

The Status of Utilization of School Guidance and Counseling Services in Ethiopian Secondary Schools in Addressing the Psychosocial and Academic Needs of Secondary School Students: The Case of Sidama Zone, SNNPRS

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Abstract: *The aims of school guidance and counseling services are similar to the purposes of education in general. In Ethiopia, the profession is introduced since 1960s and graduates of psychology were assigned as school counselors. The general objective of this study was to assess the status of utilization of school guidance and counseling services and challenges in addressing psychosocial and academic problems in selected secondary schools at Sidama Zone of SNNPRS, Ethiopia. The study used descriptive survey design and 258 students, 3 school counselors and 4 school administrators were participated in the study. Descriptive statistics like percentages, mean, range, and Standard deviation were used as data analysis techniques for close ended items. Open ended items were narrated qualitatively. The result indicated that there is high counselor student ratio in the study areas. Students face different psychosocial and academic problems that need the help of school counselor. The study further revealed that majority of students are not utilizing school guidance and counseling services properly to be successful in their academic life mainly due to lack of awareness about the service in their school, weak link between school counselors and school community. Accordingly, low self concept, lack of proper study skills, time management problem, lack of assertiveness among female students to cope school challenges, and different problems students with special Needs face were identified as a potential problems that needs intervention of school counselors. Other problems for under utilization of the service are related with professional competencies of the school counselors, lack of policy direction about the service and administrative problems. Based on the findings, it is recommended that there should be clear policy, manual and job description for professionals, additional professionals should be employed, school counselors should be creative and necessary pre-service training on school counseling should be offered for new graduate to improve and strengthen school guidance and counseling services to address psychosocial and educational needs of students in the nation.*

Keywords: *Guidance and counseling, Need, Counselor, Utilization, Preparatory and Secondary schools*

I. Introduction

School is the institutional place where people acquire knowledge through teaching and learning processes and nearly all human beings can anticipate healthy growth in terms of developmental /growth, educational, and vocational experiences (1). One of the missions of schools is stimulating and shaping the new generation for the great experiences of life. Failures in proper adjustment to all the facets mentioned could affect the education of young people and expose them to environmental as well as personal problems that impede healthy development. To achieve these healthy lifelong developmental processes and experiences, the role of different stakeholders cannot be undermined in schools.

One of these stakeholders in educational setting is school guidance and counseling services that aid the accomplishment of school missions and visions of preparing and producing competent, healthy and productive young generation for a nation. As Heyden(2) described, the aims of school guidance and counseling service in schools are similar to the purposes of education in general which is targeted to assist students in fulfilling their understanding about oneself and acceptance of others, developing associations with peers, balancing between permissiveness and controls in the educational setting, realizing successful achievement, and providing opportunities to gain independence among others.

School guidance and services prepare students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and grow in their ability to understand and accept the results of their choices (3) (4). The ability to make such intelligent choices is not innate but, must be developed. When guidance and counseling services are missing in schools, students' adaptation becomes difficult thus leading to low performance, misbehavior and dropout.

As Rashid et.al(5) explained, the role and responsibility of the counselor in educational institutions is much complex as compared to other organizations since there are legal, professional and organizational issues

involved in counseling with school children. To achieve the above mentioned optimal benefits, it is not deniable that schools need well trained school counselors and proper utilization of the services. However, this educational integral part of the service is not being implemented similarly in the world. It is effectively being used and implemented in the educational system of developed nations.

When we look at the experience of Ethiopia, though the concept is new (6), it is getting better attention for the last ten years than before. With the increasing number of higher educational institutions in the country, the field of psychology started to be opened in different universities than before. Besides, opening of postgraduate program in counseling psychology at different universities than before is another improvement thought it is too late. Now a days, the emerging issues of personality maladjustment, poor study habit, career choice problem and lack of knowledge of one's aptitudes add skills make it obligatory for our educational planners and administrators to build appropriate guidance and counseling programme into our education system at different level for the development of the individual student into an adult personality, intellectual and functional proficiency, discipline and confidence. Consideration of these psychological make-ups will aid the 70/30 student ratio of natural science and social science placement policy of the government.

