

Strategies Used by Student Counsellors and Their Effectiveness in Promoting Student's Self-Efficacy in Public Secondary Schools in Moshi District – Tanzania

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the strategies used by student counsellors in promoting students' self- efficacy among secondary schools. Guided by Self-Efficacy Theory, the study adopted convergent parallel design under a mixed research approach for data collection and analysis. The study adopted probability and non-probability sampling techniques to obtain 5 Head Teachers, 5 Student Counsellors and 127 students. Cronbach Alpha was adopted to test the reliability of the research instrument at $(r) = 0.73$ for the quantitative data aided by SPSS version 22; while qualitative reliability was ensured through detailed field notes, recording devices and by transcription. The quantitative data were analysed descriptively (frequencies, percentages and means) and inferential statistics using Chi-Square Statistical test and presented in form of tables. The qualitative data were coded to translate the responses into specific categories and themes for narration and direct quotations from the respondents. The study found that student counsellors used the following strategies which proved effective in enhancing students' self-efficacy: encouraging students' self-verbalization, providing feedback on students' efforts, encouraging teachers to provide activities that students can accomplish with a reasonable amount of effort, encouraging peer modelling, helping students to set goals, teaching students effective study skills and helping student to identify their areas of interest. Through Chi-Square test, the study found that there was a significant association between strategies used by student counsellors and the level of students' self-efficacy. The study concluded that there was a positive relationship between strategies used by student counsellors and students' self-efficacy which greatly influenced students' academic achievements. Therefore, the study recommends that the head teachers should workout through the government to have more professional counsellors deployed in schools and that students should be encouraged to attend guidance and counselling sessions.*

KEYWORDS: Strategies, student counsellors, Students' self-efficacy, Public secondary schools

INTRODUCTION

Formal education demands for formal processes that enable learners to acquire skills and knowledge that would enhance the mastery of situational environmental contexts for survival. Such instructional process take place within schools (Pajares, 1996). “Students’ beliefs about their capabilities to successfully perform tasks, or self-efficacy beliefs, are strong predictors of their capability to accomplish such tasks”. Therefore, intellectually gifted students tend to believe that they are competent to complete a task and this confidence is a strong motivation for exceptional performance (Bandura, 1997). Moreover, many scholars argue that a well-planned and organized guidance and counselling programs in schools contribute a lot in moulding students’ character and confidence than corporal punishment (Hogan, Mullgan, Ameddun and Christakis, 2013).

According to Ally et al (2013) student counsellors guide and counsel students by attending to their socio-cognitive development which is influenced much by a strong belief in their abilities and developing confidence to deal with both simple and complex tasks. Hence, a call for all student counsellors to device and use strategies that would influence such strong beliefs and confidence in students.

Additionally, Ali, Haider, Munir, Khan, & Ahmed, (2013) argued that students with high self-efficacy have always displayed great achievement in their academic endeavours. Producing quality graduates who are manpower for the country’s economic and social development demands for an instructional process that builds confidence, develops critical problem-solving skills and triggers innovative thinking abilities among learners. Such skills can be developed quickly in learners who display high self-esteem and self-efficacy in their daily interaction with different entities.

Boitt, (2016) linked student’s self-efficacy with academic performance. The scholar argued strongly that learners who possess higher self-efficacy from tender ages always achieved higher grades than their counterparts. The scholar further explained that sometimes teachers or instructors tend to pay attention and love to work with learners who show high self-efficacy than those with low self-efficacy. This has contributed to students with low self-efficacy to continue dragging behind as they feel less competent in the company of their counterparts.

