

Examining the Role of Teachers in the Provision of Guidance and Counselling at Secondary School Level

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Abstract

Scientific and technological advancements have affected all walks of life and have brought about significant changes in them. Keeping in view the ever-changing nature of society, educational demands and needs, employment and religious exploitation, school students are under a lot of stress. The situation demands that they should be helped to cope with this stress. Educational guidance and counselling have played a vital role for students in this regard. The present study was planned to investigate the role of educators in providing guidance and counseling to students of secondary level. A descriptive survey design was used for this purpose. The participants were included through stratified sampling technique. These comprise principals, teachers and students of secondary schools in the Islamabad Capital Territory. Three separate questionnaires were designed for the participants. These included questionnaires for: the principals of secondary schools, students and teachers. The findings revealed that the teachers lacked the skills and knowledge required for providing guidance and counseling to the students. The current teacher education programs don't equip teachers with the skills to provide guidance and counselling to students. In addition, the teachers are not ready to play the role of guidance counsellors. The analysis revealed that there did not exist any arrangement for providing guidance and counselling to the students.

Keywords: Role, Competence, Guidance, Counselling

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Introduction

Rapid changes taking place in contemporary society have put greater demand on the educators for reformation of the school education. Instead of a sole focus on academic achievements the schools are entrusted to whole person development of learners. Teaching and learning is not confined only to classroom academic activities. The learners of today are living in complex world with a variety of problems. As the students do not receive sufficient familial support to face different kinds of problems, the school is considered as main source of stability in their lives (Aggarwal (1997). The ministry of education is paying special attention to help the student through specific services in the schools.

The main purpose of a school is to prepare the students for future. The school offers an educational program to unfold the abilities and potentialities of the learners. Guidance and counselling programs are designed to cope with the physical, social, emotional, vocational and educational problems of the students. The learners need guidance and counseling to make intellectual choices and adjustment in their lives. They require help to cope with the challenges in this fast changing world. Such school counseling programs are helpful for the overall development of the learners at school.

Guidance and counselling provides an insight to knowledge and attitudes. It is therefore imperative to help young people to handle the challenges and realities they come across in their ever-changing milieu, recognize their potentials and identify the problems and opportunities in the real world. Guidance and counseling is considered as a programme of activities which assist the learners to solve existing difficulties in this era of sophisticated technological advancements.

Through guidance and counselling the learners are helped to overcome the problems which would otherwise make learning difficult. The students are enabled to make informed decisions with the help of guidance and counselling in their personal, academic and professional life. Awan (2002) says that the goal of guidance and counselling services is to enable each learner to extract optimum educational benefits.

Guidance and counselling is an important feature of the educational programs which focuses on helping the students to learn their strengths and weaknesses. It also aids the learners in adjustment process (Egbo, 2013; Roger, 2006). Guidance is said to be the procedure for helping a person understand himself and his surroundings while counselling assists a person in solving their personal, social and educational and development problems. It is through guidance and counselling that the

individuals are enabled to cope with the novel situations. Their strengths and weaknesses are tested once they try to solve new problems.

Role of Teachers

In the scientific, technological and digital era teachers are to perform multiple roles. They are no longer limited to classroom academic activities. They are reinventing themselves and their occupation to enable the students to cope with the challenge of the modern world. Teachers are well aware of the fact that the essence of education is a close relationship between knowledgeable, caring, secure and motivated learners (Hussain, 2006). The teachers know that in order to understand the interests, needs, abilities and learning and thinking style of the learners, they will have to take each learner as an individual. It is the job of the teacher to counsel the students in the process of growth and maturity. They are to help them to integrate their social, emotional and intellectual growth. If the teachers adopt the role of educational guide, facilitator, and co learner, the learners will accomplish more (Rao & Hari, 2005). It is the responsibility of the teachers to assist the students in developing their abilities to think positively and critically, use their knowledge in solving problems and make informed decisions (Khizran, 2004).

Teaching learning procedures include guidance at all stages. The main focus of teaching is to facilitate human development. We cannot say that the guidance and counselling is the whole of teaching but it is part of teaching (Sullivan, 2008). The most important responsibility of a teacher is to help fashion an individual so that his/her hidden potentials are brought out. Teachers have a vital role in this regard as well. An astute teacher knows that many students learn only what they think is good for reaching their goal. Azad (2007) opines that a teacher has the opportunities in the classroom to assist the young learners to discover their hidden potentials and weaknesses, to make better their study habits and attitudes for a successful life. The learners can be guided to achieve their goals and objectives in this process.

