



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

The Extent to Which Guidance Services in Schools Help Students Choose Their Subjects in Ordinary Level Public Secondary Schools in Mwanza District, Tanzania

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Abstract:

This study examined the extent to which guidance services in schools help students choose their subjects in O-level Public Secondary schools in Mwanza District, Tanzania. The Rational Choice Theory guided the study and a convergent research design under mixed methods research approach was adopted. The targeted population was 1 District Secondary Education Officer, 26 heads of secondary schools, 535 subject teachers, 26 Class teachers, 2756 parents and 2756 students. A study employed stratified random, total population and snowball sampling techniques to obtain the sample size of 431 respondents. Data were collected through questionnaires and an interview guide. The content and face validity of the research instruments were ensured by MWECAU research experts. The research instruments were pilot-tested in two O-level public secondary schools. The calculated reliability coefficients for subject teachers and students in Likert items found in questionnaires were 0.832 and 0.765. The trustworthiness of qualitative research instruments was determined through triangulation. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22 and presented through frequencies, percentages and mean. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The study found that guidance services in schools, to a high extent, facilitate students to choose subjects. The study concluded that guidance services play a crucial role in facilitating students to choose subjects as the majority of subject teachers, some parents and other education stakeholders help students to be aware of the importance of making proper subject selections in relation to their combinations which will lead them into their intended future careers. The study recommends that schools should recognize the importance of guidance services. The government initiatives should, therefore, prepare qualified teacher-guidance from universities and colleges to ensure the effective provision of guidance services in schools on students' subject choices.

Keywords: Guidance services, career guidance, rational choice theory, subject choices

1. Introduction

Secondary school education is a very important level of education throughout the world because it is the source of knowledge acquisition. It is a stage at which learners come into contact with various subjects, determining the field of study they would like to pursue in higher learning institutions (Bethel-Eke & Eremie, 2020). One of the challenges students face in secondary schools today is to determine their future career early, which would, in turn, determine the choice of subjects and combination a student needs to take to fit into that career. It is in this view that guidance services on students' subject choices in secondary schools throughout the world are very crucial as students are to be guided well on which subjects to specialize in determining their career path after schooling.

Guidance services on students choosing their subjects in secondary schools for future career paths emerged in the early 20th century in Asia, particularly in Hong Kong and China (Wong & Yuen, 2019). In European countries like England and Germany as well as the U.S.A, guidance services on students' subject choices, which would lead them to their proper career choice, have been emphasized as a formal service by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) since the 1960s, (Wong & Yuen, 2019). In African countries like Zambia, Nigeria and Kenya, guidance services on students' subject choices in secondary schools emerged in the 1970s to provide learners with enough information on which subjects to specialize in determining their future career after schooling (Banda, 2016).

In Tanzania, Ordinary Level secondary education system enables students to study a variety of subjects like English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Civics, History, Geography, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Book-keeping, Commerce, Agriculture, Computer Studies, Food and Nutrition, Bible knowledge and Islam. However, when students reach form three, they are

free to choose subjects to study for their combinations, which will lead them to their future careers. Other students are to specialize in science, arts, commerce and business (MoEST, 2015). Guidance services on students' subject choices in O' level secondary schools are very important to students, particularly when they enter form three, of which they have to join either science combinations, arts combinations or Commerce (Chilewa & Osaki, 2022). Some of the scholars argue that in Tanzania, guidance services on subject selection in secondary schools are delivered informally because most of the guidance teachers in secondary schools are selected by their superiors randomly to hold those positions considering their moral and spiritual beliefs. Also, the school timetable does not give room for the students to consult with their teachers; hence, they use the little time given during extracurricular activities (Chilewa & Osaki, 2022). The previous research findings gave a chance for the current researcher to investigate the extent to which guidance services in schools help students' subject choices in O-level Public Secondary schools in Mwanza District, Tanzania.

