



## Assessment of Service Delivery in Guidance and Counselling Units in a Selected Polytechnics Schools in Rwanda

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**Abstract:** The study intended to assess to students' satisfaction with guidance and counseling services offered in Polytechnics schools. Specifically, the study sought to find out the student guidance and counseling services, to examine the extent of the influence of accessing guidance and counseling services on students' school life and students' attitudes towards studies; to assess the level of students' satisfaction about guidance and counseling services offered, to find out the challenges constraining effectiveness of guidance and counseling services and to identify strategies for improving guidance and counseling services provided to students. Descriptive survey research design using quantitative approach was used to generate primary data with help of a questionnaire addressed to selected students from Polytechnics schools. The target population was 50 students who have been offered guidance and counseling services during the 2021 academic year. Due to the students' availability and their willing to participate in this study, the only 46 students were purposively selected and involved in the present study. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentage tables were used to summarize and to analyze data. The study revealed different types of guidance and counseling services that are offered such as career guidance, educational issues, social relations, family problems, peer pressure, health issues and conflict resolution. Access to guidance and counseling services has encouraged students to study hard, develop in them positive attitudes towards learning, to approach exam without fear, improve class attendance, improve concentration in studying, keep them in touch with friend and family members, keep them connected to others and help improve performance. Access to guidance and counseling services has helped students appreciate my studies, think that studies are a good thing, believe that studies lead to success, do not bother about studies and like their studies. The students were satisfied with the services as the services were good. The main challenges constraining effective guidance and counseling services were lack of confidentiality, lack of time, lack of training, lack of referral material, students' reluctant to seek help, inadequate facilities and resources. Confidentiality and advice to students, provision of faculties were among the others strategies to improve services. The study recommended that enlightening guidance and counseling service, training of counselors and constant sensitization of the students would improve guidance and counseling services.

**Keywords:** Service Delivery, Guidance, Counselling Units, Polytechnics Schools.

### 1. Background to the study

The need for Guidance and Counselling in Rwanda has been made more urgent by the greatly expanded and diversified educational facilities and opportunities at the country's Polytechnics schools level (Gichunge, 1996). At the same time, the majority of students in Rwanda Polytechnics schools are in the transition period from puberty to adolescence. This period is characterized by physical and social changes as well as mental and psychological developments. Physically, the transition is marked by the changes in the body as a whole, but specifically, changes are manifested in the voice, sex organs, height and weight. Socially, they become attached to one member of the opposite sex, although at times they become gregarious when the group faces a common foe or have a common problem (ibid.). They are also emotional and almost respond in the same way to similar

situations. In addition, they tend to develop adventurous spirit to do the forbidden, like defy authority, challenge authority, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol and engage in sex.

According to Gichunge (1996), the students' individualistic ideals, interests and emotions need recognition and encouragement. Normally, they are faced with the desire for education and career development. What hinders them from achieving these desires is the influence of a money economy, a pluralistic society, growing materialism and the adoption of western technology. As a result of these influences, they are constantly searching for identity, stability and direction in a changing and uncertain world. Their main concern is to find a coherent and consistent identity so as to function well in the world. There is therefore need to provide them with Guidance and Counselling services to help them make the right choices at every transitional stage.

Guidance and counseling services are very important tools in human development especially during adolescent stage. Adolescent stage is characterized by rapid growth and change: physically, socially, spiritually, morally and intellectually. As of adolescents are in Polytechnics schools and tertiary schools, guidance and counseling services are seriously needed at these levels. According to Bark (2003), guidance and counseling are the assistances made available by qualified and trained persons to an individual of any age to help him to manage his own life activities, develop his own points of view, make his own decisions and carry his own burden. In addition, Braddock (2001) states that, the purpose of guidance and counseling in schools is to improve academic achievement, foster positive study attitudes and habits, increase acquisitions and application of conflict resolution skills, and even decrease school dropouts.

Lack of guidance and counseling in adolescence has resulted to increase in unpleasant outcomes in the society. These include low academic performance, school dropouts, drug abuse, crimes, and even failure to secure jobs. Anastasi (1990) also adds that the task of educational guidance and counseling is to enable a student to adjust himself to his studies by improving his study attitude and removing subject matter difficulties. When guidance and counseling services are missing in schools, students' adaptation becomes difficult thus leading to low performance, misbehavior and dropout. According to Odeke (1996), without sound guidance and counseling, many student's loose direction and engage themselves in bad behaviors such as drug abuse and alcohol indulgence, missing classes, dropout and so on; as a result, they lack both focus and direction resulting to total failure in life. In this regard, students need guidance and direction to study and choose career.

In some countries, guidance and counseling services are not a new phenomenon. In Ethiopian higher education, "Guidance and Counseling" course was first introduced in the curriculum of Addis Ababa University in 1967 (Alemu, 2013). Since then; the course has been given to university students at the department of Psychology and the graduates have been assigned to schools and other social settings to provide guidance and counseling services. In Rwanda, guidance and counseling was introduced in Polytechnics schools following the Gachathi Report of 1976. The purpose was to help students understand themselves and to discover their abilities and limitation from their environment (Ndegwa, 2013).