With the changing times, teaching assignments have become more challenging as multicultural classrooms are now prevalent. The teachers' job is to make the students cope well with the complexities of this situation. Teachers should now help make the learners critical thinkers, problem solvers and good decision makers in the modern age.

The teachers should have competencies to integrate knowledge, handle complexities and adapt to the needs of learners. They need to be competent in their responsibilities toward their students inside and outside the classroom (Koshy, 2004; Mohanty, 2003; Villegas, 2003). One of the

important roles of teacher is to properly guide and counsel students. Teachers play key role as a facilitator in helping to make the students intellectually and socially competent. The teacher is a keen observer of students' performance, and needs to have the ability to cater to their individual differences, needing to adapt solutions to their problems.

According to Shahzad (2005) it is the teacher's duty to act as a future planning guide for students. In this connection, the teacher needs to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses to provide the possible solutions to their problems. They should guide the learners for both the curricular and co-curricular activities. Teachers need tries to help the students overcome their specific learning needs and give all students the confidence to lead a normal life. A teacher needs to establish a very high degree of relationship with his/her students so that their all-round development is ensured.

The educational experts agree that the guidance and counselling services are an important part of the teaching/learning process (Shahzad, 2005). Goals of teaching and counselling are similar and depend upon each other for their efficacy. Guidance and counselling is not the teaching alone but it is an integral part of the whole process and directly contributes to the actualization of educational objectives (Mehmood, 2008; Mishra, 2004; Rao, 2004). It is a teacher's duty to make his/her disciples learn positive attitude which will steer their lives in the right direction. This environment will make the learners prepared for and acceptable fora role in society as their personality will exhibit a balance necessary for a socially intelligent person.

Secondary education is a very important step in the overall education system. It is the stage of forming and gradually establishing new sets of student habits, skills and attitudes. As a result they face problems related to education, emotions and adjustment and require assistance to overcome such problems. Secondary level teachers having close and frequent relations with students as they move through their adolescence can help them in their natural setting through guidance and counselling.

There is a growing realization that schools must help the students to cope with the challenges caused by scientific developments. All over the world schools have accepted this new role and trying to fulfill the demands of the learners in rapidly changing circumstances and guidance and counselling services have become an important part of education system (Rao & Hari, 2005). In our country, Pakistan, majority of parents are unable to help their children to solve their social, emotional, educational and vocational problems (Government of Pakistan, 1998).

Parents and families tend to expect that it is a teacher's role to prepare students for future. But the question arises as to whether teachers

have the required skills and are competent enough to perform the additional responsibilities of providing guidance and counselling?

These circumstances motivated the plan for this study. The main aim of the study was to analyze the role and competence of teachers in helping their students to cope with their problems by providing guidance and counselling. These are the main questions which guided this research.

1. Are the secondary school teachers aware of their multiple roles in the changing circumstances?
2. Are the secondary school teachers competent to provide guidance to the students of secondary stage?
3. What is the students' perception about provision of guidance by their teachers?
4. What measures can be adopted to enable teachers to provide guidance and counselling to students of secondary stage?

Method

The population comprised of principals, secondary teachers and students enrolled in secondary level schools in the Islamabad capital territory, both in urban and rural setting. With the permission of Federal Directorate of Education Islamabad Pakistan and consent of school principal and teachers, the sample for the study was selected through stratified sampling techniques. It comprised 20 Islamabad Model Schools (10 Boys, schools and 10 Girls' schools). To investigate the problem, 20 Principals (equal number of males and females) from the sampled schools, 100 teachers (equal number of males and females) teaching in the sampled schools and 300 students (equal number of boys and girls) studying in X-Grade (average age = 15 years) were the participants of the study.

Instruments

Descriptive research design was adopted for this study to find out the opinions of the teachers, students and the principals vis-a-vis the role of teachers in providing counselling and guidance to students. Three questionnaires were prepared by the researcher himself to find about existing level of provision of personal, educational and vocational guidance and counseling to the students, teachers' training, role and competency to provide guidance and counseling. Questionnaire for teachers consisted 32 items. Similarly, questionnaire for principals

consisted 32 items. However, questionnaire for students consisted 28 items. The responses were recorded on a 5 point Likert Scale. To validate reliability, the research instruments were piloted in the three secondary level schools. These schools were not included in the sample of study.