However, the extent of proper utilization of school guidance and counseling services in aiding government policy and above all student achievement is not well researched so far. For instance, Blind (7) indicated that Ethiopia is one of the countries where no evidence could be found to suggest that counseling is available or officially valued in state funded schools. Additionally, Yusuf (6) recommended that extensive research should be carried out on the field and service to evaluate its status. All these suggest that comprehensive study should be carried out in order to assess whether profession of guidance and counseling is serving the need of students at secondary school level or not.

Based on the above assumptions and directions, this study was carried out in South Nation and Nationalities People Regional State (SNNPRS) of Southern Ethiopia and Sidama zone to assess to what extent the service is being utilized in secondary schools.

1.1 Demand of the Service in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the terms guidance and counseling were introduced in the educational literature in response to the changing needs of the society mainly as a result of the political, economic, and social impact of the revolution (6). Training of school counselors started in 1966-1967 with the offering of guidance and counseling course at Addis-Ababa University. It was not until 1974 that a full-fledged department of psychology was established there (6) (8). Since 1960s graduates of Psychology were assigned as school counselor. However, as Yusuf (6) indicated it is difficult to call these graduates as school counselor since they have taken only three counseling course.

The need of school guidance and counseling professionals can be described in different ways. Among others, the need can be estimated by conducting census, assessing needs based on the available human resource in the school and total number of students, and supply of human need of the school(9). The first and the third criteria depend on number of graduates from the Universities and emphasis of the Education bureau for staffing. For this research, the second criterion is highly emphasized.

Fred Lunenburg,(10) stated that most accrediting agencies in the United states require a counselor-student ratio of one full-time counselor for 250 to 300 students. This writer added that a caseload of this magnitude is satisfactory if counselors are to have adequate time to counsel students individually and in small groups, as well as consult with faculty, administrators, and parents. In Canada, it has been suggested that 15 to 20 per cent of school population determines the number of students who may be in need of individual counseling or direct intervention of some kind. Thus, in a school population of 500, the school counselor can estimate that about 75 to 100 students may need some direct service with some aspect of their growth and development. Time to deliver this type of intervention needs to be factored into the school counselor's overall schedule (11).

In some European countries, resource allocation is worked out in terms of guidance staff-to-student ratios. Typically, the staff-to-student ratio is quite high (e.g. in Cyprus, Romania and Sweden it can be as high as 1:800; in Bulgaria, Ireland and Malta it is 1:500; in the Netherlands it is 1:300-400; while in Finland, it is 1:272, with trade unions finding this unacceptable and lobbying to bringing down the ratio to 1:2009(12).

Shertzer et.al(9), stated that one full- time counselor for 600 pupils in elementary schools, one full-time counselor for 300 pupils in secondary schools , and one full-time counselor for 750 or 1000 students in junior colleges and above is recommended. On the other hand the American National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)(13) believes that the implementation of a precollege guidance and counseling initiative must take into consideration factors such as concern for student growth and development needs, program scope, role of the counselor, and the number of support staff available. The association accepted ideal counselor/ student ratio of 1/100, and it align with the position statement of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) with its recommendation that the ratio be between 1/100 (ideal) and 1/300 (maximum).

Besides, NACAC agree with ASCA that the implementation of a guidance and counseling program should be determined primarily by concern for meeting students' developmental needs (14).

In Ethiopia, where educational settings are expanding, the country do not have exact policy document and guideline that talk about the required number of guidance and counseling professionals to be assigned per student or per schools. It is believed that the demand vary from region to region and zone to zone and from school to school. So that it should be thoroughly investigated for further action.

1.2 Overview of Utilization of School Guidance and Counseling Service in Ethiopia

In developed countries, the profession of counseling is integrated in the education system and all concerned school bodies other than trained counselors cooperate with counselors for the effectiveness of the process. Accordingly, counselors at different educational levels have clear written and demarcated roles and responsibilities in their operation.