The Rwandan society has also been experiencing rapid political, social and economic changes. As a result, parents, families and the community are losing their responsibilities, such as preparing the adolescent for adult life. The schools, on the other hand, with a loaded curriculum and the anxiety of excelling in national exams, goes on to put more pressure on the adolescent who is already overloaded with social problems. Therefore, Guidance and Counselling services need to be developed as rapidly and as carefully as the changes occur and as resources permit. The study sought to establish the nature of services that the Guidance and Counselling units were delivering to students to empower them to make the right choices at the various transitional stages that they undergo.

Egbochuku (2008) asserts that the aims of school guidance and counseling services are to provide students with opportunities to develop knowledge and appreciation of themselves and others, to develop relationship skills, ethical standards and a sense of responsibility. The students also have the opportunity to acquire skills and attitudes necessary to develop educational goals which are suited to

their needs, interests and abilities and information that would enable them to make decisions about life and career opportunities

Makinde (1994) further argues that guidance helps in giving direction to the achievement of developmental tasks of adolescents. Counseling on the other hand helps prevent frustration, restore self-understanding and educate on tasks necessary for good adolescent growth. Counseling is concerned with the worth of an individual, awareness of the various aspects of growth, helping an individual understand himself or herself and his or her world. Thus, it provides favorable conditions for healthier growth and correction of unbecoming behavior (Makinde, 1994). Guidance and counseling services are therefore necessary at these levels where adolescent stage is at its peak. At this stage, students need to clarify their goals and values, strengthen their interests and aspirations, appreciate their philosophies and cognition and adjust to the norms of society.

In Rwanda Polytechnics schools today, the major complaint is on indiscipline, which has been found to manifest in different forms. These forms range from strikes, burning and destroying the school properties, sex, drug abuse, and many more. According to Ohlsen (1979), adolescents are idealistic, self-critical, and very reactive against adult hypocrisy. They become very critical of adult's failure to attack problems that they face in their homes, schools, churches and in the nation as a whole. Guidance and Counselling services given to them should therefore enable them to voice their problems and also seek amicable solutions.

An effective Guidance and Counselling programme is essential for a good school (Mutie & Ndambuki, 2003). If there is to be any impact on the growth and development of the child and the quality of educational programme, the Guidance and Counselling programme must be an organized service. Pecku (1991, p. 82) points out five aims of an effective Guidance and Counselling services in a Polytechnics schools school. These are to assist the learner to: Achieve self-understanding; Learn to deal with complicated interpersonal relations; Attain appropriate academic achievement; Alleviate special personal or emotional problems, and make appropriate educational and vocational decisions.

It is worth noting here that depending on the context of a school, a particular society, there could be more and sometimes different services delivered to the students within the Guidance and Counselling units. However, for the Rwandan context, the objectives of Guidance and Counselling are given in line with the broad goals of education and these should guide the nature of guidance and counselling in Polytechnics schools. The efficiency of counselling services, therefore, depends on the balance among, corrective, preventive and developmental functions. The study applied a combination of approaches in evaluating the services offered by the Guidance and counselling units in selected Polytechnics schools based on the objectives set by the MINEDUC.

Many studies have been done to find out the nature of services needed by students and offered within the Guidance and Counselling units. Karen, Shirley, Allen, Paul and Connie (1999) did a study in Southern California on the Guidance and Counselling services among 203 high school students and found that amongst the services Polytechnics schools school students needed was financial management. The study further established that high school students spent \$141 billion annually. Most of that spending was related to self-gratification of immediate wants. The questionnaire was developed to ask the teens what they knew and wanted to know about financial management. From the study findings, it was evident that early financial management education is crucial and should therefore be included in school Guidance and Counselling services. The study deduced that individuals who learn financial matters at an early age tend to do better financially than those who do not have financial education. Financial education also enabled high school students set goals and develop savings and spending plans for reaching their goals.

Another study by Lukanow, Brandrup, Mansour and Hawkins (1991) also on the Guidance and Counselling services needed by Polytechnics schools school students found that students need more knowledge on pregnancy and sexual behaviour. As part of their recommendation, they say that education and information about health risks related to sexuality, such as preventing unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and even sexual dysfunction should

be provided to Polytechnics school going students (p. 66). According to them, information to help individuals as they develop their sexual identities and provide them with the means to make Informed choices in the field of sexuality are some of the areas that Guidance and Counselling units should address.

In a related study, Smith, Jones and Hall (1980), in New Jersey, found that among others, information on contraceptives, adolescent pregnancy and its lasting effects on the adolescent parents should be some of the services provided by the Guidance and Counselling units in Polytechnics schools. Their study found that the consequences of adolescent pregnancy were long lasting for the mother. The study involved 50 respondents. It was found that 60% of the adolescent mothers did not finish high school; yet, graduating from high school was critical for post-Polytechnics schools education or getting a good job. On the other hand, fathers of children born to adolescent mothers bore relatively few consequences of adolescent pregnancy. Seventy per cent of adolescent males who became fathers completed high schools. This study therefore found that apart from ensuring that the students are aware of consequences of engaging in sexual activities while in school, the Guidance and Counselling services should be structured such that students who fall out of school due to pregnancy are followed and helped to live a meaningful life.

