



## The Guidance and Counselling Services in the Boys' Secondary Schools in the Eastern Province of Zambia

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**Abstract:** *The study was designed to investigate the Guidance and Counselling services in the boys' secondary schools in the Eastern Province of Zambia. Data was collected from 8 guidance teachers using interviews while a questionnaire was used to collect data from 40 grade 12 learners in four boys' schools. The study found that various guidance and counselling services are offered in the boys' secondary schools of Eastern Province Zambia. The findings showed that the services that were common in all schools ranged from information services (talks, sensitizations, and literature display through posters), placement services (enrolment by class and subject allocations), appraisal services, vocational and career guidance services, counselling services, referral services (Drug Enforcement Commission, Hospitals, supportive non-governmental organization), evaluation, follow-ups, consultancy, and research services. It is these services that help the boys to realise the importance of being in secondary school and avoid peer pressure, which make them fail to meet their academic aspirations.*

**Keywords:** *boys' schools, guidance and counselling, Eastern province*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In Zambia, various studies have been conducted to determine the nature of guidance and counselling services offered in schools. Some of the scholars like Tuchili (2008) who conducted a study on an evaluation of guidance and counselling services provided in selected schools in Lusaka district indicated that all the sampled schools visited were providing various services in education, vocational, career; social, personal guidance and counselling and such services were well known by all the pupils. The study additionally revealed an attention to subject combinations (pathways), career choice, counselling, apprehension and emotional stress to a large extent existed in the schools visited. Dissemination of information through posters about various guidance and counselling services were pasted on notice boards and announcements were made to pupils during assembly and career workshops for pupils with specialists in various professions being invited.

Another report from the Hong Kong Education Commission (1990) emphasized the need for involving all school personnel to create a caring and inviting environment for students to grow and realize their potentials for whole-person development. The report noted that apart from subject teaching, teachers are entrusted with many responsibilities nowadays. Guidance and counselling are some of their major duties for every teacher. In the guidance and counselling literature, these two words generally take on different meanings.

Gysbers and Henderson (2012) observed that the former refers to helping students' whole-person development, while the latter is frequently targeted at helping students with problems. In other words, guidance work is preventive and developmental whereas counselling is more of supportive, remedial work. The other activities being done were talks on emerging issues that they noticed on the students as guidance takes on a form of a preventive approach to try to bring down the rising challenges of drug abuse, HIV and AIDS and also encourage adherence to treatment for those under care and encourage rehabilitation. This agrees with the view that the global trend seems to have moved from a casework and remedial approach to a preventive, developmental approach in providing guidance and counselling (Yuen, 2002). These lessons from China must be compared to the Zambian schools and observe how the guidance and counselling services were being provided in boy's schools.

Another study was conducted in the Central and Southern provinces of Zambia by Kasonde et al (2009) on the impact of guidance and counselling services in high schools. The study established that

the majority of pupils and teachers said that the guidance and counselling unit provided pupils with information on entry requirements for higher institutions, subject choice, selection of a career pathway, and counselling services. On the contrary, some personnel who worked in the guidance and counselling office were not qualified, lacked confidentiality, and also that the information given was flimsy. The study by Kasonde was conducted in two provinces of Zambia and was conducted in both single and co-education schools. The findings of the study may not be the same as this study since the research site are different and the population consists of only boys in the single-sex secondary schools of Chipata in the Eastern Province.

Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (2014) through the directorate of school guidance services agree to the findings that in recent years, escalating cases of student/learner violence and demonstrations have become the order of the day. Students don't seem to have avenues where they can vent their anger and frustrations, as they feel left out in matters that affect them by the school administration. Students' councils are important for learner/student representation in matters of policy at primary, secondary, and college levels.