Consequently, Bembenutty, H (2014) strongly pointed out that schools should develop strong and competent guidance and counselling units to address different socio-cognitive challenges that face learners. In an attempt to address this phenomenon, the scholar highlighted that learners who score low grades in their academics are most prone to low self-esteem, lack of appropriate study technique, low memory and lack of teachers to take into a consideration differentiation lessons. While holding constant other factors such as incapacitated mental ability in some learners, the scholar strongly related high self-efficacy of learners with high academic performance. Similarly, Beattie (2015) reiterated that all teachers regardless of their areas of specialization and responsibilities are responsible to teach and enhance students’ self-efficacy so as to enable them to achieve good academic performance. Besides, the government of Tanzania has tried to

implement several mechanisms through the ministry of Education Science and Technology in view of promoting quality education which should be reflected in students' academic performance. Nevertheless, the reality on the ground is that there is still poor performance in most of the government schools.

Kyanda, (2018) also reiterated that Teachers are taken as role models to students. They are responsible for the teaching and learning process to be as interactive as possible in order to motivate students who are slow learners. Guidance and counselling in most schools, is offered by teachers who have been delegated that role by the heads of schools. However, these teachers vary in their guidance and counselling skills, and devoted time is also limited due to other instructional responsibilities. Similarly, Sima (2018) reported that a school with strong guidance and counselling units exhibit high academic scores at national level than those without such units. The researcher argued that academic excellence of a learner does not solely depend on cognitive ability of the learners, but also socio-cognitive factors that need to be addressed by professional counsellors.

Consequently, there is a justification for public secondary schools in Moshi to establish a very strong guidance and counselling units in order to support learners in their academic journey. Despite the government effort to introduce courses of counselling units in the faculty of education in various colleges and universities, still teachers who graduate from these colleges are not professional counsellors, and the problem of low self-efficacy of learners is still rampant. It is against this ground that the current study examined the strategies used by student counsellors and their effectiveness in promoting student's self-efficacy in public secondary schools in Moshi District, Kilimanjaro region – Tanzania.

Statement of the Problem

Strasburger, Hogan, Mullgan, Ameddun and Christakis (2013) argued that guidance and counselling plays a vital role in moulding students' character and discipline. Moreover, Bembenutty (2011) demonstrated a positive correlation between homework assignment given by the teachers and students' grasp of the subject content. Besides, Getachew&Birhane (2016) reiterated that frustration and low confidence in mathematics among students due to poor background in mathematics, discourage them from instructors when students make mistake, failure to explain concept adequately as instructors are merely interested to cover chapters limited time to class activity and poor feedback provision.

Students' understanding of the syllabus is examined towards the completion of the course of study. In Tanzania, students sit for final exams at the end of their 4th year course examined by NECTA. The grading of students is based on their performance. Hence, students are required to be equipped and motivated to explore their abilities, have high self-efficacy, and work hard towards a better academic performance. Hence, this study examined the strategies used by student counsellors and their effectiveness in promoting students' self-efficacy in public secondary schools in Moshi District, Kilimanjaro region in Tanzania.

Research Question and Hypothesis

RQ: What strategies do student counsellors use to promote student's self-efficacy in public secondary schools in Moshi district?

Ha: There is a significant association between strategies used by student counsellors and students' self-efficacy.

Theoretical Framework

The study was grounded on Self-Efficacy Theory. Self-efficacy refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required for producing given attainments. The theory was propounded by Bandura in 1997. According to Bandura (1997) individuals engage in meaningful or symbolic thinking processes that enable them to predict possible outcomes of their behaviour. Hence, the degree of self-efficacy determines people's willingness to approach a task. The theory further identifies four sources of self-efficacy which are: support and persuasion from parents and teachers, cognitive processes, identifying with a model through observational learning; and past performances or experiences.

The current adopted as it offered a clear basis on which academic performance of students in secondary schools can be derived. It is clear from this theory that self-efficacy beliefs determine how a student feels, thinks, and behave during their school life. Psychologists often note how strong sense of efficacy may affect students' accomplishment and well-being. Students with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to be certain about their capabilities when encountered by difficult tasks in their academic progresses. Hence, the current study employed the theory to examine the strategies used by student counsellors and their effectiveness in promoting students' self-efficacy in public secondary schools in Moshi district.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In the context of the learning for secondary and primary school students, students with high self-efficacy regard failure as not putting enough effort while those with low efficacy regard failure as their incompetence to achieve something. A study by Bembenutty (2011) showed that there is positive correlation between homework assignment given by the teachers with self-confidence and the sense of responsibility among students. He stated that the assignment and self-learning skills or self-regulated learning can help students' academic performance, while helping them to improve time management and learning environment.

