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RESEARCH ARTICLE

**TUTOR-COUNSELLORS' COMPETENCY, TEACHING LOAD AND THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE IN PUBLIC TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES IN THE RIFT VALLEY REGION OF KENYA**

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**Abstract**

Guidance and counselling services that are offered in Public Teacher Training Collages are aimed at assisting students in dealing with the challenges they face each day of their lives. However, despite the implementation of these services, students still experience numerous social, academic, psychological and disciplinary challenges. This paper is based on a study whose objectives were to determine the tutor counsellors' competency, teaching load and the challenges they face in providing guidance and counselling services in public teachers' training colleges located in the formerly the Rift Valley Province of Kenya. The study adopted a discipline survey and targeted all the 2,658 second year students. A random sample of 335 students was selected. Ten tutor-counsellors were purposively selected and included in the sample. Data was collected using two structured questionnaires, one for the students and the other for tutor-counsellors. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 for windows. The reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. The majority of tutor counsellors in public teacher training colleges in Rift Valley were not competent enough to offer guidance and counselling services to students. Most tutor counsellors in the Public Teacher Training Colleges teach between 18 and 26 lessons a week. This means that they have less time to provide guidance and counselling services to students due to the teaching load and time. Guidance and counselling tutors face a number of challenges in undertaking their responsibilities in the college. These include lack of specific time allocation to guidance and counselling activities, inadequate resources and facilities and heavy workload of tutor counsellors

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**1) INTRODUCTION**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) in Kenya launched guidance and counselling in 1971 when it started the guidance and counselling sub-section in its headquarters. This unit sought to promote guidance and counselling in schools by organizing seminars for head teachers. The Gachathi Report (National Commission on Education Objectives and Policies) of 1976 recognized the important role of guidance and counselling as part of their normal duties. The programme includes all services aimed at helping a student understand himself/herself and obtain social maturity for optimum development, and general adjustments to school life (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). The programme in the learning institution is considered as a continuous education process aimed at bridging the gap between one educational level and another (Pecku, 1991).

## 2) Guidance and Counselling Services

- 3) The terms 'guidance and counselling' have different meanings though they are often used interchangeably. Ndambuki and Mutie (1999) define counselling as the skilled and principled use of relationships, which develops self-knowledge, emotional acceptance, growth and personal resources. According to Makinde (1984), counselling is an interactive process conjoining the counselee who is vulnerable and who needs assistance and the counsellor who is trained and educated to give this assistance; the goal of which is to help the counselee learn to deal more effectively with him/her and the reality of his/her environment. Essentially, guidance and counselling are concerned with developing client's own capacity for decision-making and problem solving than handling clients solutions.
- 4) Guidance can be defined as a process by which an individual is assisted to understand, accept and utilize his/her aptitudes, interests and attitudinal patterns in relation to his/her aspirations (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). Guidance involves personal help and advice given by someone and is more public, less personal, less intimate, informative and meant to instruct, unlike counselling it can be initiated by the counsellor (Makinde, 1984). It is clear that guidance can be viewed as a process and a service. It is a process in that it assists a student to make wise decisions, choices and adjustments in light of his/her potentials and limitations. As a service, guidance provides information and assistance to students to make sound judgment.
- 5) According to Krumboltz (1965), the central reason for the existence of counselling is that people have problems that they are unable to resolve by themselves therefore they need a helper. The helper is to assist the client explore the world of experience, feelings and behaviour. Me Daniels and Hatt (1992) state that the role of counselling, being a facilitative service, is important as it would provide help the students to assist them deal with life situations. Guidance and counselling on individual or group includes all those services that contribute to the individual understanding of himself/herself, their attitudes, interests, abilities, physical, mental, personal and social maturity (Pecku, 1991).

## 6) Challenges Facing Counselling in Teachers Training Colleges

Efficacy of guidance and counselling services is determined by various factors. These factors include organisation and the administration of the individual college, the professional environment and assignment of responsibility among college tutors contribute to a large extent towards efficiency of guidance and counselling services. Availability of these resources is based on their provision by the college and the community at large. These resources should be identified and documented so that they can be made available as lack of these resources would adversely affect provision of these services (Guez & Alien, 1998). These resources would provide the tutor-counsellor with the desirable psychological and physical condition of work. These would in turn create the positive contribution of counsellor role towards the guidance and counselling services.

