

EFFECTIVENESS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING POLICY AND PRACTICE IN RURAL ZIMBABWEAN LEARNERS' SUSTAINABLE FORMATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

In Zimbabwean secondary schools, the guidance and counselling policy and practice was brought in with the view to answer learners' scholastic, societal and individual needs. However, the implementation of the policy and practice in teaching-learning activities for social sustainability was seen incomprehensible in light of numerous challenges, learners were going through. It is in this context that this paper sought to explore the extent to which a selected secondary school in one rural district in Zimbabwe was implementing the guidance and counselling policy and practice in its teaching-learning activities. A qualitative approach with specific reference to case study strategy was followed to acquire an in-depth comprehension of the issue under investigation in the selected secondary school in Lupane District, Matabeleland North Province. Literature method, critical policy analysis and in-depth interviews were used to generate data from 'teacher-counsellors' twenty who were purposively selected to take part in this study. Generated data was thematically analysed. From analysed data, it was noted that participants perceived the guidance and counselling activities as an important component for proper formation of conscientious inhabitants. However, it also surfaced from the discussion that various obstacles were obstructing the implementation of the policy and practice at a selected rural secondary school. Therefore, through the participants' experiences in the learning activities, the guidance and counselling policy and practice was not being implemented fully for learners' sustainable formation. We recommend that the secondary school's stakeholders do consider guidance and counselling activities, an integral component of the learners' learning activities to enhance their sustainable formation.

Keywords: Effectiveness, guidance and counselling policy and practice, rural learner, sustainable formation and 'teacher-counsellor'

INTRODUCTION

In Zimbabwe *guidance and counselling* has traditionally been done without training from the formal school system, rather it was through the sharing of experience and wisdom between parents and their children (Nkala, 2014). However, the pressure of socio-cultural, socio-economic and political factors wrinkled the everyday counselling in societies since folks have become too individualistic (Mataure & Ndambuki, 2003; Heppner & O'Brien, 2002). It is also significant to note that beliefs, morals and social contacts have been watered down by transnational cultural influences through social media, music, among other toxic inspirations (Chireshe, 2011; 2012). In this context adolescents stand confused as to which examples to

go along with, hence society at large and parents, in particular, look up to the education system with its multi-faced roles to provide the adolescents with the pertinent individual, societal and vocation guidance (Samkange & Dondofema, 2016).

From the above discourse, education has been identified as a powerful tool to facilitate the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and values for social sustainability (UNESCO, 2005). Education is needed to reduce illiteracy and enable economic development in line with the poverty reduction programmes, the *Millennium Development Goals* and the universal declaration of '*Education for All*' (Kane, 2004). In 1980 Zimbabwe set up a government based on egalitarian ethos with a view of transforming the nation through a policy and practice framework underpinned by the essence of '*Growth with Equity*' (Mawere, 2013). However, in recent years the society seems to have undergone a breakdown of the joint family system, increased sociability of the children, immense technological advances, and peer pressures resulting in an environment laden with stress and strain on pupils (Chikwature, Oyedele & Ganyani, 2016; Kodad & Kazi, 2014). In this regard, learners have become a worrisome lot as they engage in all sorts of crimes and misdemeanours far beyond their age, with their academic performance and moral behaviour leaving a lot to be desired (Terhile & Pinga, 2017; Samanyanga & Ncube, 2015; Ndum & Onukwugha, 2013; Zvobgo, 2009).