Subject teachers might have a contribution to students' subject choices in secondary schools because they are the ones who demonstrate and deliver proper instructions during the class sessions. Subject teachers are required to motivate students and guide them on subject selection and specialization for their better future careers, Okeke et al., (2020). However, the researcher was not sure to what extent the subject teachers facilitate students' subject choices, which was why there was a need to carry out a study in Mwanza District to assess the extent to which subject teachers contribute to students' subject choices. Furthermore, the study was also done in Mwanza District so that subject teachers can be aware of the importance of guiding the students on subject selections and Ordinary-level secondary school students can be aware of the importance of guidance services provided by their subject teachers towards their subject choices.

Parents or guardians are said to play a role in career advisory to their children; their influence on students' career choices is significant. Moreover, students require more information concerning the content and structure of the subjects they want to pursue and their contributions to their subject choices. Okeke et al. (2020) argue that parents have a significant influence on students' subject selection. Since the researcher was not sure to what extent the parents of students in Mwanza District contribute to their children's subject choices, there was a need to conduct a study in Mwanza District to assess how parental guidance services contribute to students' subject choices in O-level public secondary schools. Through this study, the parents in Mwanza district will be aware of their contribution to their children's subject choices when they are in ordinary secondary schools.

Table 1 shows the number of students in O-level public secondary schools in Mwanza District who managed to select either science subjects or arts subjects and sat for form four NECTA Examinations for three years (2020-2022).

Years	Science Takers		Arts Takers	
	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)
2020	1040	41	1473	59
2021	633	25	1872	75
2022	1064	39	1638	61

Table 1: Number of Students Who Studied Science and Arts Subjects from 2020 – 2022

Source: Mwanza District Quality Assurance Office Data from 2020-2022

Data in table 1 show that in O-Level public secondary schools in Mwanza District, students were given the chance to select subjects to study, particularly when they reached form three and form four, of which others were specializing in science subjects while others were specializing in arts subjects. However, a researcher was not sure to what extent the guidance services contribute to students' subject choices in ordinary-level public secondary school in Mwanza District. Therefore, there was a need to carry out a study on the extent to which guidance services in schools help students choose their subjects in O-level public secondary schools in Mwanza district.

2. Statement of the Problem

Failure to make proper subject choices, particularly for O-level secondary school students, creates a lot of academic and future career challenges for the majority of students, teachers, parents, and the community at large. Ordinary-level secondary school students are very confused about which subjects to study, particularly when they enter form three, where there is specialization on different subjects, which are a determining factor for their career path. Abubakar (2019) in Nigeria argued that students are highly confused about which course to study when they join the university, which results from poor selection of subjects at the O-level. Additionally, Savickas (2019) revealed that Parents who were aware of guidance services on students' subject choices were complaining that their children could not make choices of subjects without parents' influence. Teachers were also complaining that students were not choosing the subjects that would adequately prepare them for their future education. The situation forced some of the professionals to change their careers, something that was burdensome and costly to them and their parents because the training process demanded money and time. Studies conducted by (Aslam et al., 2021; Chilewa & Osaki, 2022; Njogu, 2019 and Tesha, 2020) focused much on the factors influencing career choice and career aspiration as well as the significance of career guidance among public secondary school students. These studies did not capture the aspects of the contribution of guidance services to help students choose their subjects. Thus, the current study fills such gap by assessing the extent to which guidance service in schools helps students choose their subjects in Mwanza District.

3. Research Question

This study was guided by the following research question:

- To what extent do guidance services in schools help students choose their subjects in O-level public secondary schools in Mwanga District?

4. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Rational Choice Theory (RCT), which was first introduced by the American Economist and Scientist Gary Becker in 1976. RCT is a social and economic theory that states that individuals make rational decisions by calculating benefits and costs. The theory states that any choice and decision-making are greatly influenced by individual interests as a starting point. However, the steps involved in reaching rational decisions and choices are made in a disorganized manner; hence, the individual has to be guided to reach decisions that are regarded as rational. According to Rational Choice Theory, individuals are free to evaluate the available options and are free to choose the one that is of high benefit or lowest cost. This theory may relate to the study as when students choose subjects to study, they may weigh the benefits of each subject. For instance, students who have an interest in taking science subjects and want to pursue careers in medicine may consider taking biology, chemistry and physics, whereas those who have an interest in social studies may choose to take subjects like English, History, Geography and Kiswahili.