About the organization and professional conduct with regards to guidance and counselling, Okorodudu (2004) argued that guidance and counselling have been theorized as a package of activities that have provided us with the gateway out of the existing numerous problems in our present age of complex scientific and technological development. Consistent and well-executed planned guidance activities have been a good platform for assisting adolescents in school to manage and understand their affairs both in the school and at home. Other scholars like Ndike (2012) of Kenya noted that the guidance and counselling services in schools are characterized by several inconsistencies because even the guidance teachers have personal and social challenges that needed resolving before they could handle the issues in the department effectively. How they were resolving the challenges in the guidance and counselling department were facing will be the interest of this study.

The MOE (2012) stipulates that learners in secondary schools come from an assortment of learning backgrounds. It simply tells that there is variety in their entry socio-economic and academic contours, which translates into a discrepancy in their behaviour patterns. It must be borne in mind that the child of today is different from the child of yesterday and tomorrow. It is also common knowledge that today's child is seen as developing, needing not just academic knowledge, but also information about the psycho-social dynamics, sexual issues, and changes that are coupled with being a member of a family, school, society, and nation among others.

Matters of guidance and counselling are taken from a broad perspective. Guidance is a broad term usually used in school programs of activities and services that are aimed at assisting students to make and carry out adequate plans and to achieve satisfactory adjustment in life. Guidance can be defined as a process, developmental in nature, by which an individual is assisted to understand, accept and utilize his/her abilities, aptitudes and interests, and attitudinal patterns concerning his/or her aspirations (Kochar, 2013). Guidance in the education cycle refers to the shepherded experiences and discoveries that enable a person to adjust and fit into a given society and exhibit a required behaviour that is appreciated by every person. This adds to the learning experiences the children undergo before coming to school and while in school about the world and its inhabitants and their behaviour.

On the other hand, the term 'counselling' is defined by Kundu (2015: 455) as "a process in which a relationship between a professionally trained counsellor and an individual seeking help to adjust effectively with a personal concern of educational, vocational or emotional - social (psychological) field". In other words, counselling involves a passionate and tender talk regarding advice on a given topic with an individual or individuals in that secluded or conducive environment as perceived by the two. It is for this reason that the guidance and counselling services in schools are given a room where the activities take place.

There is sufficient evidence that indicates that guidance and counselling services are being provided in the secondary schools of the Eastern Province of Zambia. Studies conducted by Tuchili (2008), Mwape (2015), and Musenge (2016) have raised issues that little attention has been paid to the social and career guidance and counselling services in the secondary schools while the academic services are championed by every teacher. This evidence is based on the services provided in the co-education schools in Zambia. Very little is known about the guidance services offered to boys in single-sex

schools. With such findings, this study assesses the guidance and counselling services in the boys' secondary schools in the Eastern Province of Zambia. The purpose of the study was to investigate the guidance and counselling services in the boys' secondary schools in the Eastern Province of Zambia

- Establish types of guidance and counselling services being offered in the boys' secondary schools of Eastern province.
- Examine pupil's perceptions of the services being provided by the guidance and counselling office in boys' schools.

## **2. METHODS AND TOOLS**

The study used a pragmatism paradigm and adopted a mixed method to understand the services that were being offered to the learners by the teachers and the schools. Embedded design was used to collect data from the participants since it enabled the collection of data from both teachers and learners separately and mix the data later to understand the guidance and counselling services in boys' schools. The study collected data from four boys only schools of Eastern province. From these schools, ten grade 12 boys were randomly sampled for the study with 8 guidance teachers were purposively sampled for the study. Learners answered a questionnaire while teachers were interviewed. Grade 12 learners were targeted because they were the ones who received these services for longer and they should have been guided on the career choices since they were about to complete school. Mostly excel was used to analyse quantitative data from the semi-structured questionnaires while the qualitative data which was obtained through semi-structured interviews were analysed by coding and grouping the emerging themes.