In this context, learners experience immense psycho-social anxieties, which tend to distract their progression in different learning activities that enhance social sustainability (Onyango, Aloba & Raburu, 2018; Mapfumo & Nkoma, 2013). In support UNESCO (2002) postulated that African adults have become more concerned about issues to do with accumulation of wealth and are less engaged in many moral beliefs geared towards the upbringing of their children. Thus, the changing societal and family values and traditions form the bases for psychosomatic issues, which incline towards influencing the learners' behaviour in and out of schools (Wambu & Fisher, 2015). These negative societal trends underscored the need for a learning package that comprehensively addresses the learners' needs. On this basis, the education system responded through the introduction of activities aimed at equipping learners with life-long experiences, handiness and morals (Kane, 2004; UNESCO, 2003). In addition, Nziramasanga (1999) highlighted those due many pressures imposed on the family, parents tend to have little time with their children to give them the necessary guidance and counselling, hence they expected teachers to play an important role in moulding secondary school learners into accountable and responsible citizens. This was done taking into cognisance that secondary school learners are mostly adolescent and at this stage in the contemporary society, they come across greater obstacles in and out of secondary school (Njoka, 2014; Chireshe, 2006).

With this in mind, a school as a system is expected to deal with these obstacles through appropriate guidance and counselling strategies (Samkange, et al., 2016). In this perspective *guidance and counselling policy and practice* was introduced backed by *Director's Circulars 23/2005 and 2/2006* as a non-examinable subject in line with the international policies and practice to enhance the personal, social and academic development and to assist learners to make rightful decisions on career choices (Egbo, 2015; Gudyanga, Wadesango, Manzira & Gudyanga, 2015). This was done to promote national development through an educational system, which channels out well disciplined, socially adjusted and productive products with sound physical and mental health practices (Chimonyo, Mapuranga

& Rugonye, 2015). In spite of the existence of a policy announcement on guidance and counselling in secondary schools, disruptive behaviour was still existent among learners. For instance, there has been a marked increase in the number of cases of teenage pregnancies, substance abuse, bad behaviours, disdain of authority, and disregard for older people by the rural learners (Chiwanga, 2013; Eyo, Joshua & Esuong, 2010; Moyana, 2013; Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2004). Despite all this, studies on the implementation of the *guidance and counselling policy and practice* in rural secondary schools are scarce with most of them concentrating more on the necessity for guidance and counselling in schools (Moeti, 2016; Lai-Yeung, 2014; Shumba, Mpofu, Seotlwe, & Montsi, 2011). In Zimbabwe, a few studies (Chireshe, 2006; Chireshe & Mapfumo, 2005; Mapfumo, et al., 2013) have been carried out to explore benefits of guidance and counselling services to learners in secondary schools. However, these studies have raised a gap, which remains unfilled about the implementation of *guidance and counselling policy and practice* in rural secondary schools. It is against this background that this study sought to fill the identified gap by providing answers to the following main question: ***To what extent was guidance and counselling policy and practice sustainably implemented in the selected rural secondary school?*** From this the following sub-questions were derived:

- *How was the concept of guidance and counselling concept applied in the learning process?*
- *What was the role of guidance and counselling policy and practice in learners' formation?*
- *What obstacles are encountered by 'teacher-counsellors' in guidance and counselling activities?*

Significance of the Study

This study has both academic and hands-on implication to rural teaching-learning institutions. It presents an acute exploration of the implementation of *guidance and counselling policy and practices* at the selected rural secondary school. Therefore, its findings have an undeviating inference to secondary schools, which are providing guidance and counselling teaching-learning activities to rural learners. In addition, the findings of this study are significant to teachers since it enlightens them on the possible obstacles encountered in the implementation of the *guidance and counselling policy and practices*. Thus, this might assist teacher-counsellors in rural secondary schools to streamline guidance and counselling policy and practices in teaching-learning process to meet learners' desires.

Limitations of the Study

It was noted that in this study researchers encountered the following limitations: Some participants were unwilling to divulge the information and thus curtailed a clear data generation, and some were reluctant to respond to issues under discussion, this caused a delay for the researchers to finish within the stipulated time frame. In response participants were encouraged to be honest and promised anonymity of the contributions.

METHODS

In generating data, the researchers were the chief tools aided by the following methods: literature review, critical policy analysis and semi-structured interview (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2011; Chisaka & Vakalisa, 2003). Thus, these methods were geared towards finding out what was in or on the participants' mind (Patton, 1990). These methods allowed for data generation methodically and fully within limited time, with limited means (Sayer, 2000).