Procedure

The questionnaires were handed over to the teachers and principals in person. The students were served the questionnaires through their subject teachers who provided them with the guidelines for solving the questionnaires. The same procedure was adopted for the collection of the solved questionnaires.

Results

To measure the responses the instruments used were based on 5-point Likert. The option of “uncertain” was mostly not responded by the respondents or responded with a very small frequency. Through analysis it was found that 75 % principals and 63 % teachers rejected that existing teacher training programmes create awareness in the teachers and enable them to play their role as guidance counsellor. They also rejected that teachers are inclined to accept the added role of guidance counsellor. 65 % principals and 58 % teachers rejected that there exist any formal system to provide guidance and counselling in the school.

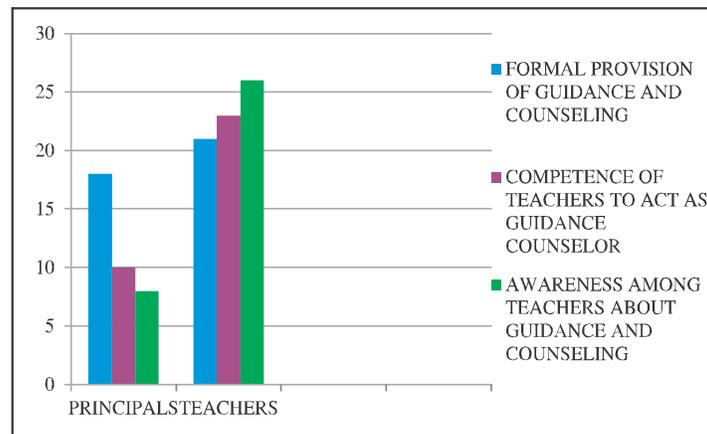


Figure 1: *Formal Provision of Guidance and Counselling, competence of teachers and awareness among teachers about guidance and counselling*

76 % principals, 61 % teachers and 75 % students rejected that the teachers provide any sort of educational, vocational and social guidance to the students to overcome the problems.

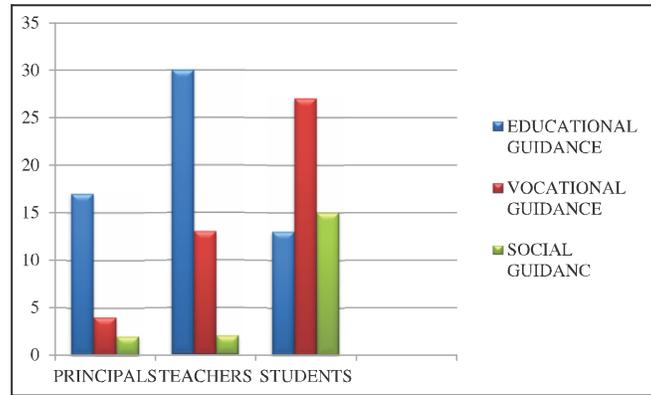


Figure 2: Provision of Educational, Vocational and Social

78% principals, 59 % teachers and 80 % students rejected that teachers guide the students regarding their strengths and shortcomings and help them in formulating goals and developing confidence in their abilities. It was reflected that 90 % principals, 55 % teachers and 78 % students disagreed that students are guided by respective teachers in coping with their emotional problems.

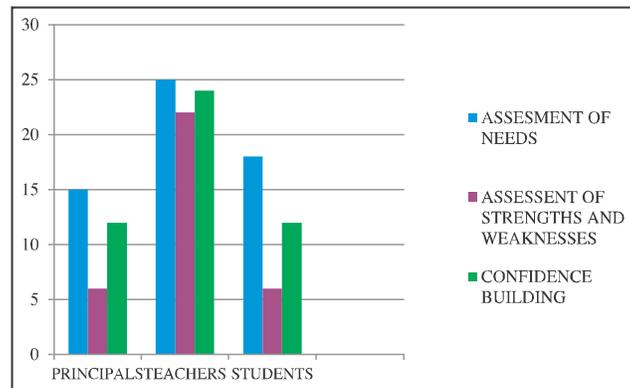


Figure3: Assessment of needs, strengths and weaknesses and confidence building

It was also found that 75% principals, 53% teachers and 64% students are of the opinion that students are not guided by the teachers about their contribution to the society. 100 % principals, 90 % teachers and 87 % students agreed that there should be qualified guidance counselors in the schools. They favored guidance and counselling services as an indispensable component of programs of studies.