Doswell (1993) has explored the effect of attitudes of teachers on service delivery programmes within Guidance and Counselling units. Doswell (1993) reports that the teacher's race, social background and religion have some influence on their attitude towards the students to whom they were to administer Guidance and Counselling services. He observes that the age of the teacher and the presence of young unmarried children in a teacher's home are predictive of attitudes towards Polytechnics school's students who, for example, became pregnant. The study found that teachers who encourage teen-age parents to remain in school are an extremely valuable part of the support system for pregnant and parenting adolescents.

According to Bagley and Ramsey (1986), Finkel, (1984), Herman and Hirschman (1981), Polytechnics school students ought to be given life skills on how to cope with poverty and sexual abuse. This should therefore form part of the services provided by the Guidance and Counselling units. Because of poverty and the HIV/AIDS scourge, many youths today are finding themselves living with caregivers other than their parents. These scholars advocate that children who live without their biological parents at some time during childhood have increased vulnerability to sexual abuse. Sims and Stamper (1992) add that that a large percentage of boys and girls experience sexual abuse by the time they reach middle and high school. The same views are held by Lindberg and Distad (1985) who argue that family relationships, interpersonal relationships, sexual behaviour and personal safety are common subjects that teachers in Guidance and Counselling department should discuss with students in a non-threatening environment.

According to Esere (2006), the main aim of behavior modification strategies is to have a change in behavior towards positive change. Effective counseling is therefore perceived as that which helps a client to effect a change in his or her behaviors such that he or she is able to live a more productive and satisfying life. Akinade and Adedipe (2004) have also noted that behavior modification is associated with the control of behavior through the action of environmental forces. It is a process of helping people to learn how to solve certain interpersonal, emotional and decision making problems.

Skinner (1953) contends that learning cannot occur in the absence of either positive or negative reinforcement. According to Skinner, actions that are reinforced tend to be repeated whereas those that are not reinforced tend to be extinguished. His model is based on reinforcement principles and has the goal of identifying and controlling environmental factors that lead to behavioral change. Corey (2005) and Araya (2008) assert that behavior is influenced by stimulus events, external reinforcement and cognitive mediation processes. The theory also involves a reciprocal interaction among the environment, personal factors like beliefs, preferences and expectations and individual behavior.

Euvrard (1992) describes guidance as practice, a process of bringing students into contact with the world of reality in such a way that they acquire life-skills and techniques, which allow them to direct



themselves completely in the educational, personal and social spheres and the world of work in order to progress and survive effectively.

Okobiah & Okorodudu (2004) add that guidance can also be looked at as a programme or services to individuals based upon the need of each individual, an understanding of his/her immediate environment, the influence of environmental factors on the individual and the unique features of each school. Guidance is designed to help each individual adjust to his/her environment, develop the ability to set realistic goals for him/herself, and improve his/her education.

Guidance therefore encompasses those services and programmes of the school, which are specifically intended to promote educational, career, and personal social development of students (Denga, 2001). Ubana (2008) maintains that guidance services include processes of consultation, co-ordination, collaboration, instruction, information-giving, appraisal, referral, and institutional support. As a process, Eyo, Joshua and Esuong (2009) add that guidance involves a series of actions or progressive steps, which move towards a goal. As a service, it involves four major services, namely, those of educational, vocational, personal and social guidance.

Collins (2002) says that guidance and counseling is important because it provides an insight on working knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is necessary to assist individual especially young people to be able to deal with challenges and realities they face in their ever changing environment, understand themselves their social and physical environment, realize their potentials as well as identify opportunities in a world where chances for further training, employment and advancement continue to dwindle.

Atodo (2008) adds that counseling is largely concerned with giving advice and concentrates on the individuals' self-awareness as well as helping improve problem-solving skills and education of the individual.

Counseling is a relationship between a concerned person and a person with a need (Gora, Sawatzky & Hague, 1992). This relationship is usually person-to person, although sometimes it may involve more than two people. It is designed to help people to understand and clarify their views, and learn how to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices, and through the resolution of emotional or interpersonal problems.

Counseling is therefore a process by means of which the helper expresses care and concern towards the person with a problem, and facilitates that person's personal growth and brings about change through self-knowledge (UNESCO, 2000). It is a learning-oriented process, which occurs usually in an interactive relationship, with the aim of helping a person learn more about the self, and to use such understanding to enable the person to become an effective member of society. In this regard, school counseling helps students to understand themselves and their opportunities, to make appropriate adjustment and decisions, and to accept personal responsibility for their choices.

The aims of school counseling, although they may in some cases overlap with the goals of guidance are distinct. Lambert and Barley (2001) explain that counseling school counseling aims to help students gain an insight into the origins and development of emotional difficulties, leading to an increased capacity to take rational control over feelings and actions. Counseling also aims to alter maladjusted behavior among students. It also aims to provide students with the skills, awareness and knowledge, which will enable them to confront social inadequacy, such as negative cultural and gender stereotypes.