Research Design

This qualitative study was carried out at one rural secondary school in Lupane District, Zimbabwe, which experienced a high learner drop out due to many factors among them limited guidance and counselling activities (Dube, 2016; Nyokanhete, 2013). This called for the researchers to employ qualitative approach, with specific reference to case study strategy in gaining an in-depth comprehension of the rural participants' view (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Wiersma, 2000). In addition, this allowed for the generation of detailed information about participants' personal feelings, experiences and opinions about the issue under investigation (Cohen & Manion, 2011). Further to this researcher were in a position to holistically ask for detailed depictions and implications on the implementation of the *guidance and counselling policy and practice* in learning activities (Chikutuma, 2016; Moeti, 2016; Mapolisa & Tshabalala, 2014; Creswell, 2009; Losido, Spandling & Voegtler, 2006).

Sample and Sampling Procedures

For data sourcing twenty (20) 'teacher-counsellors' were purposively sampled on the basis of their teaching qualification and experience in the teaching fraternity. Thus, this sampling technique endorsed the researchers to use participants who had vital information with respect to the issue under investigation (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). It is against this background that the participants were assumed to be a knowledgeable and authentic source of information concerning the issues under investigation (Polit & Beck, 2012; Kaputa, 2011; Kumar, 2008; McMillan & Schumacher 2006; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Data Analysis

Data from interview schedule was transcribed, and written in verbatim according to themes, as they emerged, with literature sources being critically reviewed (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Thus, generated data was analysed according to emerging themes, including giving an account of the participants' answers word for word.

Ethical Considerations

On ethical considerations, the researchers sought permission to administer the methods from the relevant school authorities. Thereafter an informed consent was sought from the selected participants to whom researchers explained the purpose of the study and their role in it. The researchers shared with them that their participation in the study is entirely voluntary and that

they could withdraw from the research without giving any reasons to do so. In addition, researchers also assured the participants that the data generated were to be shared with them for its legitimacy and to be used after their endorsement.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides answers to the issue under investigation under the following themes: guidance and counselling concept and its application in the learning process; role of guidance and counselling policy and practice in learners' formation, and obstacles encountered by 'teacher-counsellors' in guidance and counselling activities. The theoretical lens of this study centred on developmental, and systems approaches (Nkala, 2014). This is in line with the aim of *guidance and counselling policy and practices* that is targeted at supporting the holistic advancement of learners in addition it helps in the creation of a teaching-learning environment, which nurtures learners so as to accomplish their personal/social objectives through reinforcing positive factors in them. It includes sequential activities designed to address the needs of all learners by aiding them attain knowledge of self and others, and in their own career progression. Thus, analysis for the generated data was done through a thematic approach where data was grouped according to the sub-questions. Momentous comprehensions emerged from the analysis of the data generated over and done with diverse methods. Firstly, it was noted that the selected participants were holders of various professional teaching qualifications, ranging from Certificate in Education up to bachelor's degrees in education with various years of teaching experiences. The fact that most of the participants had more years of teaching experiences; made us assume that they are a credible and dependable source of data for the issue under discussion. This concurs with Samanyanga, et al (2015) who highlighted that 'teacher-counsellors' are allocated to each class based on special considerations such as his/her maturity, professional qualification, experience and needs of the learners.

Guidance and Counselling Concept and Its Application in The Learning Process

The activities in guidance and counselling are guided by *Secretary's Circular 3/2002 and Director's Policy Circular 23/2005*, which specifies endeavours schools are to embark on with the view of nurturing pupils through career retrospectives, community service projects, library research skills development, drama and role-plays (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, 2002; 2005). It is against this background that this section centres its discourse on methods used from the participants' perspective during 'teacher-counsellor' - learner or learner-learner interaction in guidance and counselling learning activities in the selected secondary school.