The major goals of school guidance and counseling are to promote personal growth and to prepare students to become motivated workers and responsible citizens. Every individual may need direct or indirect aid in developing desirable attitudes and modes of behavior in his home and in his relationships with his associates outside the home. The kind and amount of direct or indirect help needed by learners vary somewhat with developmental stages and school level. Educators recognize that in addition to intellectual challenges, students encounter personal/social, educational, and career challenges. School guidance and counseling programs need to address these challenges and to promote educational success (10).

But in Ethiopia, one of the problems associated with roles and responsibilities of school counselor is absence of professional job description for counselors. With this regard, the finding of Yirgalem(15), and Yusuf(6) have indicated that guidance and counselors in schools did not have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Rather, they were preoccupied with routine works coming from the school administrators than helping students to utilize their service to be effective in their academics and solve different psychosocial problems they encounter in daily life. Another study by Semira and Sileshi (Cited in Baker, (8)), investigated that counselors are not effective in their activities due to inadequate training, which is given for general psychologists not professional counselors.

1.3 Areas of Intervention of Guidance and Counseling in School settings

As stated repeatedly, the major goals of school guidance and counseling are to promote personal growth and to prepare students to become motivated workers and responsible citizens. Educators recognize that in addition to intellectual challenges, students encounter personal/social, educational, and career challenges. School guidance and counseling programs need to address these challenges and to promote educational success (10). Specific approaches may differ from level to level; the need for assistance in some adjustment areas may be greater at one level than at others. In brief, every individual may need direct or indirect aid in developing desirable attitudes and modes of behavior in his home and in his relationships with his associates outside the home. In general expression, the American School Counselor Association(13) have outlined a balanced approach to school counseling, including support for student development in three domains: academic, career, and personal/social .

In Uganda the need assessment conducted in 2008 as cited by Charles Onencan(16) indicated that school counselors and teachers need the following training to serve their students in a better manner.

a. Educational needs (e.g. study skills techniques, test taking skills, academic persistence, academic/educational planning skills, acquiring skills, attitudes and knowledge to learn effectively),

b. Career needs (e.g. career exploration and planning, subject choice, job seeking and job keeping skills, relationship between personal qualities and work, investigating the world of work in relation to knowledge of self) and

c. Personal social needs (e.g. self-awareness, conflict resolution, handling crisis situations, peer pressure, coping with emotion, sexual issues).

Such need identification enable higher institutes to design appropriate curricular activities that suite their needs and design appropriate strategies that empower school non counseling teachers to serve as counselors in the case of emergency.

In Ethiopian cases, previously research conducted at different parts of the country indicated that students visit school guidance and counseling services for different purposes. For instance a study conducted by Terje and Cherinet(17) stated that lack of concentration on studies, time management problem, need of support for academic stream placement, absenteeism and dropout are the cases treated by school counselors. Similarly a study by Yirgalem(15) indicated that students are in need of the service to improve their study skills and fostering healthy heterosexual relationship to be the most important functions of school guidance and counseling programs.

1.4 Challenges in the Utilization of School Guidance and Counseling Services

Like professionals in any field, school counselors also will face different challenges and problems in exercising their profession in school setting. For instance, lack of awareness about the role of counseling services, lack of proper supervision, administrative problems, attitude of teachers, awareness and attitude of students and lack of resources can be mentioned as potential problem in effective discharge of the service in school settings (9) (6) (18).

It has been noted that availability of resources and the necessary training in school guidance and counseling services positively affect the effectiveness of the services provided. The influence of availability of resources and the necessary training may be affected by the attitudes of students, school counselors and administrators. The physical preparation and arrangement of the counseling office, neatness of the office, and appropriateness of the location of the office to practice counseling have their own positive impact in delivering successful service to the intended purpose. In addition to these physical setup, it should have necessary stationary, computer and internet service, and waiting room(19) (20) (21) (22).With this regard Yusuf (6) discussed that Ethiopian secondary school counselors have serious scarcity of resources that impede their effective services to their clients.