Gysbers and Henderson (2006) add that counseling achieves its aims on three different, but interrelated operational levels, namely, educational counseling, personal/social counseling, and vocational counseling. Educational counseling is a term first coined by Truman Kelley in 1914 as a process of rendering services to pupils who need assistance in making decisions about important aspects of their education, such as the choice of courses and studies, decisions regarding interests and ability, and choices of college and high school (Makinde, 1988). Educational counseling aims at increasing students' knowledge of educational opportunities.

Personal counseling deals with emotional distress and behavioral difficulties, which arise when individuals struggle to deal with developmental stages and tasks (McGannon, Carey & Dimmitt, 2005). Personal counseling is important, because any aspect of development can be turned into an adjustment problem, and it is inevitable that everyone encounters, at some time, exceptional difficulty in meeting an ordinary challenge. For example, Gysbers and Henderson (2006) note that developmental challenges, such as anxiety over a career decision, lingering anger over an interpersonal conflict, depressive feelings, guilt about mistakes, or grief over the loss of a loved one may require the services of personal counseling.

## 2. The Role of the Teacher Counsellor in Service Delivery

According to Okoth (2002), the school counsellor's role concept is essentially an extension of his counselling view, which in turn is dependent upon his behavioural concept of man or his personality theory. Underlying these influences of the role concept is the counsellor as a person, his existential totality, his lifestyle, his experiential pattern, and his inner motivational force. Counselling differs from other occupations in that its main tools are people. Counsellors and clients bring many characteristics into session and experience many thoughts and feelings during it.

Counsellors are first of all people, and secondly, they are counsellors. They have their own weaknesses, strengths, fears, anxieties, doubts and uncertainties. All these can hinder or facilitate their work with clients. Counsellors must, therefore, cautiously engage themselves in self-exploration, to be aware of themselves; how others affect them and the effect they have on others. To perform their role effectively, they must allow themselves to be guided by the set objectives of Guidance and Counselling.

Rao (2003) describes the role of the counsellor as that of a staff consultant and agent at institutional change. The counsellor should be increasingly involved with consulting academic staff and teaching them skills ancillary to counselling. He should attempt to: enhance teacher's sensitivity to student problems of personal growth, demonstrate the application of psychological principles of learning to human problem solving and improve the effectiveness of the academic faculty in institutions of learning.

Makinde (1984) specifies three important roles of school counsellors. First and foremost it should be able to help persons who are presently experiencing difficulty. This is the remedial or rehabilitative role. Secondly, counsellors should be able to anticipate, circumvent and if possible forestall difficulties, which may arise in the future. This is a preventive role. Thirdly, it should be able to help individuals plan, obtain and derive maximum benefit from educational, social, vocational, avocational and other kinds of experience which will enable those individuals to discover and develop their potential. This is the educative and developmental role.

Pecku (1991) identifies five roles of an effective Guidance and Counselling teacher. These he gives as: counselling, consultation, coordination, evaluation and in-service of teachers. Hollis and Hollis (1965) on the other hand give the responsibility of Guidance and Counselling teacher as falling in the areas of: planning and development of the guidance program, counselling, pupil appraisal, educational and occupational planning, referral work, placement, parent help, staff consulting, conducting local research and doing public relations work. By making a survey into the nature and service delivery of Guidance and Counselling units in the selected Polytechnics schools this study was able to establish the roles of teachers assigned to these units.

## 3. Importance of Effective Service Delivery in Guidance and Counselling Units

Several evaluation studies have been done to find out the effectiveness of Guidance and counselling programmes. Kranzler *et al.* (1966) evaluated the effects of counselling on fourth-grade students in the USA. He believed that the close personal relationship provided to students assigned to counselling would result in a significantly greater gain in sociometric status. The evaluation studies found that the difference between the counselled and the control groups were significant. Through this evaluation it was evident that Guidance and Counselling was effective. This study is similar to Kranzler's in that it is also focused on one grade of learners randomly selected, that is, form four

students. However, it differs from that of Kanzler's in the level of learners studied and in that it did not look at the effects of counselling on the student but the nature of services offered by Guidance and Counselling units.

Rothney (1958) makes a series of studies to evaluate the value of counselling. The experimental group received extensive Guidance and Counselling, and it was found that it had better academic records, made more realistic vocational choices, were less dissatisfied with their high school experience, made more progress in their employment, participated in self-improvement activities, had a more favourable attitude towards counselling and were more satisfied with their lives compared to subjects who did not receive any counselling assistance. However, it will be inferred from the services delivered through the units in schools.

Williamson and Bordin (1940) attempted to make an inquiry into the effectiveness of counselling services provided at the Student Counselling Bureau, University of Minnesota. The findings were that: the counselled students were rated significantly higher on the adjustment scale, the counselled students earned significantly better grades than the non-counselled students. Twenty-five years later Campbell (1965) compared the same two groups, that is, those who had been counselled and those who had not. The differences between the two groups were slight but the counselled group reported higher incomes and made greater contribution to society.