It must be noted that the Ministry [of Primary & Secondary Education] places much emphasis on learning of guidance and counselling in schools, hence here at our school it is time-tabled to be taught once a week (before lessons commence every Monday) under the guidance of a class teacher' (Interviewee 4)

This concurs with Samanyanga, et al. (2015) who indicated that guidance and counselling were done in part under circumstances where each class was allocated a 30-40 minute lesson, undertaken by a 'teacher-counsellor' who employs a variety of methods in facilitating the learning process. However, methods used could not be conceptualised since the extent to which learners could transfer the learnt into subsequent problem situation in society was not easily be measured (Heath & Palechar, 2009). This concurs with what was highlighted in interviews with the following participants:

Under normal circumstances these activities should be planned like other lessons, however, due to my huge teaching workload, I just address my learners on current issues about discipline and school rules. I mostly do this when recording their attendance every morning (Interviewee 16)

In support another participant brought the following:

Yes I might have been assigned the responsibility of being a 'teacher-counsellor' of a form one class, but due to my limited skills in counselling, I, therefore, resort to inviting those whom I think are experienced enough in the area from within the school or outside to discuss a variety of issues with my learners (Interviewee 19)

From above responses, it can be noted that the 'teacher-counsellors' followed a para-professional model as most of them were neither 'qualified counsellors' nor were they registered with any professional council to do with psycho-social support or counselling. This concurs with Mushaandja, Haihambo, Vergnani and Frank (2013) who noted that in most schools 'teacher-counsellors' were first and foremost teachers with a fulltime teaching load and other education associated roles and responsibilities. Besides Shumba, et al (2011) proposed that helpful guidance and counselling requires the 'teacher-counsellor' to have a comprehensive knowledge of the content and approaches, which augment learning activities. It is against this background that these 'teacher-counsellors' therefore need to be equipped with relevant knowledge base and understanding of models relevant and acceptable to guidance and counselling activities. Hence 'teacher-counsellors' should be equipped with knowledge on counselling theories to enable them to construct a plan of action about the complex and diverse requirements of learners (MacBeath & Sugimine, 2003). In this regard a participant had the following to say:

At times as a school, we invite drama groups to perform in front of learners on issues such as career selection, drug abuse, among others (Interviewee 20)

Also, one participant noted that:

On rare occasion do we send learners to a seminar at the district or provincial level on issues around sexually transmitted infections, youth delinquency, drug abuse just to mention but a few (Interviewee 13)

From the above responses, it was noted that a variety of methods are employed in facilitating guidance and counselling sessions at the selected schools. This concurs with

Mpofu (2006) who postulated that learners as adolescents can be assisted in acquire a clear indulgent of who they are as learners elucidate their beliefs and self-awareness through interactions in innumerable podiums. It is in this context that guidance and counselling policy and practices are conceptualized as an integral part of the teaching-learning process that provides all learners with the prospect for ideal development (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). This In consequence, guidance and counselling in this study was abstracted to have emphasis on guiding and counselling learners towards upright interactions, morals, customs, sustenance networks, personal value and sense of belonging. It is against this background that this paper was centred on teacher-counsellors' accountability and capability to implement the *guidance and counselling policy and practice* with the view to support learners overcome impediments of life. It is against this background that the next section explores the role of *guidance and counselling policy and practices* in rural learners' formation.

Role of Guidance and Counselling Policy and Practice in Learners' Formation

In this section data generated about the significance of the *guidance and counselling policy and practice* is presented, analysed and interpreted. In a discussion with the participants, the following was explained:

From my assessment, the implementation of this policy and practice helps in shaping the behaviour of some of our pupils who are involved in some acts of misconduct be it here at school or in their community (Interviewee 3)

In support another participant highlighted that:

This policy and practice from my understanding enhance the maintenance of discipline in our schools. Thereby reducing incidences such as bullying of new learners, rudeness to teachers and fighting among learners (Interviewee 10)