4.1. The Strengths of the RCT Theory

The merits of this theory are that it enables teachers to study and understand students' individual behaviors and interests in academic matters and non-academic matters, as well as the environment of the learners, as it has a greater influence on the behavior of the individual student. The theory gives the teachers and other related people awareness that students' subjects' choices depend on individual choices, but for the students to make proper choices, they have to be guided. Additionally, the theory has a great ability to provide a general framework for understanding how individuals make decisions and its practicability in policy and decision-making. Hence, according to RCT theory, for a student to make proper subject choices, guidance services seem to have a greater contribution.

4.2. The Weaknesses of the RCT Theory

RCT is associated with inadequate information, which makes it difficult for individuals to make rational decisions. As a result, they may rely on other ways of making decisions. The theory also fails to clarify the standards of what is rational and what is not a rational choice.

4.3. Applicability of the Rational Choice Theory on the Contribution of Guidance Services in Facilitating Students' Subject Choices

The theory insists on the existence of guidance services on students' subject choices in secondary schools as it supports that choices are influenced by individual interests. In relation to subject choices, most of the secondary school students select the subjects to study due to their own interests. However, for the individual student to reach rational choices, she/he has to be guided by their subject teachers, parents, guardians, or other related people in order to be able to calculate the benefits and the cost of the subjects which they are choosing.

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) suggests that Individuals are free to evaluate the available options and are free to choose the one that is of high benefit or lowest cost. This theory may relate to the study as when students are free to select subjects of their choice, they may weigh the benefits of each subject against the cost in relation to who they want to become in the future. This might be achieved through receiving guidance services from a variety of people, including their subject teachers, parents and other related people.

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) also calls for individual behavior as it has been argued that every individual is most likely to undertake courses of action that they perceive to be the best possible option and one that would lead them to their own advantages. This indicates that as a rational being, each individual student needs to be treated differently according to his or her behavior to be able to receive and accept guidance services given on subject choices for his or her better future career.

5. Review of Empirical Studies

Aslam et al. (2021) conducted a study on Significance of Guidance and Counseling for Enhancing the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Karachi, Pakistan. The study employed a quantitative research method approach; a stratified sampling design was used to draw the sample size of 1000 teachers. The research instrument was closed-ended questionnaires for teachers. Data were collected and analyzed descriptively with the help of SPSS in testing the hypothesis. The study recommended that guidance and counseling were of great significance in schools. Thus, there should be a comprehensive Guidance and Counseling program in schools for students' educational needs. As previously mentioned, the study employed a closed-ended questionnaire in which the researcher was able to collect huge amounts of information from a large number of respondents for a short period of time. However, it was difficult for the researcher to collect in-depth information with regard to respondents' feelings, emotions and opinions, which is why it calls for the current study to employ questionnaires and interviews to be able to collect enough and in-depth information regarding the feelings, emotion and opinions from the respondents.

Abubakari (2019) conducted a study about career guidance services in public senior secondary schools in Kano, Nigeria. The study employed a mixed research method approach. The sample size was 387 respondents from 21 secondary schools. Simple random and purposive sampling was used to get respondents. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed by using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics like t-tests. The study found out that the school counselor played a great role in the area of career decision-making, goal-setting and personal awareness. The researcher

managed to use random sampling techniques, of which it produces results that best represent a general population. However, the researcher was not able to consider the question of gender in selecting sample size for the study. Therefore, the current study employs stratified random sampling to eliminate the question of gender bias in selecting a sample for the study in relation to the extent to which guidance services help students' subject choices in secondary schools.