Morris (1966) and Lieberman (1996) did an inquiry in USA into the effect of programmes given in classroom guidance, they found that comprehensive curriculum about career, academic and social/personal development could positively impact student knowledge in each of those domains. That social skills could increase the social attractiveness of gifted and special needs student and that multicultural conflict resolution education could provide students with more positive perspectives on conflict, and can build related skills. The study also found that classroom curriculum about stress reduction techniques could improve student self concept, sense of locus of control and appropriate coping strategies and that classroom guidance focusing on academic achievement could influence students' behaviour and attitudes towards school, impact students school attitudes, and improve knowledge about succeeding in school. Lastly, the study found out that classroom curriculum designed to educate students about goal setting, problem solving, career exploration, school resources significantly improved student behaviour, attitude and knowledge in the areas. This present study seeks to find if the services delivered by the Guidance and Counselling units in schools are in line with the Guidance and Counselling goals of MINEDUC.

#### **4. Research Design**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The design is considered suitable for the study as it involves gathering data from members of the population in order to determine its current status in regard to one or more variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Moreover, a survey reports things the way they are. A survey study serves the following purposes: to obtain information that describes the existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes and values. Surveys are used to explain/explore the existence of two or more variables at a given point and they are useful where the study involves population which is too large for direct observation (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). More still, descriptive studies are concerned with gathering facts rather than manipulation of variables (Kothari, 2003)

#### **5. Data analysis and result**

This chapter is concerned with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data based on the objectives/questions that guided the study. Data collected was presented into two sections: the section one presents information on the background characteristics of respondents, while section two presents the results collected under the three objectives of the study. The data presentation was done based on the research objectives/questions. The results of the data analysis provided information that formed the basis for interpretation of the findings, discussion, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

### 5.1 Types of guidance and counseling services offered at Polytechnics schools

The first objective was to establish the type of guidance and counseling services offered at Polytechnics Schools. The table 5 below shows the type of guidance and counseling services offered in the school under the study.

Guidance and counseling services offered at Polytechnics schools

Guidance and Counseling Services	Frequency	Percent
Career guidance	29	63.0
Educational issues	45	97.8
Social relations	31	67.4
Family problems	45	97.8
Peer pressure	28	60.9
Health issues	44	95.7
Conflict resolution	26	56.5

Source: Field survey, 2021

The Table shows that there are several guidance and counseling services that are offered at Polytechnics School. However, the services that are most offered to students is guidance on educational issues (97.8%) followed by family problems (97.8%) and health issues respectively. This shows that although there are several guidance and counseling services that counselors can offer, students mostly seek for guidance and counseling on issues related to academics, family problems and health. These results show that more students are not seeking for the guidance and counseling services even when they have a problem. This therefore implies that they have wrong perceptions towards the guidance and counseling services.

In addition, students who seek guidance and counseling on career guidance (63.0%), social relations (67.4%), peer pressure (60.9%) and conflict resolution (56.5%) are fewer than those that seek help for educational issues and family problems and health issues. This fewer than expected and this shows that students are not ready to open up and seek for guidance on issues that are connected to the psychosocial, emotional changes. These results confirm what Wanjohi (1990) and Mutunga (2003) said that there is low level of voluntary guidance and counseling by students. Further, Wanjohi (1990) had noted that most students feel that it is only those students with problems who should see a counselor and those who are bright in class and with no academic problem should not seek for any help. It is because of this that students are indifferent to guidance and counseling.

### 5.2 Influence of access to guidance and counseling services on students' school life and attitude towards studies

The study was to examine the extent of the influence of accessing guidance and counseling services on students' school life and students' attitudes towards studies. Student respondents were asked to indicate how access to guidance and counseling has influenced their school life and their responses are presented in table.

Influence of guidance and counseling services on students' school life

Guidance and counseling services	Frequency	Percent
Encouraged me to study hard	38	82.6
Developed in me positive attitude towards learning	42	91.3
Helped me to approach exams without fear	39	87.0
Improved my class attendance	37	80.4
Increased my concentration in studying	41	89.1
Kept me in touch with friends and family members	45	97.8
Kept me connected to others and helped me improve my performance	44	95.7

Source: Field survey, 2021



The results demonstrate that student respondents reported that guidance and counseling services has kept them connected to others and helped improve their performance. This was indicated by 95.7% of student respondents. In addition, 97.8% of student respondents indicated that guidance and counseling kept them in touch with friend and family members. 89.1% of respondents indicated that it has increased their concentration in studying.

Furthermore, 80.4 % of students revealed that guidance and counseling services have improved their class attendance while 87.0 % indicated that these services have helped them to approach exams without fear. 91.3 % of student respondents indicated that guidance and counseling services have developed in them positive attitude towards learning and 82.6 % indicated that guidance and counseling have encouraged them to study.

The influence of guidance and counseling services on students' school life has been also stated by other scholars. For instance, Zins & Elias (2006) opined that when guidance and counseling is introduced to students, chances of having problems with behaviors management diminish as more of the students have the opportunity to decide how they learn. In addition, Odeke (1996) adds that without sound guidance and counseling services in schools many students loose direction and engage themselves in bad behaviors such as drug abuse and alcohol indulgence, missing classes, school dropout and so on. As a result, they may lack both focus and direction resulting to total failure in life.

