also emphasised by the Humanistic Learning Theory that learning is holistic growth of the person which needs to accommodate all, cognitive, emotional and interpersonal domains (Purswell, 2019).

On the issue of early sexual behavioural practices, the study found that teachers were mostly engaged with group guidance and counseling session to discuss about it especially with female students who seemed to be vulnerable to issue of sexuality. Yet, those students who confirmed to commit sexual practices were being punished according to school rules and regulations, as reported by one of the head of school: *"...Teachers use to talk with students about sexuality especially those who have reached puberty, but when they are found to engage in sexual affairs, they were punished according to school rules and regulations..." (Interviewed HS, school D).*

This may prompt someone to comment that the recurrence of sexual behaviours among the students, who were formerly punished or suspended, could imply that the used approach of group guidance and counseling did not cover the need related to sexuality awareness. In fact, this approach would very likely leave other individual victims unattended if proper skills would not be employed. However, the study found that individual counseling approach was difficult to be used mostly due to interference from the school timetable. These findings concur with Abel (2016); Mduma (2017); and Sima (2010) who found teachers being overloaded with class duties hence failed to devote much of the time engaging with students' psychosocial challenges intensively. The found inadequacy of the guidance and counseling

services may also be associated with prevailed statistics of school dropout due to pregnancy among female students (BEST, 2016; BEST, 2019).

However, in dealing with panic and generalised anxiety, together with subject selection and career choice the study found that some schools took initiatives of inviting psychology experts to assist students particularly on subject selection and career choice with regards to their ability and interests. Although the chances did not happen regularly to all students in every year as it depends on those psychologists' schedule, and funds as thanks giving for the service. Moreover, it was observed that teachers engaged in preparing students psychologically when examination approach, but the impact seemed not went far reach since their talks were of more authority due to their position; making students think more on consequences of failure than the ability they possess to perform better. This is in tandem with findings by Masalu (2018) who found that the common practices of punishing students in response to undesirable behaviours make teacher-counselor's service doubtful.

The counseling service particularly career counseling has a significant impact on students in recognising their internal attributes of future career and subjects choice, instead of depending on the external forces which later subjected them into a dilemma. Moreover, assisting in career choice and subject selection may reduce the level of anxiety in academic processes and develop peace of mind in engaging with academic activities. This is in line with Nkuba (2012) who found that career guidance and counseling is beyond helping someone look for a job, but is of outmost importance in mental health.

4. CONCLUSION

From the findings, it was revealed that the students have been encountering various challenges in their schooling which necessitate demand of counseling services. Therefore, from the first objective it can be concluded that the prevailed situation in schools is still unsteady because students' issues were inadequately addressed. From the second objective, it can be concluded that the strategies used by teachers to address students' needs were inadequate to curb the needs because they applied more traditional approaches due to inadequate counseling professional skills, magnitude of students' issues and available time to engage effectively in students' issues.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to counseling issues among students, it is recommended that teacher counselors need to clearly define issues that make students suffer so as to establish appropriate strategy of handling and help students attain healthy academic prosperity. Again, there is a need to match the students' counseling needs with appropriate approaches so as to address the services adequately. This is because the current situation shows that needs seen to be inadequately addressed. On the second objective, the study recommends provision of more training to teachers on different counseling skills and techniques in order to make them competent to engage with various students' issues professionally. Moreover, the assigned teacher counselors need to be exempted from other delegations of extra curriculum and their teaching workload needs to be minimised to allow them to engage effectively in counseling services.

REFERENCES

- Abel, J. (2016). *Investigating counselling services as a strategy of enhancing Academic achievement of secondary school students in Tanzania: A case of Mbeya city*. Unpublished Master's dissertation. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: University of Dar es Salaam.
- American School Counselor Association. (2017). *The American School Counsellor Association: "Working with undocumented students."* Position statement draft. CESCAl Conference, April 24-25. Alexandria, Virginia: Author.
- Berger, C., Alcalay, L., Torreti, A., & Milicic, N. (2011). Socio-emotional well-being and academic achievement: Evidence from a multilevel approach. *Psicol.Reflex. Crit.*, 24(2), 132-139.

- Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST).(2016). *Pre-primary, primary and secondary education statistics in brief*.President's office Regional Administration and Local government. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government.
- BEST (2018). *Pre-primary, primary and secondary education statistics in brief*.President's office Regional Administration and Local government. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government.
- BEST (2018). *Pre-primary, primary and secondary education statistics in brief*.President's office Regional Administration and Local government. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government.
- BEST (2018). *Pre-primary, primary and secondary education statistics in brief*.President's office Regional Administration and Local government. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government.
- Biswalo, M.P. (1996). *An Introduction to Guidance and counseling: In diverse African contexts*. Dar essalaam, Tanzania: Dar es Salaam University Press.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2016).Using thematic analysis in psychology.*Qualitative research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007).*Research methods in education (6thed)*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research. Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research (4thed.)*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Evers, T. (2013).*Opening doors to self-determination skills*.Wilscons in department of public instruction. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Gad, R. N. (2016). Learning difficulties. Issues treated in therapy. Retrieved from <http://www.goodtherapy.org> 27/08/2018.
- Girls' Health in Girls' Hands (2016). Why socio-emotional counsellors at schools? Eight reasons. Retrieved from <http://www.ghghmonterey.org> 21/8/2018.
- Gichohi, N.W.M. (2019). Influence of Anxiety on Academic performance among students at the Technical University of Kenya. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 9(5), 850-865.
- Harris, M. A. &Orth, U. (2019). The link between self-esteem and social relationships: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Journal of personality and social psychology*.Advance online publication.<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000265>
- Hui, E. K. P., & Tsang, S. K. M. (2012). Self-determination as psychological and positive youth development construct. *The Scientific World Journal*, 2, 7-13.
- Iwata, J. J. (2021). Witchcraft beliefs and practices: Perceptions of Tobacco growers in Lupa and Ngwala villages, Tanzania, *East African Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(1), 127-139
- Manyerere, M. (2017).*The perceived influence of indiscipline behaviours on students' learning in public secondary schools in Musoma Municipality, Tanzania*.Unpublished Master's dissertation. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: University of Dar es Salaam.
- Masalu, J.P. (2018). An investigation into students' indiscipline cases in secondary schools in Tanzania. Unpublished Masters' dissertation.
- Mduma, E. A. (2017). *Exploring students' understanding and attitudes towards counseling services in secondary schools. A case study of Kunduchi ward in Kinondoni Municipality*. Unpublished Master's dissertation. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: University of Dar es Salaam.
- Miller, D. F. (2013).*Positive child guidance (7th ed)*. Belmont, CA: Wardworth.
- NikiFarid, N.D., Che' Rus, S., Dahlui, M., & Al-Sadat, N. (2013). Determinants of sexual intercourse initiation among incarcerated adolescents: A mixed-method study. *Singapore Med J*, 695-701.
- Nkuba, M. (2012). Career services provision to secondary school students in Tanzania: Is it a dream or reality? *International journal of learning and development*, 2(2), 242-257.
- Nkuba, M., &Kyaruzi, E. (2015). Is it Not Now?: School counsellors' Training in Tanzania secondary schools. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(19), 160-169.

- Purswell, K. E. (2019). Humanistic learning theory in counselor education. *The professional counselor*, 9(4), 358-368
- Said, F. (2015). *The influence of teachers on career choice among secondary school students in Dar es Salaam region-Tanzania*. Unpublished Masters' Degree dissertation. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: University of Dar es Salaam.
- Santrock, J.W. (2007). *Child development* (11st ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill
- Semali, L. M., & Vumilia, P. L. (2016). Challenges facing teachers' attempt to enhance learners' discipline in Tanzania's secondary schools. *World Journal of Education*, 6(1), 50-67.
- Stallman, H. M (2012). University counseling services in Australia and New Zealand: Activities, Changes, and Challenges. *Australia Psychological Society*, 47, 249-253
- Thompson, E. H., Robertson, P., Curtis, R., & Frick, M. H. (2013). Students with anxiety: Implications for professional school counsellors. *Professional School Counselling*, 16(4), 222-234.
- Wako, A. (2016). The Status of Utilization of School Guidance and Counseling Services in Ethiopian Secondary Schools in Addressing the Psychosocial and Academic Needs of Secondary School Students: The Case of Sidama Zone, SNNPRS. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 21, 27-35.
- Yusuph, K. (2016). Anxiety and academic performance among secondary school pupils in Tanzania. *British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science*, 14(3), 147-161.
- Yusuph, K., & Negret, I. (2016). Adolescents and drug use in Tanzania: History and Education. *Advances in Research*, 7(2), 1-10.