Furthermore, it is also concerned that students who have high self -efficacy (in reading and writing) often adapt strategic and in-depth learning strategies, while students with low self- efficacy level only practice basic approaches. The consistence makes changes and the learning approach from time to time and feel comfortable to practice more over time learning, however students who have low self -efficacy show no changes in their learning approach, (Pratasala& Redford, 2010). The reviewed study left the variable of challenges facing students' counsellors and aspect of self-efficacy of students in relation to their academic performance. These aspects have been covered

by the current study. The current study also explored which strategies are used by student counsellors and their effectiveness in Tanzania.

A study in Ethiopia by Getachew&Birhane (2016) shows that frustration and low confidence in mathematics among students due to poor background in mathematics, discourage them from instructors when students make mistake, failure to explain concept adequately as instructors are merely interested to cover chapters limited time to class activity and poor feedback provision. The present study specifically aims at unearthing the place of guiding and counselling strategies used by teachers to improve self-efficacy among the students.

Not only the study of Birhane et al, but also a study conducted in Tanzania by Kirondo, (2014) found that teachers use various strategies to create, maintain, and protect self-efficacy in classroom setting. These strategies include providing room for open and exchange of ideas, accept mistakes as a normal part of learning and create encouraging and supporting environment for student learning and grow. Furthermore, knowledge and skills alone are not enough to achieve and sustain an individual's behaviour; one also needs a strong sense of self-efficacy to be able to use them effectively and consistently under difficult circumstances to maintain high self-efficacy and high performance consecutively. Thus, the current study focused on student counsellors' strategies and the effectiveness of these strategies in promoting students' self-efficacy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a convergent parallel research design under the mixed-method approach that involved the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data sets in a single phase (Creswell 2012). Moshi district has a total of 53 government schools. The study sample was 5 heads of schools, 5 students' counsellors, and 127 students. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to draw the sample for the study. The data for this study was collected using questionnaires for student counsellors, questionnaires for students, interview guide for student counsellors, interview guide for heads of schools, and document analysis schedule. Content validity of the instruments was determined by research experts and the reliability of the questionnaire was tested by Cronbach Alpha at $(r) = 0.73$. The trustworthiness of the qualitative data was ensured by both methodic and source triangulations. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for quantitative data analysis. Specifically, frequencies, percentages and mean were used to analyze the quantitative data while the hypothesis was tested using Chi-Square at a 0.05 significance level. The findings were presented using tables. The qualitative data were analyzed by transcription of data from interviews, direct quotations drawn, and interpretation was done according to the context of the study thematically.

RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSIONS

The study examined the strategies used by student counsellors in promoting student's self-efficacy. This question was directed to the student counsellors by administering questionnaire and interview guide. The analysis of this question is presented starting with the quantitative data from the

questionnaire then followed by the qualitative data from the interview guide. The quantitative data is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Strategies used by Student Counsellors in Promoting Student's Self-efficacy (n = 5)

Statement	Frequency (Percentage)					Mean Score
	VE	E	A	INE	VINE	
Task accomplishment and success (teaching students self-verbalization)	1(20)	3(60)	-	1(20)	-	3.80
Providing feedback on their effort	-	5(100)	-	-	-	4.20
Encouraging teachers to provide activities that students can accomplish with a reasonable amount of effort	-	5(100)	-	-	-	4.00
Encouraging students to work together (fostering a co-operative social environment rather than a competitive atmosphere)	-	5(100)	-	-	-	4.00
Encouraging peer modelling	-	4(80)	1(20)	-	-	3.80
Helping students set goals and wish them to achieve	-	5(100)	-	-	-	4.00
Encouraging students to engage in daily problem – solving opportunities	-	5(5)	-	-	-	4.00
Teaching students effective study skills	-	5(100)	-	-	-	4.00
Encouraging students to write self-affirming statements consisting of brief reflections on their most important values, characteristics and relationships	-	5(100)	-	-	-	4.00
Identifying students' interest and encouraging them to pursue	-	5(100)	-	-	-	4.00
Posing dialogic questions to students rather than providing them with answers or directive comments	-	5(100)	-	-	-	4.00
Average Mean Score of the Items						3.62