From the participants' contributions, it was acknowledged that the implementation of *guidance and counselling policy and practice* in the learning activities in the selected secondary school assists in shaping learners' behaviours. Thus, the above response brought to light the need to implement guidance and counselling activities to enable shaping of the behaviours of some of the learners involved in some acts of misconduct. This was against the background of an increased number of learners being suspended from school due to issues such as truancy, shoplifting and drug abuse (Dlomo, 2012; Madziyire, 2010). This concurs with Mwangi (2014) who highlighted that guidance and counselling tend to build learners' moral uprightness and instil a sense of responsibility in them. Thereby inculcating accepted values, which transforms learners' mind-set with regards to self-control to enhance their behaviour transformation. Also, one of the participants reported that:

It's key to note that our society is bound by the 'ubuntu/unhu' ideals, which due to unforeseen circumstances have been eroded. It is against this background that through this subject the long-lost moral values will once again be inculcated in our learners (Interviewee 16)

From the above response, the participant highlighted the issue of inculcating the 'ubuntu/unhu' ideals. This takes place through the doctrine of in loco parentis, which guides that 'teacher-counsellors' take over parental authority to mould learners according to expected societal norms and values as guided by the *Ministerial Circular Number P35*. This calls for the conception of a connection between them and their learners in a bid to inculcate the ideals of 'ubuntu/unhu' (Chimhenga & Mpofo, 2016; Tshabalala, Ncube & Mapolisa, 2014; Mugabe & Maposa, 2013). Thus, through the guidance and counselling activities, learners acquire ideas of knowing themselves, gain social support and to learn from the past in a bid to set truthful aspirations in life in general and education in particular (Chimonyo, et al., 2015).

Our school is located in the remote part of this district; hence our learners have limited access to current affairs. I believe that during interactions in Guidance and Counselling sessions a lot can be availed in terms of career opportunities (Interviewee 7)

In concurrence with the above opinion, one of the participants indicated that:

Guidance and counselling sessions allow for learners to vent out any unexpressed feelings, which he or she can otherwise let loose to other learners. Thus, it diffuses tension in the learner's mind as well as improving one's behaviour (Interviewee 12)

Due to the remoteness of the area, in which the selected school is situated learners have limited access to the latest information about their possible career progression. It is against this background that pupils tend to face obstacles in the selection of subjects both at Ordinary and Advanced level and ultimately at higher education, due to lack of information about the entry requirements for these courses in higher education. From the participant's perspective, these sessions have the potential to enlighten learners on career opportunities, which are out there in the world of work. This concurs with Afande (2015); Nweze and Okolie (2014) who revealed that guidance and counselling in secondary schools were instrumental in equipping learners with requisite knowledge and skills that enable them to make informed decisions when it comes to career selection. A further probe on the importance of implementing *guidance and counselling policy and practice* in the selected rural secondary school one participant revealed:

In the guidance and counselling sessions together with the learners, we discuss a lot of contemporary issues among them diseases and drug abuse in a bid to raise their awareness about their devastating effects on one's growth and development (Interviewee 11)

From the participant's response, it was revealed that some learners were involved in immoral practices. In this case *guidance and counselling* was seen as being capable of inculcating expected norms and values in learners. This concurs with Seligman (2006), who noted that this approach allows learners to develop a greater understanding of their environment, and this helps them in making appropriate decisions when confronted with social obstacles. Also, through these sessions' information about diseases such as the deadly sexually transmitted infections and criminal activities in which adolescents are involved can be disseminated. Therefore, upon learners being aware of what was happening around them,

then it was presumed that they are in a position to make informed decisions about whatever move they want to undertake in a bid to live a healthy and crime-free life. Thus, from the participants' perspective, guidance and counselling policy and practice can play a significant role in moulding an upright citizen with the expected qualities of 'ubuntu/unhu' in the rural society through exposing learners to positive interventions (Deidra, 2013).

