



GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAMMES FOR ENHANCING THE COMPETENCIES AMONG GRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Guidance and counseling is a systematic professional process of helping the individual through education and interpretative procedures to gain a better understanding of his own characteristics and potentialities. The aim of the present study is to know the graduate students and their principals' perception on the effectiveness of the guidance and counseling programmes for enhancing students' academic, career and personal competencies. The investigator has used descriptive survey method for the present study. The respondents of the study were 15 degree college principals, and 90 graduate students taken from various degree colleges of Anantapuram district. Simple random sampling method was utilized to select the student respondents. Purposive sampling method was used to select the degree college principals who participated in the study. Data for the study were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Descriptive statistics i.e. mean, frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data. All the respondents who participated in the study perceived guidance and counseling programmes as effective in enhancing students academic, career and personal competencies. Education stakeholders and policy makers in education who include mentors, counselors, principals/heads, managers and NGOs interested in education matters may use the results of this study to strengthen, improve and maintain the programme services. It was recommended that guidance and counseling programmes be implemented and fully supported as a matter of priority in all degree colleges to equip all the students with necessary academic, career and personal competencies.

Keywords: *Guidance And Counseling, Perception, Effectiveness, Competencies.*

1.0 Introduction

The Education Commission (1964-66), while lamenting on the inadequacy of provision for student welfare in the institutions of higher learning, recommended the inclusion of guidance and counseling including vocational placement, among student services. It stressed 'guidance and counseling programme which would assist the students in the choice of courses, indicate the links of remedial action and help in dealing with emotional and psychological problems. Guidance and counseling programmes should be an integral part of the educational facilities provided in institutions of higher education'. Guidance and counseling have three-fold functions: adjustment, orientation and development.

Guidance and counseling are adjustmental in the sense that they help the student in making the best possible adjustment to the current situations in the educational institution and occupational world, in the home and the community. Guidance and counseling have orientational function also. They orientate the students in relation to career planning, educational programming and direction towards long-term personal aims and values. Awareness of the need to plan in the context of the complexity of the world of work is an essential prerequisite of going through education and preparation for after-education career. Guidance and counseling have another important function, developmental function. They should try not only to find solutions when the problems have occurred and have done their damage, rather they should begin before the problems arise and maladjustments occur. If unsolved problems are allowed to accumulate, their total effect may lead the student to the point where his capacity for growth is blocked. Guidance and counseling programmes need to be introduced in degree colleges to meet the varied needs of the educational system, administration and students.

2.0 Review of Literature

Biswalo (1996) observed that guidance and counseling assist students in planning an effective study and revision programme, subject choice, study skills, information on higher education, reduce test anxiety, and in all aspects relevant to the pursuit of education in school and after school. Absence of these competencies makes students to underachieve academically. Academic competencies assist a student to relate present subjects to future academic choices, relate academic performance in school with courses to study after school and prepare a student to choose from a wide variety of substantial post-secondary education options as well as link current school subjects to life in society later after school. Kimathi (2002) who conducted a study on perception of teacher counselor role in the implementation of secondary school curriculum in Kenya established that school guidance and counseling programme has contributed to the effective student learning and high academic performance but there was no mention on contributions to academic and personal competencies. Killeen and White (2004) concluded that 67% of the respondents reported having information about suitable education and training opportunities. Another 66% of the participants indicated that they became more interested in getting better education and training as a result of participating in careers guidance. Guidance and counseling programme studies in institutions of higher education are conspicuous by their absence. As a result, there is a dire need to conduct research in this area. The present research study is made to address this problem.



3.0 Statement of the Problem: 'Guidance and Counseling Programmes for Enhancing the Competencies among Graduate Students'.

4.0 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to study the degree college principals' and students' perception on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programmes in enhancing degree students' academic, career and personal competences.

5.0 Methodology Used in the Study

5.1 Method used in the Study

The method that has been adopted by the investigators in the present research study is the survey method. Along with it, case studies, observations, interviews and formal talk with the Principals, teachers and students (during data collection) formed the sources of information.

5.2 Tools used in the Study

To achieve the above stated objective, the investigator developed the following Rating Scales to assess the principals and students perception on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programme in enhancing the degree college students' academic, career and personal competences.

1. Rating Scale to assess the principals' perception on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programme in enhancing degree students' academic, career and personal competences.
2. Rating Scale to assess the degree students' perception on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programme in enhancing their academic, career and personal competences.

5.3 Locale and Sample of the Study

The locale of the study is the Anantapuram district of Andhra Pradesh State. The investigator selected 15 degree colleges by using simple random sampling technique considering Private un-aided, aided and Government degree colleges. The total samples of the study were 15 principals and 90 students.