Key: **VE** – Very Effective, **E** – Effective, **A** – Average, **INE** – Ineffective, **VINE** – Very Ineffective.
Source: Field data, 2019.

Table 1 shows data on strategies used by student counsellors from the questionnaire responses. The data showed that all the strategies used scored a mean of 3.62 which implies that they were effective in promoting students' self-efficacy. Data on these variables further indicate that the strategies of teaching students' verbalization and encouraging peer modelling scored a mean of 3.80 each. This shows that the strategies were effective in enhancing student's confidence and ability. Moreover, the strategies of posing dialogic questions to students rather than providing them

with answers or directive comments, identifying student's interest and encouraging them to pursue the interest, encouraging students to write self-affirming statements consisting of brief reflections on their most important values, characteristics and relationships, teaching students effective study skills, encouraging students to engage in daily problem – solving opportunities, helping students set goals and wish them to achieve, encouraging students to work together (fostering a co-operative social environment rather than a competitive atmosphere), and encouraging teachers to provide activities that students can accomplish with a reasonable amount of effort had each scored a mean of 4.00. This implied that the items were effective in promoting students' self-efficacy. On the other hand, the most effective strategy was the strategy of encouraging teachers to provide activities that students can accomplish with a reasonable amount of effort, with a scored mean of 4.20.

The findings on the strategies used by student counsellors in promoting students' self-efficacy are supported by Bembenutty (2011) who reiterated that student counsellors should use effective strategies such as helping students of set goals which are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and are time bound. The researcher went further explaining that equipping students with various study skills and posing dialogic questions to students help in boosting their self-efficacy which in turn positively influence their academic performance.

Furthermore, student counsellors were interviewed to explore their deepest feelings about promoting student's self-efficacy. The respondents strongly came out with argument that counselling pedagogy has been largely left for those with educational training to determine what methods should be utilized in the classroom and which are most effective to disseminate information to students. Teachers are appointed to be student counsellors even if their interest and abilities are not in line with such appointment. This affects the strategies that will be used by the teacher to promote student's self-efficacy. The respondents further explained that teachers appointed as student counsellor should be provided with in-service training on guidance and counselling; otherwise, the school has to employ a professional counsellor. It was strongly voiced out that teachers' attitude towards students who are low achievers in their respective subjects negatively affect student's self-efficacy. During the interview one of the respondents had the following to express:

I sympathize with teachers who put no effort in encouraging students with low self-esteem leading to poor performance in their subject. Most of teachers appraise and award best performing students (students with high self-efficacy) while neglecting those with low performance. For example, there is a student whom I have journeyed with from form two up to now the student is in form four. Previously this student was low achiever and her teachers did not pay any attention to her. Most teachers perceived her as incapacitated student who drags behind their efforts. This led this student to believe that she could not improve in her academic excellence. When I started my counselling sessions with her, while at the same time talking with specific teachers who were too much on her to change their attitude; the student began to develop confidence in her abilities and slowly by slowly kept on improving in her academic performance. Until now she is one of the best

candidates, we have in form four and we expect her to score division one in her forthcoming NECTA (Interview, 9/10/2019).

The sentiment above implies that student counsellors have to come up with effective strategies that will effectively improve students' self-efficacy. Dealing with students with low self-efficacy demands a lot of patience and frequent deliberation with the specific student. Counselling such student requires the student counsellor to have adequate counselling micro-skills, effective counselling process, cultural competence and values that will facilitate quick understanding of the nature of student and the object of counselling.