The desirable tutor-counsellor's work conditions would be developed and maintained only through the joint effort of administrators and counsellors. This is whereby the college administrator assists the counsellor to facilitate total guidance and counselling services within a college through his/her understanding support and leadership. The most important of the human resources is to have a good counsellor-student ratio. This is because too many students would limit the tutor-counsellor from giving good services to the beneficiaries. The role and function of the tutor-counsellors must be well spelt out as this allows them to use their education positively. The counsellor should be personally suitable to handle this role. They should also have a professional and productive relationship with the students. To equip the counsellor professionally, enough time and resources should be realized through careful planned programmes of in-service (Guez & Alien, 1998).

The most important physical resources are the finances in terms of the college budget for guidance and counselling services and other sources of finances. Guez and Alien (1998) note that although many costs of guidance and counselling services are incorporated in the total college budget, certain considerations important for adequacy in the counselling role need a separate annual budget desirable. Guidance and counselling services need finances for purchasing equipment and materials, printed guidance and counselling materials, printing costs and supplies. Travel allowances are needed for counsellors attending conferences and workshops for professional advancement.

Time provision for guidance and counselling is crucial. Effective guidance and counselling services depend entirely on the time allocation for the performance of guidance and counselling activities and for individual counselling. Discharge of these services lie wholly on the tutor-counsellor. Provisions of time during college hours should be

made for performance of guidance and counselling services. Mutie and Ndambuki (1999) suggest that time allocation on the college timetable enables the tutor-counsellor to carry out maximum guidance and counselling activities. Various authors feel the provision of guidance and counselling room is vital.

According to Rao (2006), guidance and counselling rooms should be easily accessible to students with counselling needs. It should be well stipulated that this is a separate unit in college. The room should be situated in area relatively free of noise and confusion and be able to allow privacy. It should have enough space, comfortable furnishings and proper ventilation. This appears to be not the case in our teachers training colleges. Sagimo (2002) points out that an office worker cannot be efficient unless the working environment or physical condition is favourable.

### 7) Statement of the Problem

Implementation of guidance and counselling services in higher learning institutions was aimed at assisting students cope with challenges they face. However, there has been an increase in cases of indiscipline among students in these higher learning institutions. This casts doubts on the service providers and students themselves. The study investigated the perception of tutor-counsellors and students of guidance and counselling services in public teacher training colleges in Rift Valley Province of Kenya.

#### Limitations of the Study

Participants were asked to reveal their perceptions which might not have been honestly provided. The study limited itself to issues that pertain to guidance and counselling services only.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in all five public teacher training colleges in Rift Valley Province. These colleges are: Kericho TTC, Mosoriot TTC, Tambach TTC, Baringo TTC and Narok TTC. These colleges are spread all over Rift Valley Province and were chosen for the study due to the available evidence of low demand for guidance and counselling services due to the fact that students are still facing various challenges. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population was 2658 second year were chosen because the researcher felt they would provide required information since they have been exposed to guidance and counselling services for a longer period of time compared to first years. Proportionate stratified sampling was used in selecting the 335 participants from the college. This ensured that the sample was proportionately and adequately distributed among the colleges according to the population of each college.

Proportionate stratified sampling was also used to select male and female students from the proportion allocated to each college. The sample comprised of 198 males and 137 females. This ensured that the sample was proportionately and adequately distributed between male and female students in the colleges. Data was collected by use of questionnaires. The data collected was analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.5 for windows. Descriptive statistics using percentages and frequencies were used and results presented in tables and pie-charts to summarize and, organize data to describe the findings.

## 8) RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 9) Tutor Counsellors Competency

The study sought to determine the perception of tutor-counsellors' competence in providing guidance and counselling services in Public Teacher Training Colleges. The competency level was measured by their professional training, guidance and counselling experience and active involvement in guidance and counselling services. As regards professional training in guidance and counselling, the results in Table 1 show that 30% of the tutor counsellors were not trained, 20% had certificate level training while 30% had diploma and 20% had a Masters' level training while there was no bachelor degree level of training.

**Table 1: Tutor Counsellors' Level of Training in Guidance and Counselling**

Level of training	Frequency	Percentage
Untrained	3	30
Certificate	2	20
Diploma	3	30
Bsc Degree (G&C)		

M.EdlMA(G&C)	2	20
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N=10

The results clearly indicate that a shortage of trained counsellors persists in Public Teacher Training Colleges in Rift Valley Province. These findings concur with those of Koech (1999) which revealed that most teacher counsellors in secondary schools had no guidance and counselling skills. This is an indication that tutor-counsellors are not sufficiently prepared for their role of providing guidance and counselling services.