5.4 Data Collection

The investigator got permission from the Principals of the respective degree colleges to collect data from the students. Good rapport was established with the principals and students before administering the tools. They were explained in detail about the purpose of the study. It was emphasized that the data will be kept confidential and they were requested not to leave any item without rating. No time limit was set to respond to the rating scale. The investigator collected the filled-in rating scales personally from the respondents of the study.

5.5 Statistical Techniques Used in the Study

The collected data were analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques such as mean, frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data.

6.0 Results and Interpretations

Data obtained from the questionnaires and interview schedules were systematically analyzed and presented as follows.

Table-1: Students' Perceptions on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling in Enhancing their Academic, Career and Personal Competencies.

Effectiveness	Academic competencies		Career Competences		Personal Competences	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Less effective	12	13.3	10	11.1	14	15.6
Moderately effective	31	34.5	32	35.6	31	34.4
Effective	47	52.2	48	53.3	45	50
Total	90	100	90	100	90	100

From table-1 indicate that majority of the graduate students (52.2%) perceived guidance and counseling programmes in their degree colleges to have effectively enhanced their academic competencies. These findings are supported by Njagi (2002) who established that majority of students were willing to seek academic help more than personal help. The findings also show that majority (53.3%) of students felt that guidance and counseling contributed towards enhancing their career competencies as it enabled them to connect with what they have learnt in college and the realities of life and the job market. These findings



concur with Gathari (2003) who contended that guidance and counseling play a great role in preparing students for life after college. It is also clear from the results of the study that 50% of students view guidance and counseling in enhancing their personal competencies such as ability to make informed decisions, boosting an individual's self-esteem, behaving adaptively and ability to manage the day-to-day challenges of life. The significant percentages of students' perceptions on effectiveness of guidance and counseling in enhancing their academic, career and personal competencies are shown in Figure-1.