The study also explored to determine the level of students' self-efficacy. To obtain the right data on this variable, the researcher employed students' questionnaire and document analysis specified for reviewing academic progress of students who had been having low self-efficacy and were undergoing counselling. The findings from the student's questionnaire are summarized in Table 4.8

Table 2: Level of Students' self-efficacy (n = 127)

Statement	Frequency (Percentage)					Mean Score
	SA	A	U	D	SD	
Confidence in my ability has improved my academic performance	51(40.2)	44(34.6)	20(15.7)	12(9.4)	-	4.06
When having discussion with my fellow students I make constructive discussion	16(12.6)	76(59.8)	19(15.0)	16(12.6)	-	3.72
I always ensure that I accomplish my assignments in time and give the teacher to mark	36(28.3)	65(51.2)	21(16.5)	5(3.9)	-	4.04
I feel bad when I get low marks	25(19.7)	69(54.3)	18(14.2)	15(11.8)	-	3.82
I can explain and make class presentation without any fear	30(23.6)	42(33.1)	27(21.3)	28(22.0)	-	3.58
I do extra work and take to teachers to mark	40(31.5)	42(33.1)	28(22.0)	17(13.4)	-	3.83
My academic performance has improved because I put a lot of more efforts	51(40.2)	41(32.3)	15(11.8)	20(15.7)	-	3.97
If I don't get right all the assignments, I don't feel well	16(12.6)	76(59.8)	19(15.0)	16(12.6)	-	3.72
My academic performance depends on my commitment and hard work	40(31.5)	69(54.3)	11(8.7)	7(5.5)	-	4.12
Average Mean Score of the Items						3.46

Source: Field Data, 2019.

Table 2 shows students' responses on their level of self-efficacy. Data in Table 4.8 indicate that some students had high level of self-efficacy while other had average self-efficacy. This judgment is based on the average mean of 3.46 which suggests a positive response. Self-efficacy being the judgement that a person makes about their own capability to achieve a future task. The Likert scale items were given to students to determine level of their self-efficacy which was presumed to

influence their academic performance. The item on “my academic performance depends on my commitment and hard work” scored mean of 4.12. This finding suggests that students had high level of self-efficacy that made them to be committed and work hard for their academic performance. The item on “I always ensure that I accomplish my assignments in time and give the teacher to mark” scored a mean of 4.04; while the item on “confidence in my ability has improved my academic performance” scored a mean of 4.06. Generally, the implication of the findings is that majority of the students had high self-efficacy. Students with high self-efficacy enjoy challenges and tolerate failure, whereas those with low self-efficacy are more likely to avoid difficult tasks, and have low commitment to goals (Mbilinyi, 2013).

To triangulate data from the students’ questionnaires, the researcher employed document analysis schedule in reviewing academic performance of students who had been attending counselling. These students were identified by the help of the student counsellors. The researcher reviewed about 10 students who had been attending counselling sessions from form two and now they were in form four. From each of the sampled schools, the researcher reviewed academic progressive reports of two students who were randomly sampled by the help of the teachers who the student counsellors. This review was done to check if the academic progress of such students improved across the years. The information obtained was summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of some of Students’ Academic Progress who attended counselling sessions (n = 10)

STUDENTS	Continuous Assessment Test Average Score		
	2018		2019
	Term I	Term II	Term I
A	38	49	56
B	40	50	61
C	52	43	66
D	45	60	66
E	31	48	54
F	29	34	47
G	43	55	70
H	39	46	57
I	33	50	64
J	47	35	58
Mean	39.7	47	59.9

Key: 0-29 = Fail, 30-44 = Satisfactory, 45-64 = Average, 65-74 = Good, 75 – 100 = Very Good. Source: Field Data, 2019.