Odhiambo (2020) conducted a study on the influence of selected schools' and students' related factors on the choice of agriculture subject among secondary school students in Uriri sub-county, Kenya. The study employed an ex-post facto research design. The target population was 262 form three students who are studying agriculture subject. Stratified random sampling was used to select 152 agriculture students. Data collection instruments were questionnaires. The study found out that there is sufficient subject choice information in schools, and also teaching methods and students' interests were found to have statistical significance on the choice of agriculture. The findings have informed the study on the availability of guidance services on students' subject choices. However, the previous study has focused on factors that influence students' selection of agriculture subject only something which lets the current researcher conduct a study on to what extent guidance services practices contribute to students' variety of subject choices, which will lead them to various combinations for their future career path. Also, the previous study involved only students as the study sample, and the researcher might not be able to collect a variety of information on factors that influence students' choice of agriculture subject. The current study involves a variety of samples like parents, head teachers, subject teachers, class teachers and students to gather enough information on how guidance services contribute to students' subject choices.

Tesha (2020) conducted a study about career guidance and career aspiration among students in public secondary schools in Dodoma City, Tanzania. The study employed a case study design under a qualitative approach. The sample for the study included 88 respondents, comprising 4 heads of schools, 4 teacher counsellors and 80 students. Sampling procedures were non-probability in which purposive technique was used in selecting heads of schools, counsellor teachers and students. Data collection instruments were questionnaires and interviews. Data were analyzed by using a thematic process. The findings have informed this study on the importance of guidance services to secondary school students. Additionally, the use of a qualitative research approach enabled the researcher to collect in-depth information from the respondents. Nevertheless, in order for the current researcher to be able to collect information from a large number of respondents, a mixed research approach was employed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data on the extent to which guidance services help students in the process of subject selection when they are in O-level public secondary schools.

Chilewa & Osaki (2022) conducted a study on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling practices on students' career development in secondary schools in Temeke Municipality, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. The study employed an embedded research design. The study sample was 15 secondary school teachers, 120 form three and form four students 3 school heads. Probability sampling tactics were employed to select respondents from the targeted population. Data collection instruments were observation, documentary review guide and questionnaire. Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The finding discovered a lack of specialized personnel in the field of career guidance and counseling. Therefore, teachers are randomly picked to hold their positions considering moral and spiritual beliefs. Also, the school timetable does not give room for the students to consult with their teachers; therefore, they spend little time during extracurricular activities. The findings of the previous study have informed this study on the existence of guidance services in secondary school students and their challenges. This offers the opportunity for the current researcher to conduct a study to assess the extent to which guidance services help secondary school students in their subject selection.

6. Summary of the Literature Review and Knowledge Gap

From all related theories and studies, most of the scholars explained the significance of guidance and counselling for enhancing students' academic performance, career guidance services in public secondary schools, factors influencing the choice of agriculture subjects, as well as career guidance and career aspiration among public secondary schools (Aslam et al., 2021; Abubakar, 2019; Odhiambo, 2020 and Tesha, 2020). Additionally, other studies reviewed explained the effectiveness of guidance and counselling on students' career development (Chilewa & Osaki, 2022). These scholars did not capture the element of guidance services on students' subject choices in O-level secondary schools. Little was known about the extent to which guidance services in school help students choose their subjects. The current study was conducted to assess the extent to which guidance services in schools helps students choose their subjects in O-level public secondary schools in Mwanza district, Tanzania.

7. Research Methodology

The study adopted a convergent design under the mixed-method research approach. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the mixed methods approach incorporates elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The design guided the researcher in collecting and analyzing quantitative data from subject teachers and students through questionnaires on the extent to which guidance services in schools help students choose their subjects in O-level public secondary schools. Qualitative data from parents, class teachers, heads of schools and District Secondary Education Officers were collected through an in-depth interview guide. The study sampled 10 O-level public secondary schools out of 26, 10 Heads of Secondary Schools out of 26, 100 subject teachers out of 535, 10 class teachers out of 26, 10 parents out of 2756, 300 students out of 2756, and 1 District Educational Officer to make a total of 431 respondents. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), a sample of 10–30% is considered to be representative of the social study, of which the researcher used a sample size of 20%. The reliability of research instruments was done with the aid of Cronbach Alpha through SPSS Version 22. Data were obtained from pilot tests in two O-level public secondary schools in Mwanza district. The calculated reliability coefficients for subject teachers and students in Likert items questionnaires were 0.832 and