#### Influence of accessing guidance and counseling services on students' attitude towards studies

Attitudes	Frequency	Percent
Guidance and counseling has helped me to appreciate my studies	44	95.7
I think studies are a good thing	39	84.8
I believe studies lead to success	37	80.4
I do not bother about studies	41	89.1
I like my studies	43	93.5

Source: Field survey, 2021

The responses above show that accessing guidance and counseling services has a strong influence on students' attitude towards studies. The findings show that accessing to guidance and counseling services has helped students to appreciate their studies. This was indicated by 95.7 % of student respondents. In addition, guidance and counseling services have also made student to take studies as good things and believe that studies lead to success, made students to not bother about studies and finally made them like their studies. These were indicated by 84.8 %, 80.4%, 89.1 % and 93.5 % of student respondents respectively. This implies that when students are appropriately guided, they will learn to value their studies consequently improve their performance. In this view Braddock (2001) confirms by saying that the purpose of guidance and counseling in schools is to improve academic achievement, foster positive study attitudes and habits, and decrease school drop outs. Anastasi (1990) also asserts that the task of educational counseling is to enable students to adjust to his studies and to improve his study attitude towards studies. When properly guided students will learn to value better their studies and adjust accordingly.

The findings in this study also agree with the experiment by Abid (2006) who proved that guidance services have significant positive effect on student's study attitudes and study habits; and that improvement in study attitudes and study habits resulted in improvement of student's academic achievement. Furthermore, Baker and Gerler (2001) report that students who participate in a school counseling program had less inappropriate behaviors and develop more positive attitude toward school than those who did not participate in the program.

### 5.3 Students' satisfaction about guidance and counseling services

The third objective of this study was to find out the level of students' satisfaction about guidance and counseling services. This was done in order to find out whether students are satisfied with the guidance and counseling services or not in order to identify challenges related to their dissatisfaction.

## students' appreciation of guidance and counseling services

Level of appreciation	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	11	23.9
Very good	16	34.8
Good	5	10.9
Bad	10	21.7
Very bad	4	8.7
Total	46	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2021

Results indicate that the majority of student respondents viewed guidance and counseling services as good. This was revealed by 32 (69.6 %) student respondents while 14 (30.4%) student respondents indicated that guidance and counseling serviced in their schools was good. This implies that a few students under the study do not appreciate the guidance and counseling services.

Furthermore, students were asked to rate the guidance and counseling activities carried out during guidance and counseling session and their responses are presented in table 9 below.

## Students' appreciation of guidance and counseling activities

Activity	Excellent		Very good		Good		Bad		Very bad	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Client reception	15	32.6	12	26.1	4	8.7	9	19.6	6	13.0
Listening	2	4.3	6	13.0	1	2.2	30	65.2	7	15.2
Appointment	7	15.2	5	10.9	8	17.4	24	52.2	2	4.3
Punctuality	9	19.6	7	15.2	11	23.9	17	37.0	2	4.3
Confidentiality	5	10.9	22	47.8	3	6.5	14	30.4	2	4.3

Source: Field survey, 2021

As it can be seen in the table, 31 (67.4%) students' respondents considered client reception during guidance and counseling services as good while only 15 (32.6%) students viewed it as bad. This implies that some students were not well received during guidance and counseling services. It was further revealed that listening activity was bad. This was indicated by 37 (80.4%) students while 9 (19.5%) students who considered it as good. This implies that there is lack of active listening during guidance and counseling session. Understanding the client is a crucial because as suggested by McGannon et al. (2005) that understanding the client's concerns is fundamental to effective counselling and this can be attained through narrative inquiry. This also supported by House and Hayes (2002) who assert that counselling is underlain by developing more understanding attitude towards pupil behavior. In addition, UNESCO (2002) asserted that one fundamental constituent of the counselling process is the co-ordinated participation of the counselor and the client. In such as situation, Onkuma (2005) maintains that the targets of the counselling may be are likely to be misaligned with the needs of the student, thus giving the impression that the counselor does not understand students' concern.

According to Bird (2000), the clients' inability to express their feeling and thoughts during counselling can be the differentiating factor between effectively solving problems and the dissatisfaction of the client. Moreover, Cisbra and Gergely (2007) establish, as part of the client-centered theory that it is essential for counselors to collaborate with the client in deciding acceptable targets and also for the counselor to guide the client to come to a realization of irrational behaviors and reconstruct irrationalities, but not to impose their personal ideas on the student.

Concerning appointment, 26 (56.5%) student respondents indicated appointment was bad while 20 (43.5%) students indicated that it was good. This implied that guidance and counseling appointment was moderate. Furthermore, 19 (41.3%) student respondents indicated that punctuality of counselors was bad while the majority 27 (58.7%) saw it as good.

Finally, 30 (65.2%) student respondents indicated that the confidentiality of counselors was good while 16 (34.7 %) saw it as bad. This implies that to a given extent, though minimal, the counselors did not keep confidentiality after guidance and counseling session.