## **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Guidance and counselling services offered in boys' secondary schools of Eastern Province of Zambia.**

Data was collected from teachers and learners on the guidance and counselling services that were provided to the boys in the secondary schools of eastern province. In responding to the guidance and counselling services offered in secondary schools, different findings were arrived at. The participants provided their views according to the experiences they have in conducting various services and meetings within the schools and at the district level. The respondents established that there were various guidance related activities that were being done covering career guidance, personal and social guidance, education or academic guidance, counselling including psychosocial care and support, preparations of students for examination, and conducting the examinations both local assessments and national examinations, orientations of new students that is grade eight (8) and grades ten (10) in the school to facilitate a smooth transition from previous schools to the current ones. One respondent said that:

*In our school, we have a well-organized orientation of new grades eight and ten being a Technical Boarding School. This is done mostly in the second or the third week depending on the grace period given for new students to arrive and report in school.*

A reaction from the respondent on career exhibitions was that:

*We usually plan for career exhibitions for our students in the second term, where various exhibitors are invited for a full day to motivate and expose our pupils to various occupational choices and training after secondary school.*

This was in line with the findings of Tuchili (2008) who indicated that all the sampled schools visited in Lusaka were providing various services in education, vocational, career, social, personal guidance, and counselling, and such services were well known by pupils.

The other findings of the study showed that the schools offered career guidance using various methods and activities to meaningfully bring about vocational and career decisions in the students. Some of the activities done included career exhibitions, career talks, and not to a large extent, tours

that were not done to the expectations of the respondents. Participants mentioned that apart from a few additions like:

*We ensure that in every term there is a Talk organized for students to handle some of the emerging trends we notice like issues of Drugs, HIV, and AIDS.*

As much as teaching and learning are taking place in school, students also have a say in the life of the school as indicated by the words from participants that:

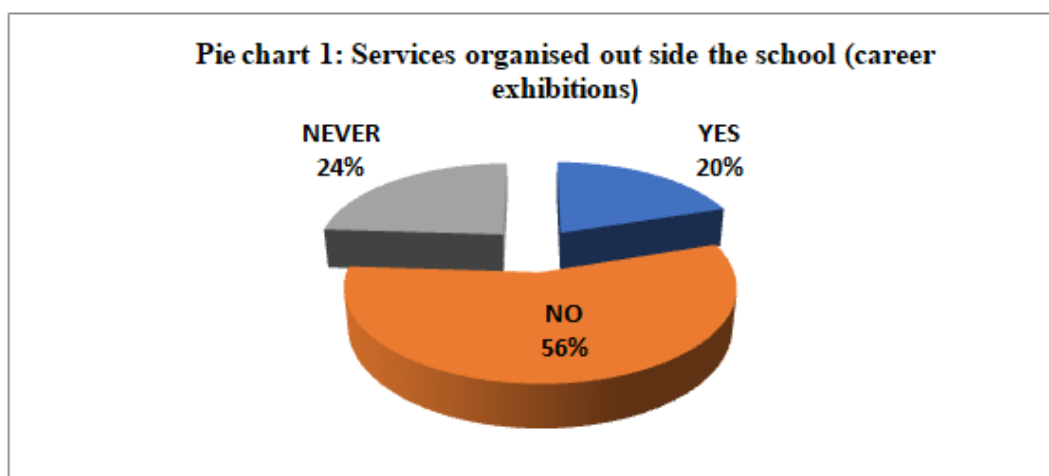
*We ensure that we have an active school council meeting in every term that deals with the needs and observations of students in the school. The council ensures that the Learners have a say and their concerns are heard as all the deliberations and minutes are tabled after with the School Senior Management for possible interventions.*

The other activities being done were talks on emerging issues that they noticed on the students as guidance takes on a form of a preventive approach to try to bring down the rising challenges of bullying, drug abuse, HIV and AIDS and also encourage adherence to treatment for those under care and encourage rehabilitation. This agrees with the view that the global trend seems to have moved from a casework and remedial approach to a preventive, developmental approach in providing guidance and counselling (Yuen, 2002). Also, the rational emotive behaviour theory encourages a helping relationship that is preventive in nature to help clarify irrational thoughts that may lead to negative emotions and decisions even in the young.