0.765. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the general rule is that if reliability ranges from 0.5 - 0.8, then it is considered acceptable. Therefore, results obtained from the instrument tested, questionnaires for subject teachers (0.832) and students (0.765) were reliable enough to be used in the actual field on the extent to which guidance services help students choose their subjects in O-level public secondary schools in Mwanga district. The content and face validity of the research instruments were ensured through the comments from research supervisors, research experts and my fellow research students at MWECAU. The researcher ensured that research ethics, particularly the rights of the respondents and anonymity, were considered and protected.

8. Study Findings and Discussions

8.1. The Extent to Which Guidance Services in Schools Help Students Choose Their Subjects

The researcher intended to find out responses from students on the extent to which guidance services in schools help students choose their subjects. The respondents were required to rate their agreement levels on ten Likert-type items. Their responses are shown and summarized in table 2.

S/N	Statement	VSE		SE		ME		HE		VHE		M
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
I	Guidance services help me to cultivate my self-concept, self-image	8	2.7	19	6.3	71	23.7	100	33.3	102	34.0	3.8
II	Guidance services help me to plan for my future career	9	3.0	18	6.0	38	12.7	88	29.3	146	48.7	4.3
III	Guidance services assist me in choosing subject combinations	12	4.0	13	4.3	63	21.0	80	26.0	129	43.0	4.0
IV	Guidance services inform me on available career opportunities	9	3.0	13	4.3	51	17.0	101	33.7	117	39.0	4.1
V	Guidance services enrich me with knowledge of subject selection	10	3.3	16	5.3	59	19.7	106	35.0	104	34.7	4.0
VI	Guidance services assist in becoming aware of my abilities and skills	8	2.7	12	4.0	55	18.3	119	39.7	103	34.3	4.0
VII	Guidance services inform me about employment opportunities	7	2.3	20	6.7	47	15.7	86	28.7	136	45.3	4.1
VIII	Guidance services assist me in combating career stereotype	11	3.7	23	7.7	53	17.7	88	29.3	120	40.0	4.1
IX	Guidance services assist me in carrying out my assessments	8	2.7	28	9.3	49	16.3	80	26.7	130	43.3	4.0
X	Guidance services motivate me to make a proper subject choice	9	3.0	11	3.7	43	14.3	88	29.3	149	49.7	4.1
Average Mean Score												4.46

Table 2: Students' Response on the Extent to Which Guidance Services in Schools Help Students Choose Their Subjects (N=300)

Source: Field Data (2023)

Key: VSE – Very Small Extent=1, SE – Small Extent=2, ME – Moderate Extent=3,
HE – High Extent=4, VHE – Very High Extent=5

In this section, the discussion of findings treated high extent and very high extent together; small extent and very small extent were also treated together for each Likert-type item. Table 2 indicates that the majority of the students (67.3%), to high extent and very high extent, agree with the statement that guidance services help them to cultivate their self-concept and self-image. The extreme minority of the students (9.0%) responded to a very small extent that guidance services help them to cultivate their self-concept and self-image.

The findings also concur with students' results in table 2, which reveal that a great majority of students (78.0%) accept to high extent and very high extent that guidance services help them to plan for their future careers. However, an extreme minority of the students (9.0%) responded to a very small extent and small extent that guidance services help them to plan for their future careers. The findings indicate that guidance services in secondary schools help the majority of students cultivate their self-concept and self-image and help them plan for their future career. The extreme minority (9.0%) of the students who responded in a very small extent and small extent that guidance services help them to cultivate their self-concept and self-image and help them to plan for their future careers indicate that guidance services still need effort in their implementation.