In this regard a rural secondary school was seen as the key cradle for firmness and to give direction to learners in decision-making instances such as career paths. Thus, guidance and counselling policy and practices are presumed as the basis for the formulation of activities geared towards inculcating into learners the norms and values expected by the society. In addition, learners are helped to impartially contest challenges associated adolescence, and performance in teaching-learning. This, therefore, implies that the implementation of the *guidance and counselling policy and practices* ought to assist learners confront trials and tribulations they encountered in life with optimism. However, during these interactions with learners, some obstacles are encountered, therefore the following section discusses these in greater detail.

Obstacles Encountered by 'Teacher-Counsellors' in Guidance and Counselling Activities

In the absence of trained counsellors, teachers are called upon to act as counsellors, along with their teaching roles (Mushaandja, et al., 2013). This, therefore, exposes learners with improper conduct in and outside school premises to helpful intercession on their dynamism for educational and age-related determinations. In this regard, schools are considered part of the greater society, which inculcates values in learners to shape their moral uprightness (Samanyanga, et al., 2015). However, on instilling these expected norms and values through the activities outlined in the *Guidance and Counselling Policy and practice* some obstacles encountered. In this regard one of the participants explained:

Due to a huge teaching load on my shoulders, I tend to concentrate more on counselling on those pupils with disciplinary problems be it at school or home when checking their school attendance each morning (Interviewee 7)

The above sentiments are supported by Boitt (2016); Nyamwange, Nyakan and Ondima (2012) who revealed that '*teacher-counsellors*' usually have a workload of more than 30 periods per week, which leaves them with little or no time for the provision of guidance and counselling sessions. This concurs with Maiyo and Owiye (2009) who postulated that busy teacher-counsellors' busy schedule leaves them with little time for effective '*guidance and counselling.*' Ultimately this leads them into using routine and ineffective strategies in dealing with concerns that would have been raised by pupils and other concerned stakeholders. Hence the need for 'teacher-counsellors' popularly known as class teachers to be given less teaching load to enable them to carry out guidance and counselling activities including arranging for an expert to deliver talks on selected topics and providing individual guidance to learners (Ajowi & Simatwa, 2010). From the discussion, it was noted that less time is dedicated by the participant to guidance and counselling activities. This was highlighted by one of the participants:

[...] most 'teacher-counsellors' only use this allocated time to complete the attendance registers with less time dedicated to the actual guidance and counselling learning activities (Interviewee 16)

From this contribution, it was noted that most teacher-counsellors in the school consulted did not have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, since they were more preoccupied with their routine teaching load (Adedrian, 1995; Alemu, 2013). Besides, another participant had this to say about parents or guardians' views towards learning activities undertaken during 'guidance and counselling' lessons:

As a male 'teacher-counsellor' it's at times difficult to offer counselling to female learners in my class as this can be interpreted in one way or the other that I am having an affair with her (Interviewee 18)

In support of the above sentiments one of the participants had the following to say:

Some parents claim that we teach their children about sex, which according to them is a taboo. Tradition prescribes that we don't talk about sex-related issues with pupils, yet there is an increase in the number of learners falling pregnant in our school (Interviewee 10)

From the participant's response, it can be noted that that cultural belief influences teacher-learner interaction in 'guidance and counselling.' It is regarded as a taboo by culture for male teachers and female pupils to discuss sex-related issues. In this context parents or guardians tend to avoid forums where their children's private and domestic issues are discussed with 'strangers' due to cultural thoughts (Oye, Obi, Mohd & Bernice, 2012; Ogonya, 2007; Rutondoki, 2000). This concurs with Mushaandja, Haihambo, Vergnani and Frank (2013) who advanced that at times parents restrain their children from deliberating their private and domestic issues with outsiders (including 'teacher-counsellors'). This was against the expectation that guidance and counselling was supposed to be done in a lively atmosphere organise and maintained within a friendly educational environment (Charema, 2008; Pandey, 2005; Leary, 2001). Under such a scenario the gap between male teacher-counsellors and female learners widens, thereby influencing negatively on the implementation of the *guidance and counselling policy and practice*.