The other problem in the provision of school guidance and counseling is related with the quality of human resource. It is essential to have well trained and experienced counselor(s) in secondary schools for effective utilization of the service. However, previous studies in Ethiopia indicated that professionals have no access of refreshing on job trainings so that they are not introduced with new scientific research, technology and how to handle cases(6). Additionally, Tickaher (23) examined that expanding of guidance and counseling in Ethiopia was affected by shortage of money caused by country's low level of economic development and scarcity of qualified people in guidance and counseling.

The last but not list influential factor to be considered for effective utilization of school guidance and counseling is having abiding policy document and related guidelines. Cognizant of these values of school guidance and counseling services, different countries have adopted and designed school guidance and counseling policy and incorporated the service in their educational system. For instance, in USA, the government in collaboration with National School Counselors Association adopted and revised appropriate policy to effectively run the service in schools (24). In Malaysia, guidance and counseling services were introduced in schools to guide students especially in the form of career guidance and to overcome social problems arising from the rapid economic changes within the country(25). School-based counseling began in the UK in the 1960s and grew considerably in the 1970s and now, School-based counseling is one of the most prevalent forms of psychological therapy for young people(26).

In Nigeria guidance and counseling service included in the policy document of the National Policy on Education in 1981(27). Counseling psychology has been a recognized and legislated specialty in South Africa since 1974, along with the specialties of clinical, research and industrial psychology (28). In the Ministry of Education system in Namibia, a teacher counselor was a teacher in a primary or secondary government school who has been entrusted with the responsibility of rendering counseling or any type of psychosocial support to learners within a school setting (29). In Kenya, the Ministry of Education has directed all schools to establish guidance and counseling departments to ban caning (beating) and other forms of physical punishment(30). Professional guidance and counseling in Tanzania schools begun in the year 1984 where guidance and counseling services were endorsed by the government as an integral part of the country's education system (31).

In Ethiopia absence of clearly stated policy document, job description for staffs assigned in secondary schools and any guidelines that describe about the service in secondary schools is a major challenge. Congruent with this idea, Blind (7) indicated that Ethiopia is one of the countries where no evidence could be found to suggest that counseling is available or officially valued in state funded schools. Another studies further explained that school guidance and counseling professionals are not aware about their roles and responsibilities due to absence of professional job description and any guidelines. As a result, they are preoccupied with routine works coming from the school administrators (6) (15). From these multifaceted problems, one can conclude that the service is not effectively serving students academic and psychosocial needs they encounter and needs due attention by the concerned bodies to make it effective. But what have to be bear in mind is it vary from region to region, zone to zone and school to school.

However, what is interesting is that the service is being offered at different public Universities (32), and in different secondary schools of the country with full of its problems(15) (17) (8) (33) (6).

1.5 Scope and Objective of the Study

In Ethiopia, school guidance and Counseling services can be offered at different educational level starting from secondary school to higher education. This research focused on preparatory and secondary schools of Ethiopia with special emphasis on Sidama Zone Secondary schools of SNNPRS of Ethiopia.

The general objective of this study was to assess the status of utilization school guidance and counseling services and problems faced in its effective utilization in at the study areas.

Specific Objectives

More specifically, the study is intended to achieve the following specific objectives. So, the study has:

- (1) Identified the gap between the need and sufficiency of guidance and counseling officers
- (2) Assessed utilization of the service by students in the respective schools
- (3) Identified the challenges schools face in utilizing the service
- (4) Find out the challenges professionals face in rendering the service in the schools
- (5) Propose possible intervention mechanisms.

II. Methodology

2.1. The Research Design

The study has adopted descriptive survey type of research which aims to discuss the existing reality by employing both quantitative and qualitative data to analyze and draws inferences.

For this research, data was collected from 258 students, 3 counselors, and 5 principals/vice principals of four namely Tabour, Addis Ketema, Wondogenet and Yirgalem preparatory and secondary schools. Representative samples of students from grade nine and eleven were selected using stratified sampling techniques. Counselors and principals/vice principals were taken based on availability sampling.