The findings were also supported by the information obtained during the interview as one of the school heads from secondary school (G) responded:

"In my school, guidance services play a great role in helping students to be aware of themselves and make a good plan for their future career" (HoS G, Personal Communication, May 17, 2023).

The findings also align with Abubakari (2019), who stated that in Kano, Nigeria, guidance services, which are mainly provided by school counsellors, played a great role in the areas of career decision-making, goal-setting and personal awareness.

The data in table 2 show that the majority of the students (69.7%), to a high extent and very high extent, accepted that guidance services assist them in choosing subject combinations, while an extreme minority of the students (8.3%) in a very small extent and small extent responded that guidance services assist students in choosing subject combinations. The findings indicated that guidance services assist the majority of students in choosing subjects for their combinations.

The findings concur with the results in table 2, which revealed that the majority of the students (69.7%), to a high extent and very high extent, responded that guidance services enable them to acquire knowledge on subject selection and also great majority of the students (79.0%) revealed that in high extent and very high extent guidance services motivate them to make proper subject choices.

This finding shows that guidance services in secondary schools have a great contribution in facilitating students with knowledge on subject selection and motivating them to make proper subject choices. The findings imply that the majority of O-level secondary school students benefit from guidance services provided in schools, as the majority of them agreed that guidance services enrich them with knowledge on subject selection and motivate them to make proper subject choices.

The findings are also supported by the information obtained during the interviews from District Secondary Education Officer, which stated:

"Actually, guidance services on students choosing their subjects in secondary schools facilitate students to be aware on the whole process of subjects' selection and subjects combinations which also act as determinant factors for their future career path." (DSEO, Personal Communication, May 17, 2023).

This implies that guidance services in ordinary secondary schools plays a great role in ensuring that students are not only aware on the process of selecting subjects, but also selecting proper combinations which will enable them to enter into their intended future career.

The findings also align with Rational Choice Theory (RCT), which suggests the importance of guidance services to students. It states that an individual makes a choice and decisions based on his/her interests. However, to reach a rational choice, he/she should be guided. Students have their own individual interests in the selection of certain subjects. Nevertheless, their choices should be guided by their subject teachers, parents, or other related people to make a proper selection of such subjects for their combinations, which is a determinant factor for their future career.

Data in table 2 show that a great majority of students, to a high extent and very high extent (74.0%), responded that guidance services assist them in becoming aware of their abilities and skills, while an extreme minority of the students (6.7%) responded in a very small extent that guidance services assist them in becoming aware of their abilities and skills.

The findings concur with the findings in table 2, which show that the majority of the students (70.0%) in high extent and very high extent accepted that guidance services assist them in carrying out their assessment and an extreme minority of the students (9.0%) responded in a very small extent and small extent that guidance services assist them in carrying out their assessment. Furthermore, the data concur with students' findings in table 2, which indicates that a great majority of the students (72.7%) to a high extent and very high extent responded that guidance services inform them about the availability of career opportunities, while an extreme minority of the students (7.3%) responded that guidance services inform them on the availability of career opportunities in a very small extent and small extent.

The findings indicate that the guidance services play a great role to the majority of the students in assisting them in carrying out their assessments as it informs them on the available career opportunities, which will lead them to the proper choice of subjects to achieve their future career goals. In order for the researcher to supplement students' responses, one of the class teachers from secondary school E was interviewed. The teacher argued:

"In our school, guidance services enhance students to become aware of their abilities. This is done through evaluation, which is done severally from the results of their assessment, something which encourages them to make proper selection of subjects." (Class teacher E, May 16, 2023)

This emphasizes the fact that guidance services in schools help the majority of students to become aware of their abilities and skills, carrying their assessment as well as informing them on the availability of career opportunities; therefore, they will be motivated to select proper subjects in order to reach the intended career opportunity.

The researcher also sought to know from subject teachers the extent to which guidance services in schools help choose their subjects. Their views are summarized in table 3.