School councils were another area where guidance services were offered in some of the schools. Representatives of students for each grade level meet with the guidance team termly to address issues of student's wellbeing both in class and outside school. The minutes of the deliberations were later taken to the school senior management for attention. This has greatly improved communication between the students and the school thus reducing negative vices of riots and boycotts in school. Again, this agrees with the Rational Emotive Behaviour principles that the way individuals think has a significant impact on the way they feel. In this case, the students thought that they had a voice in the running of the school and that their concerns were being given attention.

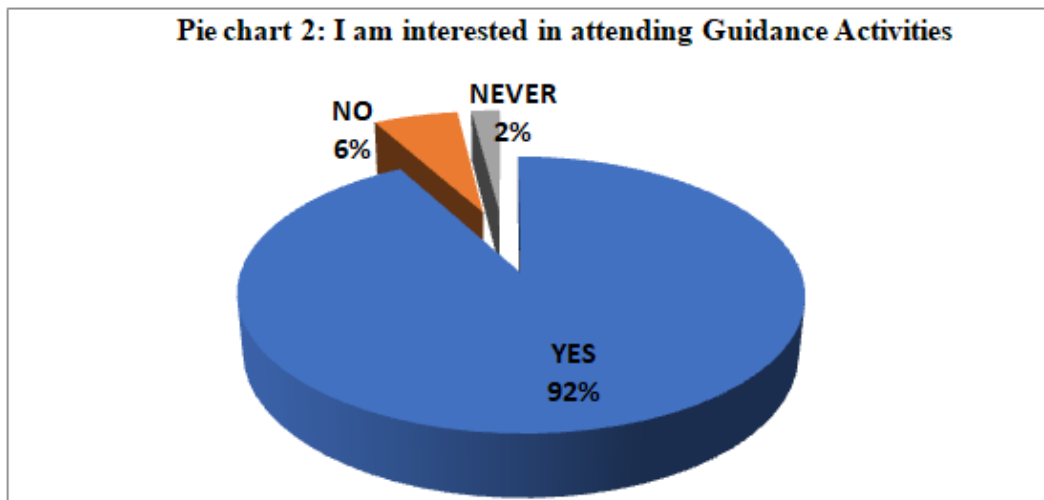
### **3.2 How boys perceive the guidance and counselling services in their schools**

The study established that vocational and career guidance activities are being offered. Both locally based activities within the school and those that were organized at the district level for many schools to attend.



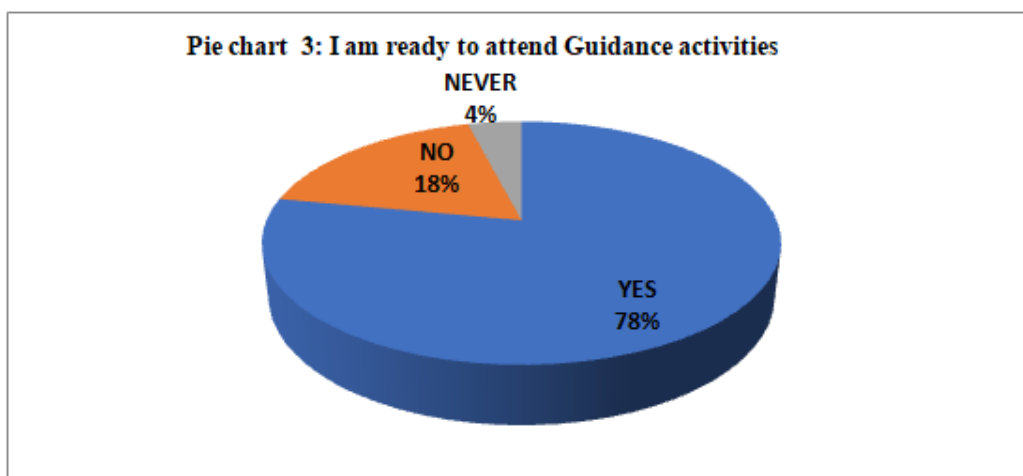
Findings presented in chart 1 show that students did not learn a lot from the services organized outside the school. This was represented by 20% of the respondents who agreed while 56% disagreed and 24% said never. The reason was that few pupils are released from schools to attend such activities and time was also a factor as most of the facilitators were given little time to fully interact with the learners.

