

Abstract:

The study sought to examine the role played by matters of confidentiality in school counseling. For any counselling to be effective, the client must be willing to open up and for this to happen, they must be assured that whatever they disclose shall be held in confidence. In school counselling confidentiality is crucial to adolescents who are undergoing an identity crisis. At this stage in their lives, the image they portray to the world is very important to them and their ego is fragile. In view of this fact, how confidential they view school counselling can determine the direction counselling interventions take. It is therefore of utmost importance to establish how best to handle the issue of confidentiality in school counselling. The study intended to find out the best way of handling confidential information and how the teacher counsellor can perform his/her duties without appearing to betray the students, while at the same time acting as a bridge between the school administration, the parents and other teachers. The study employed survey research design. 100 students and 30 teacher counsellors were randomly selected from five schools to serve as respondents. Interviews and Focus Group Discussions were the key methods of data collection. Structured questionnaires and interview guides were used as the key tools of data collection. The study established that confidentiality to the students is crucial, It also established that in school counselling trust may be broken occasionally. An important observation was that students prefer to confide in a favourite teacher rather than the teacher counsellor. An interesting observation was that the most preferred confidant by students is a parent or guardian. In view of the above findings, there is need for a ministerial policy outlining the guidelines for handling matters disclosed by students in counselling situations. Other teachers should participate in counselling of students. Thus, all teachers should undergo a course in basic counselling skills. Parents should be sensitized on the need to avail themselves to their adolescent children. It is hoped that the findings of this study will be invaluable in enhancing the quality of school counselling interventions for the benefit of the students who are the clients