S/N	Statement	VHE		HE		ME		SE		VSE		Mean
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
i	Guidance services help them to cultivate their self-concept and self-image.	85	85.0	10	10.0	5	5.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.8
ii	Guidance services help them to plan for their future career	72	72.0	28	28.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.7
iii	Guidance services assist them in choosing their subject combinations	83	83.0	17	17.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.8
iv	Guidance services inform them of available career opportunities	96	96.0	4	4.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.9
v	Guidance services assist them in becoming aware of their abilities and skills.	80	80.0	20	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.8
vi	Guidance service inform them on employment opportunities, thus making the right choice of subjects	55	55.0	40	40.0	0	0.0	5	5.0	0	0.0	4.4
vii	Guidance services assist students in combating career stereotype	42	42.0	48	48.0	10	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.3
viii	Guidance services assist students in carrying out their assessment for their future career	60	60.0	30	30.0	10	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.5
ix	Guidance services motivate them to honor their academic pursuit	70	70.0	30	30.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.7
x	Guidance services facilitate a smooth teaching and learning process; hence, students will prefer to study a certain subject.	70	70.0	25	25.0	5	5.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.6
Grand Mean Score												4.65

Table 3: Subject Teachers' Response on the Extent to Which Guidance Services in Schools Help Students Choose Their Subjects (n=100)

Source: Field data (2023)

Key: VSE=Very Small Extent=1, SL=Small Extent=2, ME= Moderate Extent=3, HE=High Extent=4, VHE=Very High Extent=5

Data in table 3 indicate that the extreme majority (95.0%) of the subject teachers responded to a high extent and very high extent that guidance services help students to cultivate their self-concept and self-image. Also, the findings in table 3 indicated that the extreme majority (90%) of the subject teachers in high extent and very high extent responded that guidance services help students to plan for their future careers. This implies that guidance services play a great role in helping students cultivate their self-image self-concept and plan for their future careers. The findings in table 3 concur with students' responses in table 2, where the majority (67.3%) responded to a high and very high extent that guidance services are very important as they help them to cultivate their self-concept, self-image and plan for their future career.

The findings are also supported by the information obtained during the interview with one of the heads of secondary schools from school (F), who responded that:

"In my school, guidance services are very important because it helps students to make proper choice of subjects of which they can plan for their career future" (HOS F, Personal Communication, May 18, 2023).

The findings concur with Tesha (2020), who established that Career guidance services in secondary schools play a great role in ensuring that students are entered into the career in which they are inspired. This is an indication that O-level public secondary school students' guidance services on subject selection are very crucial to students.

Correspondingly, data in table 3 indicates that the extreme majority (100%) of the subject teachers in high extent and very high extent responded that guidance services assist students in choosing their subject combinations. Also, the data in table 3 indicates that the extreme majority (95.0%) of the subject teachers, to a high extent and very high extent, responded that guidance services inform students on employment opportunities, thus making the right choice of the subjects. The findings revealed that guidance services in secondary school play a great role, particularly in guiding students on which subject to study for their future career in relation to the availability of employment opportunities.

The findings also align with the students' findings in table 2 where the majority (69.7%) of the students, to a high extent and a very high extent, responded that guidance services assisted them in choosing their subject combination. This implies that guidance services for secondary school students are of very significance, particularly in subject selection. Odhiambo (2020) established that there is enough guidance services information in Uriri sub-county, Kenya. This could mean that guidance services in secondary school students on subject choices are of great significance to any country that has a well-established education system.

During interviews, one of the school heads from secondary schools (A) responded:

"In my school, guidance services on students' subject choices are very important, and due to its significance, we decided to appoint one of the class teachers to be career mistress and her great responsibility apart from teaching is to guide students on the matter of subject selection for their career future." (HoS A, Personal Communication, May 17, 2023).

Another head of secondary school (I) added:

"We, heads of schools, know the importance of guidance services on students making their subject choices that's why some of the schools, however very few there are special guidance teachers dealing with students in guiding them on subject selection (HoS I, Personal Communication, May 17, 2023).