Furthermore, the researcher wanted to establish the level of satisfaction of students and the findings are presented in table 10 below.

Students' satisfaction with guidance and counseling services offered

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	13	29
Well satisfied	26	56.5
Dissatisfied	5	9.5
Very dissatisfied	2	5
Total	46	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2021

From table above, the majority 39 (85.5%) of respondents indicated that they are satisfied with guidance and counseling services offered while 7 (14.5%) students were not satisfied. This implies that counselors in their schools were effective in their counselling and guidance roles. Mancillas (2004) maintains that students have diverse perceptions about school counselling programmes, some of which may be positive and reinforce the counselling process, while other may discourage participation and threaten the sustainability of the counseling programme.

Student respondents' perception about general guidance and counseling service

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	15	32.6
Normal	27	58.7
Poor	4	8.7
Total	46	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2021

Regarding the general guidance and counseling services, the results in table 11 indicates that 32.6% of respondents rate it as excellent and the majority 58.7 % of respondents rate the guidance and counseling service as normal and the rest 8.7% of respondents said that it is poor. The findings imply that guidance and counseling service is seen as normal in the school under the study.

Whether respondents would recommend another person to the school guidance and counseling service

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	63.0
No	15	37.0
Total	46	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2021

As to the request if the respondents would recommend another person to the school guidance and counseling, the table 12 above revealed that 63.0% of respondents said yes while 37.0 % said no. this implies that the majority of student respondents like the service offered by the guidance and counseling programme in their school.

#### 5.4 Challenges constraining effectiveness of student guidance and counselling

The study also sought to find out the challenges facing guidance and counseling services in the school under the study.

## Challenges constraining effectiveness of student guidance and counselling

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of time	42	91.3
Inadequate facilities	38	82.6
Lack of training	2	100
Lack of referral materials/personnel	40	87.0
Students reluctant to seek help	44	95.7

Source: Field survey, 2021

The Table indicates that students had multiple problems with the counselling services that were provided in their schools.

A good number of students (91.3%) gave lack of time as one of the challenges. Student respondents gave an explanation that counselors too had heavy responsibilities. As a result, they lack time for respond to their issues. This agrees with past studies of Juma (2009) who also identified similar challenges and added that these make it difficult for guidance and counseling services in school settings.

On the part of counselors, they Lack of adequate training. This was indicated by 100% of respondents. This implies that they are not able to handle the issues to do with adolescents well, making students to withdraw instead of drawing near. This is in agreement with what Wachira (1997), Okola (2005) and Juma (2009) had indicated. These agreed with other scholars that trained personnel in guidance and counseling are few or not available. This may be contributing a lot to the perceptions held by students. Another number of student respondents (87.0%), indicated that lack of referral materials or personnel was another challenge faced. This makes it difficult to handle guidance and counseling services.

Another challenge that was pointed out students was inadequate funds. 100.0 % of student respondents said that there is lack of funds for guidance and counseling services. Mongare (2005) established that there is lack of flexibility of the school budget where it cannot accommodate the needs of the guidance and counseling department. As a result, there is no money set aside for maintenance of cumulative records in the department. Were (2006) also noted that the guidance and counseling programme is dynamic in nature thus keeps on changing in order to cater for the current needs of the students. Money is therefore required for frequent evaluation in its development to ensure its continuing utility. Lack of funds set aside for the guidance and counseling department in these two divisions results in the peer counselors not being taken for seminars. These challenges are similar to those confirmed by Gysbergs (2004). In addition, this is in agreement also with what Wachira (1997), Okola (2005) findings.

### 5.5 Students 'suggestions for improving guidance and counselling services

The objective of this study was set to identify strategies for improving guidance and counselling services.

#### Students' suggestions for improving quality of guidance and counseling services

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Advice students	35	75.1
Maintain confidentiality	42	91.3
Inform students about counselling	41	89.1
Proper supervision of counselors	39	84.8
Create a more trusting environment	44	93.5
Provide facilities	40	87.0
Involve peer counselor	43	93.5

Source: Field survey, 2021

The Table above illustrates the results from the question about respondents' suggestions for improving quality of guidance and counseling services in their school. The results indicate that a



large number of respondents suggest the creation of a more trusting environment for guidance and counseling service. This proportion of respondents is represented by 93.5%. As would be expected in many cases, 91.3% of respondents suggest maintenance of confidentiality. The other 89.1 % of respondents suggest informing students about counseling as another way of improving guidance and counseling service. Advice students and proper supervision of counselor were also suggested as other ways of improving quality of guidance and counseling services. These represent 75.1 % and 84.8 % respectively.

Providing facilities was given by 87.0 % of the students. Here, facilities like guidance and counseling rooms and books can make the service more effective and enable students and teachers to develop right perceptions towards the guidance and counseling services.

Involving peer counselors was suggested by 93.5% of the students. By adopting this, the student counselors can easily reach the students than when it is done only by appointed counselors. This requires training of students on guidance and counseling issues and let them help their colleagues. This will help them have the knowledge and skills required.