Pupils at times do not feel free to discuss some issue in a class set up. Hence this makes it difficult for me to deal with their individual needs as we do not have specialised rooms for us to offer a one-on-one session (Interviewee 10)

From the above response, the participant highlighted the absence of specialised rooms which offer learners a sense of confidentiality during guidance and counselling. This concurs with Chimonyo, et al (2015); Simatwa (2012) who postulated that learners may not be comfortable to confide in teacher-counsellors since guidance and counselling services are conducted in classrooms. The existence of such a set up was against the demands of the *Director's Circular 23/2005* which that each school should have *guidance and counselling* resource rooms (Ministry of Education, Sport & Culture, 2005). This concurs with Creswell (2005) who noted that adequacy or inadequacy of resources can have a huge influence on the

implementation of a programme. Powell Hill and Hupe (2009) concurs that adequacy or inadequacy of resources can have a huge impact on the implementation of a programme. In this context one of the participants had the following to say:

I majored in mathematics at the university with little or nothing content on guidance and counselling. This on its own is a challenge on my part when dealing with learners having behavioural challenges (Interviewee 12)

Thus, it can be noted that the implementation of *guidance and counselling policy and practices* in the selected rural secondary school encountered some obstacles. This concurs with Anagbogu, Nwokolo, Anyamene, Anyachebelu and Umezulike (2013); Low (2009); Songok, Yunguyungu and Mulinge (2013) postulated that in school settings they were internal, external, systems and personal obstacles to the implementation of *guidance and counselling policy and practices*. It is against this context as researchers we, therefore, wonder the extent to which implementation of this policy and practice can be effective without relevant knowledge, skills, manuals and relevant documentation of counselling procedures. Hence the lack of requisite knowledge, skills and material resources might completely derail the implementation of the afore-mentioned policy and practice. In this regard, Chikowore (2012); Philips (1981) advanced that it was of paramount importance for institutions of learning to provide an enabling environment, which accords '*teacher-counsellors*' the opportunity to discuss with their learners on personal issues, career choices, domestic issues or conflict transformation.

From the participant's perspective, the absence of a module on guidance and counselling during the professional teacher formation phase brought to light the notion that there are good grounds to believe that without adequate training in this area one cannot efficiently and effectively facilitate the learning of *guidance and counselling* as mandated by the policy and practice. This concurs (Shumba, et al (2011) who highlighted that it was important for teachers who facilitate the learning process in *guidance and counselling* to be knowledgeable about most effective strategies, which are utilized in the subject. Chikwature and Oyedele (2016) argued that in Zimbabwe most '*teacher-counsellors*' do not possess the qualifications needed in carrying out guidance and counselling sessions. In some cases where teachers have made efforts to capacitate themselves in terms of acquiring guidance and counselling degrees, they remain unrecognized remuneration wise (Chimonyo, et al., 2015). This is against the background that training has a positive influence on teachers' self-efficacy, emotions, teaching style and reactions towards children and their use of management strategies in the classroom (Klopper, 2014). This results in proactive guidance and counselling programme management to the benefit of learners in terms of behaviour change through the reduction of cases of indiscipline either at school or home (Krieger, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The analysed and discussed data revealed that guidance and counselling learning was important to the development of learners into responsible citizens. Further, the findings indicated that '*teacher-counsellors*' were encountering obstacles when implementing the *guidance and counselling policy and practice* in the rural secondary school under

investigation. It was against this background that this study concluded that to larger extent *guidance and counselling policy and practice* was not being sustainably implemented in the rural secondary school under investigation. Therefore, the following recommendations were made: 'teacher-counsellors' are staff developed on their roles and responsibilities in guidance and counselling policy and practice implementation and provisions to be made on the master school timetable for guidance and counselling lessons in line with the policy and practice requirements.

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