In order to gather the required information self report questionnaire that depicts the existing gap in the area of guidance and counseling service utilization in schools were developed after rigorous review of literature in the area.

To analyze the quantitative close ended data, Statistical Programs for Social Science for Window version twenty (SPSS 20.0 Statistics Software) was used. After the data has been entered into the computer, different statistical analyses were made for different purposes.

Accordingly, descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean, and standard deviations were used to express the proportion, average, and variability of certain characteristics of the variables. In addition, open ended data were described and interpreted in words qualitatively.

III. Research Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of students

Items	Frequency	Percent
Name of School		
Tabour Preparatory and Secondary School	69	26.7
Addis Ketema Preparatory and Secondary School	55	21.3
Wondogenet Preparatory and Secondary School	70	27.1
Yirgalem Preparatory and Secondary School	64	24.8
Total	258	100.0
Gender		
Male	143	55.4
Female	115	44.6
Total	258	100.0
Educational Level		
Grade 9	126	48.8
Grade 11	132	51.2
Total	258	100.0
Mean Age of students	17.30	

As can be seen from the above TABLE, 26.7% (N=69)of students were from Tabour Preparatory and secondary schools, 21.3% (N=55)were from Addis Ketema and the rest 27.1%(N=70) and 24.8%(N=64) are from Wondogenet and Yirgalem Preparatory and secondary schools respectively. Tabor and Addis Ketema preparatory and secondary schools are found in Hawassa city where as the rest two are from outside of Hawassa. Concerning gender of the study participant, 55.4%(N=143) are male and the rest 44.6%(N=115) are female participants. In terms of educational status, 51.2%(N= 132) are from grade 11 where as 48.8%(N=126) are from grade 9. The average age of participant students in this study was 17.3 years old.

Concerning counselors, data was gathered from 2 female counselors and 1 male counselor. As far as school administrators are concerned, the data was collected from 3 male directors/vice directors) and 1 female director.

3.2 The Need and Gap of Guidance and Counseling Services in Schools

In order to identify the need and gap of the trained counselor in the respective schools, two approaches were employed by the researcher. The first approach is assessing counselor student ratio in schools and identifying priority areas students need the help of school guidance and counselors.

With regard to assessing counselor student ratio in schools, the data collected from school administration revealed that with the exception of one school the rest 3 schools have counselor in their school. As can be seen from the below TABLE 2, the average counselor - student ratio was 1: 3363 which is too far from the standard recommended by American School Counselors Association(14) that suggests an ideal 1:100 counselor student proportion. At the same time is too far from what Shertzer et.al(9) recommended that one full-time counselor for 600 pupils in elementary schools, one full-time counselor for 300 pupils in secondary schools one full-time counselor for 750 or 1000 students in junior colleges and above. But, the figure align with other research findings (6) (15) conducted in other parts of Ethiopia so far. This TABLE further depicts that professional distribution is not gender sensitive since all the available professionals are from similar sex category in the case of more than one counselor in schools. So, such homogeneity and mismatch of number of students and available staff has its own impact on effective utilization of counseling services by students since some students might be gender sensitive to counseling services.

Table: 2 Availability of counselors in the secondary schools

Name of Preparatory and Secondary School	Availability of counselor	Number of counselor	Total No. of students in the school	Gender of counselor	Experience of counselor
Tabour School	yes	2	6801	Both are male	Over 10 years
Addis Ketema School	Yes	1	3138	Female	< 2 years
Wondogenet	yes	1*	4701	Male	< 2 years
Yirgalem	Yes	2**	5543	female	< 2 years

* The counselor was almost quit his job for the last two month during data collection

** one counselor was on maternal leave during data collection

As a second criteria used by the researcher to analyze need of the service by students and the school administrators, was asking and analyzing priority areas that need the help of psychologist in schools. With this regard, students and school administrators were asked to identify their priority area that need school counselors professional support. Accordingly, students were asked to list their top five priority area from 20 identified problems that can be managed by school counselors. Accordingly they identified the following priority areas among twenty listed problems.

