

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the preference for help-givers by secondary school students with their emotional, personal, educational and vocational problems, and whether these students held favourable or unfavourable attitudes toward help-seeking behaviour. A sample of 60 secondary school students completed a questionnaire that sought information on their preferences for help-givers and their attitudes toward help-seeking behaviour. Descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency and distributions were used to analyse the data. The results showed that for emotional problems, a religious person, teacher-counsellor, close student-friend and parent/guardian were most preferred in that order. The preferences for personal problems were the same. For educational problems, teacher-counsellor, other teachers, headteacher and parent/guardian were the most preferred in that order. These four help-givers were also the top four most preferred sources of help for vocational concerns but in a different order. The results also indicated that there was a relationship between the type of problem faced by a student and the kind of helper preferred. It was also observed that for some help-providers the year of study of a student affects preference. It was also found that there was a relationship between sex of the student and the help-giver preferred. On the question of attitudes toward help-seeking behaviour, it was observed that the students held favourable attitudes to the same. The attitudes of male students toward help-seeking behaviour were found not to differ significantly from those of female students. The study recommended that secondary schools encourage peer-counselling programmes. Schools should also give careful thought to the idea of integrating persons who serve as alternative sources of help for students into school activities. Further research was also recommended to shed more light on the topic.