Table 3 shows students’ academic performance in continuous assessment test for Term 1 & 2 (2018) while in Form III, and Term I while in Form four. These findings are for the students who had been attending guidance and counselling due to low self-efficacy. The result in Table 3 shows that there was an improvement in average mean score of the students’ academic performance for the three terms; the first term the average mean of performance was 39.7 (Satisfactory), second

term the average mean score of performance was 47.0 (Average), and 59.9 mean for the third terms (Average), i.e. first term of 2019. This finding supports the findings from the students' questionnaire on the level of student's self-efficacy which showed a positive result. The implication of these findings is that when students have high self-efficacy, they tend to show high commitment to academic task due to trust in their ability and thus an improvement in their academic performance. These findings agree with that of Grift et al (2017) who strongly emphasized that students who are highly self-efficacious exert more effort and persevere in their learning processes and undertake more challenging tasks; hence better academic performance.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant association between strategies used by student counsellors and students' self-efficacy.

Decision Rules

Hypothesis testing was based on the following decision rules:

- i. Given a significance level of 0.05:
- ii. If the observed P- value < 0.05 significance level, reject the Null hypothesis.
 If the observed P- value > 0.05 significance level, do not reject the Null hypothesis.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for the strategies used by student counsellors and student self-efficacy cross tabulation

Count	Students' Self-efficacy and academic Performance		Total
	Good performance	academicAverage Performance	
Strategies of Students' Counsellors in Effective Promoting Students' Self-efficacy	4	3	7
Ineffective	1	2	3
Total	5	5	10

Source: Field Data, 2019.

Table 5 Chi-square test of association summary Table

Chi-square test			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.476 ^a	1	.0490
Likelihood Ratio	.483	1	.487
Linear-by-Linear Association	.429	1	.513
N of Valid Cases	10		

0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10

Source: Field Data, 2019.

[$\chi^2 (1,1) = 0.476^a$, $p > 0.05$]. Since the observed P – value is less than 0.05 (P – values = 0.0490), the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant association between strategies of student counsellors and students' self-efficacy. This finding implied that the strategies used by the student counsellors were effective in promoting students' self-efficacy and thus enhanced student's academic performance. The finding from hypothesis testing supports the findings from the questionnaires for students on the level of student's self-efficacy and academic performance; and the findings from the document analysis of the students who had been attending guidance and counselling which showed a positive result; students had self-efficacy while others had low self-efficacy. This finding is supported by Bembenutty (2011) who emphasized that when student counsellor uses effective strategies, they in turn boost the students' confidence and belief in their abilities which positively influence students' academic achievement.

Summary of the Findings

The study found that student counsellors used the following strategies which proved effective in enhancing students' self-efficacy: encouraging students' self-verbalization, providing feedback on students' efforts, encouraging teachers to provide activities that students can accomplish with a reasonable amount of effort, encouraging peer modelling, helping students to set goals, teaching students effective study skills and helping student to identify their areas of interest. Through Chi-Square test, the study found that there was a significant association between strategies used by student counsellors and the level of students' self-efficacy.

Conclusions of the Study

The study concluded that the strategies used by the student counsellors were effective in promoting students' self-efficacy and this enhanced students' academic performance. The study hypothesis test drew the conclusion that there was a significant association between the strategies used by students' counsellor in promoting students' self-efficacy in public secondary schools in Moshi District Tanzania.

Recommendations of the Study

The study recommends that the students' counsellors should try different strategies and understands every student's family background and also try to employ verbal persuasion, vicarious experience, mastery experiences and physiological arousal.

Furthermore, the study recommends to the government should employ more teachers in order to reduce the heavy workload of teachers. Moreover, the government should initiate the employment of professional counsellors in schools to facilitate effective counselling of students and to allow teachers to do their work effective. This will increase students' trust and participation in guidance and counselling process.

The school administration (heads of schools) should relieve student counsellors off some responsibilities so that they get more time to deal with the students' issues. Besides, the heads of

schools should provide a specific room designed for the counselling process. This will increase the confidentiality and confidence of students with the student counsellors.

Moreover, heads of schools should ensure that teachers who resist suggestions given by the student counsellors are cautioned and made to take part in building up the students' abilities regardless of a student's low or high self-efficacy.

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