Half of the tutor-counsellors indicated that they had less than five years experience in providing guidance and counselling service, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Tutor-Counsellors' Years of Experience in Guidance and Counselling**

Number of Years	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	5	50
5-10 years	2	20
11-15 years	2	20
16-20 years	1	10
Above 20 years		

N=10

The results as shown in Table 2 indicate that the tutor-counsellors had little experience in guidance and counselling services. Analysis of the tutor-counsellors' counselling activities revealed that 38.8% of them indicated that they were involved in counselling individuals with learning problems. Only 21% of the tutor-counsellors reported to have involved administrators in helping students deal with their challenges. The tutor-counsellors who organized talks on decision-making abilities among students were only 4.5%. Makinde (1987) points out that part of a guidance counsellors' role is to give group and individual counselling to students and provide them with the information necessary to make informed choices. The findings of the study show less than half of the tutor-counsellors were adequately involved in providing guidance and counselling to students.

#### 10) Teaching Load of Tutor-Counsellors

The further sought to establish the perception of tutor-counsellors on teaching load allowed and adequate time to provide guidance and counselling in public teacher training colleges in Rift Valley Province.

**Table 3: Distribution of Tutor-counsellors Number of Teaching Lesson per Week**

Number of Lessons	Frequency	Percentage
16	1	10
18	1	10
20	3	30
22	3	30
24	2	100

N=10

As indicated in Table 3, the minimum number of lessons for tutor-counsellors was 16 while the maximum was 26. The majority of tutor-counsellors 80% teach between 22 and 26 lessons per week. Most of the counsellors indicated that their teaching load did not allow adequate time for guidance and counselling. This concurs with Singh (1994) who found that there was no difference in teaching load between teacher-counsellors and other teachers. Proper counselling required adequate time and patience. Mutie and Ndambuki (1999) concur with these findings by arguing that tutor-counsellors have a work load and counselling comes in as a second priority. Such counsellors are likely to use more of group counselling than individual counselling in order to meet increasing demand (Smith et al., 1995).

### 11) The Challenges Tutor Counsellors Face

The study also sought to identify the tutor counsellors' perception of the challenges they face in providing guidance and counselling services in public teacher training colleges in Rift Valley Province. In this study, the ten tutor counsellors reported the main challenges facing guidance and counselling services in colleges. Table 4 summarises these challenges.

<b>Table 4: Challenges facing Guidance and Counselling Services Challenges</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of specific time allocation	10	100
Inadequate Resources	4	40
Office space	7	70
Heavy workload	10	100
Personality of the tutor counsellor	3	30

N=10

As indicated in Table 4, lack of specific time allocation to guidance and counselling services (100.0%), inadequate resources (40.0%), office space (70.0%), heavy workload (100.0%) and personality of the tutor-counsellor (30.0%) were among the major challenges facing guidance and counselling in the study area. All the tutor-counsellors reported that there was no specific time allocation for guidance and counselling services in their institutions. The tutor-counsellors worked full time as tutors in addition to undertaking their guidance and counselling duties and responsibilities in the institutions. In such circumstances, the counsellors performed their guidance and counselling on part-time basis with no timetable for guidance and counselling services. All of the respondents added that because of lack of specific time allocation, they have a heavy workload of teaching and providing guidance and counselling.

Mutie and Ndambuki (1999) support this by observing that the guidance and counselling programme has not been effective in schools in the country because the providers of the service have a heavy workload. He adds that because of the busy teaching schedule, many students regard and perceive the teacher counsellor as a teacher first then a counsellor. Their perception about the counsellor and guidance and counselling services is very much influenced greatly by how they perceive him/her as a teacher. Therefore, students demand for guidance and counselling services will depend on how well or bad they perceive their counselor as a teacher. Guidance and counselling services require adequate availability of resources and facilities for effective services delivery. However, 40% and 70% of the respondents reported that the programme in their institutions lacked resources and office space respectively. This situation was reported to affect the operations of guidance and counselling services in the institutions. According to Rao (2002), materials and equipment should be provided for teacher counsellors to enable them deliver assigned responsibilities and gain existing technology.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The majority of tutor-counsellors in public teacher training colleges in Rift Valley are not competent enough to offer guidance and counselling services to students. In addition, most tutor-counsellors in the Public Teacher Training Colleges teach between 18 and 26 lessons a week. This means that they have less time to provide guidance and counselling services to students due to the teaching load and time. Moreover, guidance and counselling tutors face a number of challenges in undertaking their responsibilities in the college. These include lack of specific time allocation to guidance and counselling activities, inadequate resources and facilities and heavy workload of tutor counsellors.

From the above conclusions, it is recommended that there is need to improve the level of training of tutor-counsellor guidance and counselling. There is also need to allocate specific time for effective guidance and counselling services. In addition, there is need to reduce the workload of the tutor-counsellors to provide guidance and counselling services.

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