Findings in pie chart 2 indicated that Boys were interested in attending Guidance related Activities at all levels. This was seen from the 92% of the respondents who agreed while 6% disagreed and 2% said never. The study findings revealed that the learners were willing to attend guidance and counselling activities in the various boys' schools.



The various activities organized in the schools gave students a chance to learn new things. They got prepared for both career choice and as well as issues of subject combinations.

Pie chart 3 represents the views of the respondents regarding their readiness to attend guidance and counselling services in schools. The findings in chart 3 indicated that the respondents were eager to attend and participate in the various forums where guidance related activities were held. This was proved by 78% of the respondents who agreed while 18% disagreed and 4% said never.

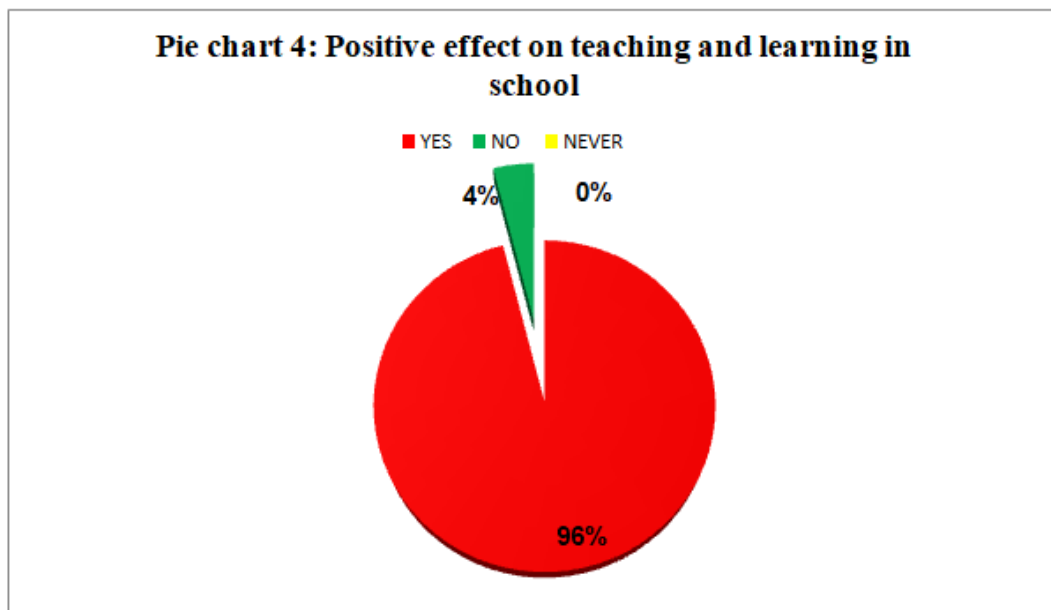


The foregoing findings show that a high number of learners had a positive attitude towards the guidance and counselling services that were offered and the relevant information through sensitization talks on entry requirements for tertiary education. This is also in agreement with the findings of Kasonde et al. (2009) on the impact of guidance and counselling services in high schools. The study established that the majority of pupils and teachers said that the guidance and counselling unit provided pupils with information on entry requirements for higher institutions, subject choice, selection of a career pathway, and counselling services. Though we cannot completely rule out the 18% that disagreed and for 4% that said never with this view. Calling for further investigations into this area.