- (1) Promotion of students self concept in the teaching learning process (55) = 21.2%
- (2) Helping students to use scientific study skills (65) = 25.1%
- (3) Empowering students in time management skills (24) = 9.3%
- (4) Helping Female students to be effective in their learning (28) = 10.8%
- (5) Helping Students with special Needs (32) = 12.4%

On the other hand, school administrators indicated that, disciplinary cases, low motivation of students to engage themselves in teaching learning process, lack of study technique, cheating, disruptive behavior in class, disrespect for teachers, low academic performance, harassment of female students, not doing assignments and homework on time, late coming to school, fighting among students and bullying are some major problems commonly mentioned among others on the given open ended items.

All these mentioned problems by students and school administrators are psychological and have their own adverse impact in student learning and is consistent with the finding in Uganda (16) and (17) which is conducted on comparison of Guidance and Counseling services in Ethiopian and Norwegian Secondary schools.

3.3 Utilization of Guidance and Counseling Services By Students

As far as utilization of school guidance and counseling service is concerned, students were asked whether they visited the counseling office or not to get psychological support for psychosocial and academic problems they encountered.

Table 3: Utilization of guidance and counseling service by students

Response	Yes	No	Total
Frequency	93	165	258
Percent	36%	54%	100%

As can be seen from the above TABLE, only 36%(N=93) of the respondents visited the school counseling office in order to get the service. The majority 64%(=165) did not use the service to address their psychosocial and academic needs.

In order to make further inquiries the users of the service were asked to mention three psychosocial and academic problems they visited school counselors to get help to solve their problems.

Table 4: Reasons of students to visit school Counselor

S/N	Reasons for visiting School Counselor	Number of respondent	Percent
1	About Study skill	40	43.0%
2	Personal Problem	29	31.2%
3	Social problem	15	16.1
4	Others	9	9.7%
	Total	93	100%

Among the reasons they stated were developing proper Study skill, coping personal problems and Social problem respectively. This finding is similar with the finding of Yirgalem (15) which stated study skills and fostering healthy heterosexual relationship to be the most important functions of school guidance and counseling programs. Similarly, this finding align with what Terje and Cherinet(17) listed as a major reasons why Ethiopian students visit the counselor.

Among the none users of the service, the following top four reasons were identified as a challenge not to use the service in their respective schools.

Table 5: Reasons not to use School Guidance and Counseling service by students

S/N	Reasons for not using the counseling Service	Number of respondent	Percent
1	Lack of awareness about the service	50	30.3%
2	Fear	46	27.9%
3	Thinking that there is no experienced counselor	42	25.5%
4	Fear break of confidentiality	27	16.3%
	Total	165	100%

The majority 30.3%(N= 50) of students replied that they do not have awareness about guidance counseling service, followed by fear 27.9%(N=46), the believe that there is no adequate counselor in their school and the rest 16.3%(N=27) replied that they fear break of confidentiality as a reason not to visit school counselor for their psychosocial and academic problems. Mainly, these issues are supported by previous findings suggesting that school guidance and counseling is not effectively employed by students due to lack of awareness, fear of stigma and ethical issues(15) (17) (6) (9) (18) which requires written ethical guidelines to protect clients from being harmed and minimize their mistrust of professionals who render the services.

On the other hand, school counselors were asked about their sources of referral of students for counseling services using rating items. All three respondents rated the role of student self referral, unit leaders, subject teacher and parents as a great deal source for their referral of students for guidance and counseling service. But friends, home room teacher and principals were rated as a little source for referral of students for counseling purposes.

Concerning the time and number of sessions they spend with the client, all participant counselors responded that they spend 45' to 1 hour on average per session and it takes 2 to 4 session for a clients problem. However, the number of session depends on nature of problem as replied by the counselor.