Furthermore, data in table 3 show that the extreme majority (100%) of the subject teachers in high extent and very high extent responded that guidance services assist students in becoming aware of their ability skills. The findings obtained in table 3 also indicated that the extreme majority (90.0%) of the subject teachers, to a high extent and very high extent, accept that guidance services assist students in carrying out their assessment for their future careers.

This signifies that guidance services to students to help them choose their subjects in secondary schools are very important in helping them to know their abilities and select subjects according to their abilities and skills for their proper future careers. The findings concur with the data in table 2, where a great majority (74.0%) of students, to a high extent and very high extent, responded that guidance services assist them in becoming aware of their abilities and skills and carrying out their assessments. The findings indicate that both students and subjects' teachers, to a very high extent, accepted that guidance services in O' level secondary schools play a vital role to students, particularly in enhancing them to become aware of their own skills and abilities, which acted as the major criteria for subject selection. During interviews, the District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO) stated:

"In our District, when we conduct seminars with subjects' teachers, we do insist on the importance of guiding students on subject selection for our students to be aware and to have a proper choice of subjects for their future career." (DSEO, Personal Communication, May 17, 2023).

One of the parents from family C during the interview declared that guidance service on students' subject choices is very important, as was quoted:

"To my side, guidance services to help students choose their subjects are very important in making them aware; however, most of the parents we do leave a high load to the teachers who teach our children to guide them on subject selection." (Parent C, Personal Communication, May 18, 2023)

This implies that the DSEO and some parents are aware of the importance of guiding students on subject choices for their future careers, as they all declared that guidance services enable students to be aware of their self-abilities and carry out their assessments.

In addition, data in table 3 demonstrate that the extreme majority (90.0%) of the subjects' teachers in high extent and very high extent responded that guidance services assist students in combating career stereotypes. The findings in table 3 concur with the findings in table 2 on students' responses, which indicated that the majority (69.3%) of students responded to a high and very high extent that guidance services do assist them in combating career stereotypes.

The findings exemplify that guidance services to help students choose subjects play a great role in combating career stereotypes as it holds that all students have the right and freedom to select subjects to study without making criteria based on gender.

The findings also illustrate that the majority of the class teachers who were interviewed agree with the statement that guidance services enable students to be free from career stereotypes. One of the class teachers from school B who was interviewed stated:

"In my school, all students are guided to select subjects to study according to their capabilities in academic performance and not according to their gender basis." (Class Teacher From School B, Personal Communication, May 17, 2023)

This infers that guidance services are there to fight against gender imbalances in students' selecting subjects to study. Also, through guidance services, each student is free to choose subjects to specialize in based on his or her academic capabilities and not on gender basis.

9. Conclusion

Based on the study findings, the study concludes that guidance services in schools facilitate students' subject choices because it helps students to be aware of their abilities and skills, which leads them to plan for their future career aspirations, inform them of available career opportunities, assist them in combating career stereotype, assist them in carrying their assessments, and motivate them to make proper subjects' choices.

Subject teachers' guidance services play a crucial role in facilitating students' subject choices due to the fact that teachers provide guidance to students on subject selection based on their academic performances, hence integrating career skills in teaching subjects. Similarly, teachers prefer to support students who demand guidance services on subject choices as well through their teaching styles, which have shown to have a great contribution to students' subject selection.

10. Recommendation Action

In order to be better positioned to provide guidance services that facilitate students' subject choices in O-level public secondary schools, students should approach their choices of subjects with positivity. When selecting subjects, they must also take their academic objectives and interests into account, with their career aspirations in mind. To better meet the goals of subject selection for their students, teachers must ensure the effective delivery of guidance services on subject selections.

11. Recommendation for Further Studies

The study was based on the extent to which guidance services in schools help students choose their subjects in O-level public secondary schools. The researcher recommends further studies to be done on the extent to which guidance services in schools help students' subject choices in O-level private secondary schools. Further studies can be done on the contribution of guidance and counseling services to students' academic performance in O-level in both public and private secondary schools.

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