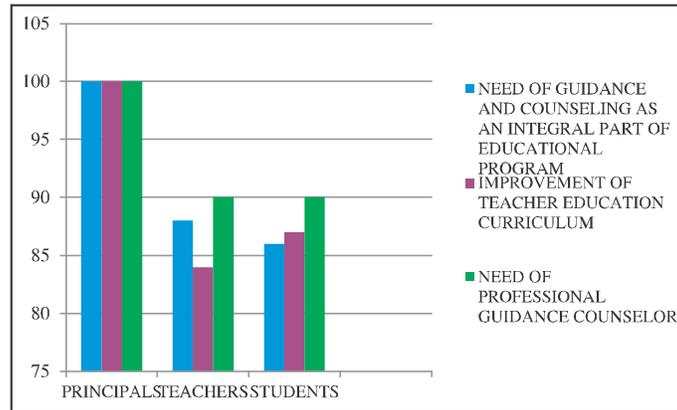


Figure 4: *Need of guidance and counselling as an integral part of educational program, improvement of teacher education curriculum, need of professional guidance counsellor.*

Discussion

The findings of the research reveal that there is a consensus among all the three respondent groups on many points and they share their view points. However, in some cases the teachers differ from the others. The results of the study show that there is no informal provision of guidance and counselling at the secondary level schools. The teachers reported that they were not provided with any training to work as guidance counsellors at any stage of their jobs. Therefore, the teachers training programs need to be updated in this regard. This connects with the findings of an earlier study by Shah (2008). The results indicate that the teachers generally do not take students’ personal problems into consideration, and there is no arrangement for assessing their needs in this connection. Neither was there any evidence that teachers help students in formulation of their goals, future planning, emotional and stress management.

The present study results also supported the conclusion drawn by Khizran (2004) that there is a need of specialized guidance counsellors at secondary school level because the teachers are not well equipped for this purpose. The study also seconded the recommendation propounded by Mahmood (2008) reaching the same conclusion.

Egbo (2008) provided evidence that guidance and counselling is the solution to overcome almost all the learning related problems. It was concluded by Bakhda (2004) that guidance and counselling is of key importance to prevent students' disruptions and to establish a free and affable environment for the learners. Otherwise, there will be discipline problems in the class. Mogobo (2007) concluded in a study that guidance and counselling to be included in the teaching training program in the main stream like any other core subject. However, when teachers are overloaded they are very likely not to be able to play their role according to demands. This study contributes to the evidence that guidance and counselling is negatively affected by weak training system of teachers. (Gybers & Henderson, 2001; Hurebera et al, 2014).

The detailed analysis of the respondents' opinions reveals the need of provision of guidance and counselling at secondary school level. This result supports the findings of Shah (2008) who conducted a study on "The Need and Provision of Guidance and Counseling Services in the Garrison Secondary Schools of Taxila and Wah Cantt." and concluded that; a comprehensive guidance program was needed at secondary school level. It can be dealt with by appointing specialized counsellors in the schools(Hussain ,2006). It can be partly solved by providing relevant training to in-service teachers thus making the guidance and counselling part of curriculum.

Conclusions

From the information collected from principals, teachers and students it can be concluded that teachers are not aware of their role to provide guidance and counselling alongside their main responsibility for teaching. The results indicated that the teachers are not willing to play the additional role for providing guidance and counselling. It can be reflected that there is no formal system for this purpose however students are informally provided educational guidance and counseling by the teachers. Therefore, to some extent students are provided with vocational guidance. However, the teachers do not provide any sort of counselling to the students in their personal, emotional and social problems. It can also be reflected that they have not been provided with specific training

to perform this responsibility. The results showed that teacher education program do not create an awareness about the need for guidance and counselling.

Keeping in view the analysis and drawn conclusions, it is suggested that providing guidance and counselling to students should be made a necessary part of the study programs. It has also been highlighted that the current teacher education study programs do not equip teachers with the necessary skills to work as guidance counsellors. It is, therefore, reiterated that trained guidance counsellors be appointed in schools. In addition, the teacher training programs should be revamped to incorporate guidance and counselling components in their curricula. This would enable the future teachers to work both as teachers and counsellor for the holistic development of students.

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