When both school administrators and school counselors are asked to express their impression about effectiveness of school guidance and counseling service, they replied that although it is so essential and support the teaching learning process, the service in their respective schools is not this much effective.

3.4 Challenges In Effective Utilization Of School Guidance And Counseling Services

As far as problems related with provision of school counseling is concerned, data were collected from school administrators and counselors.

From school administrators (directors and Vice Principals) side, all respondents state that there is lack of commitment and creativity by professionals to promote the profession in their respective schools. They further described that there are so many problems in schools but counselors are reluctant and disinterested to carry out their duties properly. Additionally, lack of cooperation among counselors, and lack planning skills are some challenges mentioned by school administrators that was impeding effective utilization of the service. This finding is similar with what presented by Abdela Muzeyin (cited in Beker)(8) stating that school counselors lack of motivation, absence of supervision and lack of evaluation skill about the service, poor personal creativity of

counselors to adjust themselves in the existing situation, and considering their profession as low income generating service among others.

Concerning provision of resources, for counseling services, except one participant, the rest school directors stated that they provided office and necessary materials like computers, chair, table and other facilities. The one that didn't provide office stated the counselor share office with other teachers.

Concerning any policy document or guideline to monitor and assess contribution of the service in addressing the needs of their students, all school directors have responded that they do not have any reference and job description to evaluate the effectiveness of their counselor unlike other teachers. Similarly, all school counselors stated that there is no job description and guideline that guides them. They further described that they are not evaluated based on their provision of guidance and counseling services. But rather, they are evaluated by their engagement in other activities than counseling services provided which is hindering them not to get appropriate feedback and improve their services. This trend contradict with what Chireshe(34) stated that some African countries (Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, South Africa, Botswana and Nigeria) have School guidance and counseling services policies. This implies that less emphasis is given for school guidance and counseling services for its effective utilization and needs the attention of concerned officials in Ethiopia.

Concerning initial training and on job training opportunity to upgrade their profession to effectively render the service, only one school counselor responded that (s)he has got on job training on school guidance and counseling after graduation. But the rest replied that they didn't get any training that prepares them for the position and handle different student cases. Besides, with the exception of one counselor, the rest responded that the contribution of initial training is not a great deal to prepare them for current practice as a school counselor. This align with what Semira(Cited in Baker) (8) and Sileshi (33)),described that secondary school counselors are not effective in their activities due to inadequate training, which is given for general psychologists not professional counselors and what Yusuf(6) stated that Ethiopian school counselors have no access of refreshing on job trainings and the curriculum will not prepare them very well to be good school counselor.

The other challenge that all counselors of the study described was that number of students in their respective schools and the available counselor (student counselor ratio) does not match. The numbers of students are too much and beyond their capacity to address the existing needs of students. Besides, lack of conducive office, lack of budget allocation, lack of coordination among stakeholders, lack of awareness among school community about the service, defensiveness of clients during the session, and lack of proper supervision by seniors are among the challenges they mentioned for the low effectiveness and inefficient status of the service in secondary schools.

IV. Conclusion

This study concluded that there is high need for the service and school counselors are deployed by concerned body to address different psychosocial and academic needs of students. But the service is not being effectively delivered and utilized by majority students due to different reasons.

V. Recommendation

Up on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are forwarded to different concerned bodies.

(1) For School Counselors

- Counselors should work hard to create awareness about counseling service for school community
- Counselors should be creative and a role model in their profession for others
- They should link and network to work with others
- Counselors should design different training for school community on different psychological issues to sensitize the profession.

(2) For School Administrators

- Appropriate facilities should be fulfilled for effective counseling by the school administrators
- The service should be gender sensitive
- Budget should be Allocated
- Refreshment training should be designed for professionals to share experiences
- Capacity building program for professionals should be designed

(3) For Educational Policy Makers at Regional and Federal Level

- Additional counselors should be employed by government using the existing opportunity
- Proper policy guideline and job description should be developed for school counselors
- Pre-service training should be reconsidered in the manner to suit to school counseling

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