The findings are in line with other scholars' opinions such as Kuhn, L.A (2004) who opined that confidentiality is one major element of a successful counselling programme, and making the proceedings of counselling independent of school's disciplinary committee activities hold key to participation of students.

## 6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings revealed that guidance and counseling services were good. In addition, student found that only client reception was good. Furthermore, students indicated that they were somehow satisfied with guidance and counseling services offered. With regard to the general level of perception on guidance and counseling services offered, the majority of students found them as normal. That is the reason why they would recommend their colleagues to the school guidance and counseling service.

With the objective four which intended to find out the challenges constraining effective guidance and counseling services, the study found that the main challenges constraining effective guidance and counseling services were lack of confidentiality, lack of time, lack of training, lack of referral material/ personnel, students' reluctant to seek help, lack of facilities. These challenges restraint students for attending guidance and counseling services.

Concerning the strategies for improving guidance and counseling services offered in Polytechnics schools., the study found out that the main ways of improving guidance and counseling services in is by counselors being confidential and advice students on the importance of guidance and counseling services. They can also improve the service by informing student about guidance and counseling services, proper supervision of counselor, creating more trusting environment, providing facilities and by making use of peer counselors.

The study sought to find out if the service delivery within the Guidance and Counselling units. The study found that learner characteristics affected the Guidance and Counselling services that students sought. The characteristics considered in this study were age and gender. The study found that gender determined whether students sought Guidance and Counselling services or not. More female than male students sought Guidance and Counselling services, however gender did not affect the issues for which Guidance and Counselling services was sought. Age was also found not to have an effect on whether students sought for Guidance and Counselling services or not and the issues for which they sought these services. The MINEDUC has guidelines which it is expects all schools to use in the provision of Guidance and Counselling services.

Descriptive survey research design using quantitative approach was used to generate primary data with help to questionnaire addressed to selected students from Polytechnics schools. The target population was all students who have been offered guidance and counseling services during the 2021 academic year. Using a list from student service direction, students offered guidance and counseling services were 50 from different departments. Due to the students' availability and their willing to

participate in this study, the only 46 students were purposively selected and involved in the present study.

The researchers used excel to process the collected data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentage tables were used to summarize and to analyze data. Data analysis enabled the researcher to come up with the following findings based on the research objectives.

A list of guidance and counseling services was made and it included career guidance, educational issues, social relations, family problems, peer pressure, health issues and conflict resolution. Students were asked to indicate some of the guidance and counseling services they were offered. The findings showed that there are different types of guidance and counseling services that are offered in Polytechnics schools. These included career guidance, educational issues, social relations, family problems, peer pressure, health issues and conflict resolution.

The study also revealed that access to guidance and counseling services has encouraged students to study hard, develop in them positive attitudes towards learning, to approach exam without fear, improve class attendance, improve concentration in studying, keep them in touch with friend and family members, keep them connected to others and help improve performance. In addition, access to guidance and counseling services has helped students appreciate my studies, think that studies are a good thing, believe that studies lead to success, do not bother about studies and like their studies.

## 6.1 Conclusions

On the issue of the student satisfaction with guidance and counseling services offered in the school, the findings show that they students found it as good and finally were satisfied with the services.

There are a number of factors that hinder students from seeking for the guidance and counseling services. These include counselors' not confidential, lack of facilities, lack of time, lack of trainings, lack of referral materials, students' reluctance to seek help and inadequate funds.

On ways of improving the provision of the guidance and counseling services it is important to note that counseling is concerned with the worth of an individual. Thus, the awareness of various aspects of growth, helping individuals understand themselves and their world. Thus, it provides favorable conditions for healthier growth and correction of unbecoming behavior. These will then enable the guidance and counseling services achieve their objectives and result to students who will be all rounded citizens.

## 6.2 Recommendations

Physical and human resources were also not well distributed in all schools. The type of school did not have an influence on services delivered. Both private and public were not aware of the MINEDUC guidelines on the provision of Guidance and Counselling services. Each school had its own guidelines on service delivery, though they were almost similar.

If regular and thorough supervision is given to all Guidance and Counselling units in schools in the country, then all students going through Rwanda Polytechnics schools will have undergone more or less the same experiences within the Guidance and Counselling to prepare them for the future as they pursue higher education and prepare for the world of work. In addition, the MINEDUC should strategize on how to evaluate Guidance and Counselling units in schools. It is only through evaluation that it can be established whether or not the units adhere to the set goals.

The management of Polytechnics schools through student service direction should enlighten students on the importance of guidance and counseling programme and on the different services that are offered. This will enable students to understand the importance of guidance and counseling services and seek for different services that are offered.

Guidance and counseling training should be organized and offered to school counselors in order to empower and update them on the guidance and counseling strategies

There should be provision of guidance and counseling materials to schools. This will help counselors to work in trust environment.

Students should be encouraged and helped to develop right perceptions towards guidance and counseling by encouraging them to take an active role in peer counseling.

Constant sensitization of the students and good relation with counselors will also help student develop the right perception of guidance and counseling programme and make them to be free with them and ready to share with them their problems.

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