Findings in pie chart 4 suggested that most respondents were of the view that school guidance services especially student council meetings with guidance teachers had a positive impact on their learning. The figures attest to the fact that the services improved teaching in the various subjects they learned. From the findings in pie chart 4, it was clear that most respondents said boys perceived guidance and counselling that it assisted them to improve their Learning in the various schools they

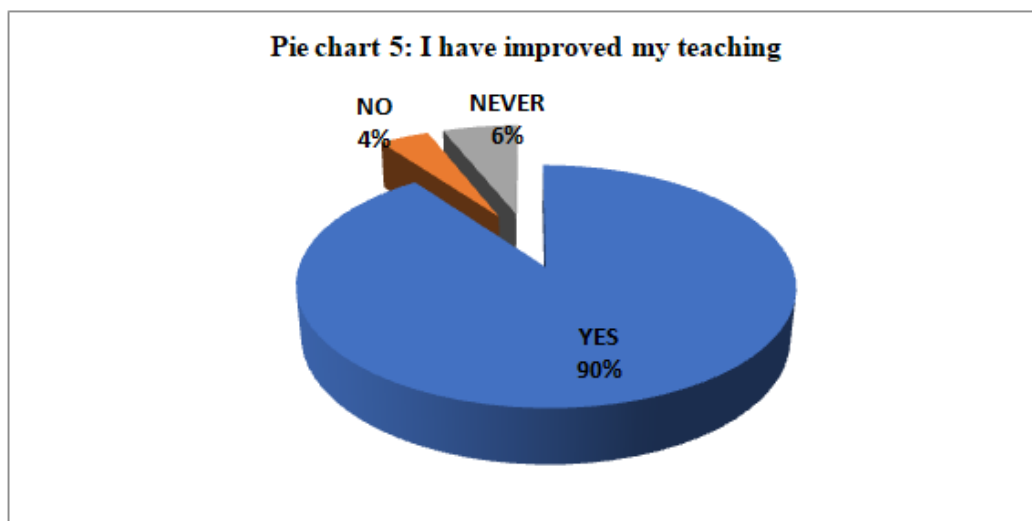


are in. This was seen from the 96% of respondents who agreed that the feedback from various services had a positive effect on teaching and learning.



The findings show that the participants had a positive effect on teaching and learning in school hence they needed guidance and counselling.

Pie chart 5 presents findings showing that teachers had improved in their teaching through guidance services (School Council meetings). This was seen from the 90% of the respondents who agreed while 4% disagreed and 6% said never.



The foregoing findings show that learners felt that their concerns were being addressed especially those relating to teaching and learning. This was in line with the ministry of education guidelines on the provision of guidance services in school. Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (2014) through the directorate of school guidance services agree to the findings that in recent years, escalating cases of student/learner violence and demonstrations have become the order of the day. Students don't seem to have avenues where they can vent their anger and frustrations, as they feel left out in matters that affect them by the school administration. Students' councils are important for learner/student representation in matters of policy at primary, secondary, and college levels.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Various guidance and counselling services are offered in the boys' secondary schools of Eastern Province Zambia. The findings showed that the services that were common in all schools ranged from

information services (talks, sensitizations, and literature display through posters), placement services (enrolment by class and subject allocations), appraisal services, vocational and career guidance services, counselling services, referral services (Drug Enforcement Commission, Hospitals, supportive non-governmental organization), evaluation, follow-ups, consultancy, and research services. It is these services that help the boys to realise the importance of being in secondary school and avoid peer pressure which make them fail to meet their academic aspirations. In doing so, the guidance and counselling services are becoming meaningful to the learners, and this is driving them to concentrate with their academic work. In this context, the study has demonstrated that providing guidance and counselling services to learners goes beyond teaching and it enables learners to realise their education dreams as they are put in the right path to achieve such dreams in life. The study concludes that boys' guidance and counselling services should be enhanced even in other schools so that the development of the children can be uniform in the Zambian education system.

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**Citation:** Mwanza Nicholas. "The Guidance and Counselling Services in the Boys' Secondary Schools in the Eastern Province of Zambia" *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, vol 8, no. 12, 2021, pp. 99-105. doi: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.08120011>.

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