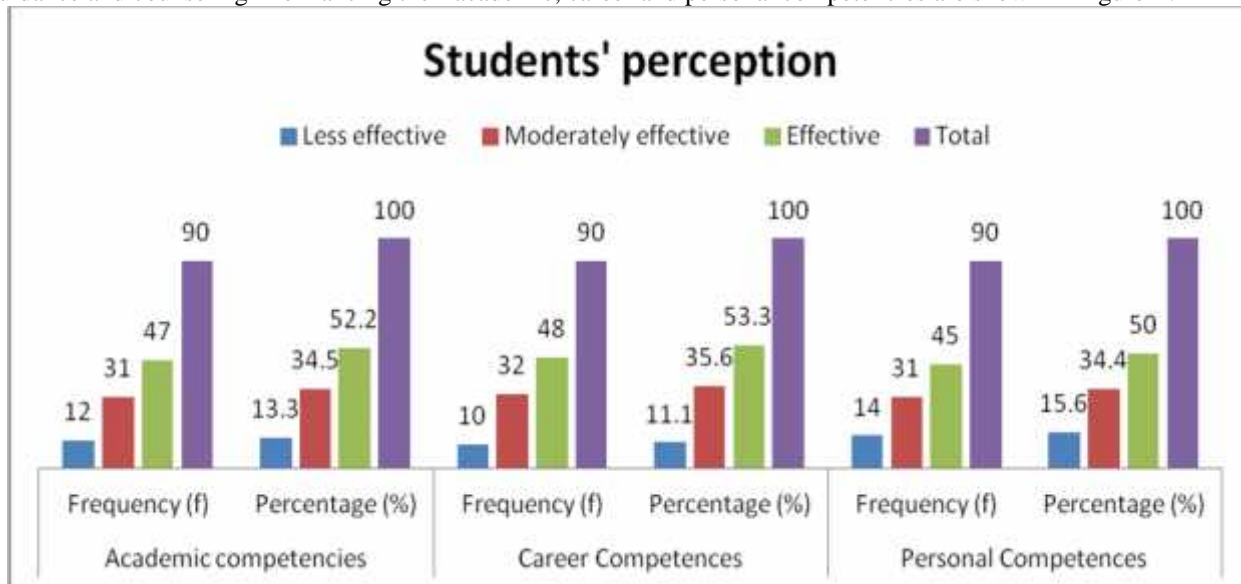


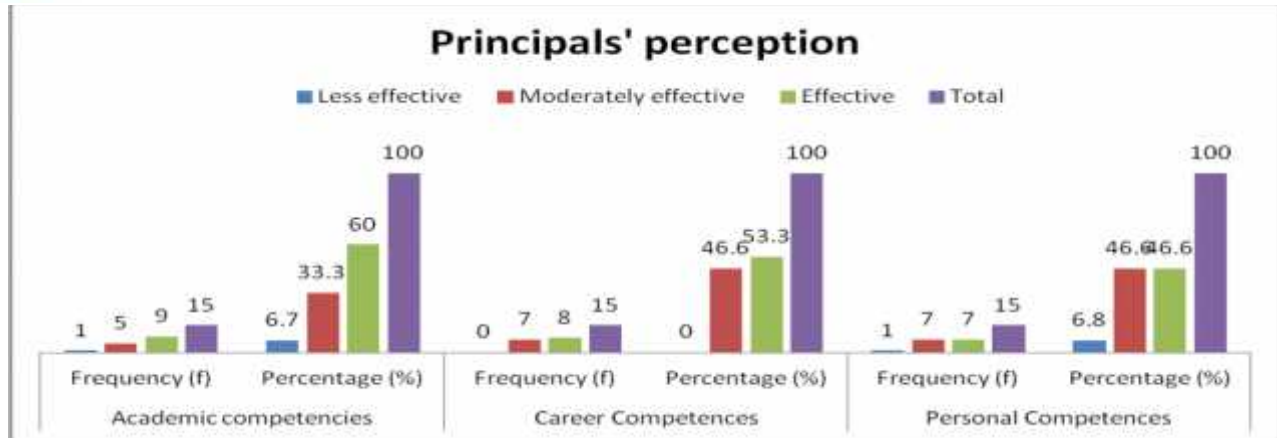
Figure-1: Percentages of students' perceptions on effectiveness of guidance and counseling in enhancing their academic, career and personal competencies.

Table-2: Principals Perceptions on Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling in enhancing students Academic, Career and Personal Competencies

Effectiveness	Academic competencies		Career Competences		Personal Competences	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Less effective	1	6.7	0	0	1	6.8
Moderately effective	5	33.3	7	46.6	7	46.6
Effective	9	60	8	53.3	7	46.6
Total	15	100	15	100	15	100

The results in table-2 reveal a general agreement among the majority of principals (60%) that the degree college guidance and counseling programmes has been effective in enhancing the students' academic competencies. This implies that academic competencies are the most effective when enhanced by guidance and counseling programmes in degree colleges as perceived by all the respondents of the study. These findings are supported by Sink (2005) who found that guidance and counseling interventions were effective in students' academic pursuits while they were in college and in educational accomplishments after college. The findings also shows that majority of the principals (53.3%) perceived college guidance and counseling programmes as effective in enhancing students' career competencies. This implies that the principals of degree colleges are pessimistic about the programmes effectiveness in assisting students attain career competencies. From the table-2, it is evident that an equal number of principals indicated that guidance and counseling programmes in degree colleges were moderately effective (46.6%) and effective (46.6%) in enhancing students personal competencies. These findings are supported by Lapan, et al (2001), Littrel (1995) and DeRosier (2004). These studies show that guidance and counseling programme offers students a variety of competencies required for personal growth and development. The significant percentages of principals' perceptions on effectiveness of guidance and counseling in enhancing their students' academic, career and personal competencies are shown in Figure-2.

Figure-2: Percentages of principals' perceptions on effectiveness of guidance and counseling in enhancing their students' academic, career and personal competencies.



7.0 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study which have been discussed in the foregoing sections, the following conclusions have been drawn.

- Graduate students perceived guidance and counseling programme as being effective in enhancing their personal, career and academic competencies.
- Principals of degree colleges working in Anantapuram district perceived guidance and counseling as effective in enhancing their students' career, academic and personal competencies.

8.0 Recommendations

In view of the fact that guidance and counseling programme plays an important role in enhancing graduate students personal, career and academic competencies in Anantapuram district, and for it to continue playing an even more effective role, the investigator offers the following recommendations:

- There is need to organize seminars and workshops to offer continuing education in guidance and counseling. This will equip the students with latest theories and techniques of counseling to make them more effective counselors.
- College administrators should endeavour to provide all resources for guidance and counseling. These include not only a counseling office equipped with reference materials, but also students' personal files and adequate career resource materials.
- There is need for college administration to offer guidance and counseling department the necessary support it deserves to make it effective such as financial and moral support.
- All stake-holders in the college should be mobilized to assist in creating awareness and advising students on the need for them to seek counseling services to help enhance their academic, career and personal competencies.
- Teacher counselors should be relieved of some of their heavy teaching load so as to make them get enough time to concentrate on the provision of counseling services to students.

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