

## **Perception of Secondary School Students regarding Guidance and Counseling in Quetta**

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### **Abstract**

The main objective of the study was to find out the opinion of secondary school students regarding strategies used to solve the problems of career counseling, selection of subjects and behavioral problems. The study was quantitative in nature. A questionnaire was developed and validated by the researchers. The data was collected from male, female, urban and rural secondary school students. There were 565 students in all. Of them 417 were female and 148 were male students. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 15. The reliability of the tool was found 0.88. A positive relationship was found between parents and friends as a counselor. It is recommended that the Government of Baluchistan should appoint a counselor in schools for proper guidance of students in choosing their careers and subjects and addressing psychological issues.

**Keywords:** Perception, secondary school students, guidance and counseling, Quetta

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### **Background of the Study**

School counseling has great importance in teaching learning process. It also plays a vital role in the career planning of the students and in nation building. It was started in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but it is evident from the history that it existed even in the age of the ancient Greeks and Romans in teachings of Plato and Aristotle. It has also been noted that church priests had used counseling in their preaching. At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, first documentary book appeared with name of *The Universal Plaza of All the Professions of the World* (Garzoni, 1626)

Later on, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it gained attention of the general public and the intellectuals and its importance was recognized by all. In 1909, the Boston Vocation Bureau prepared a systematic guidance program on the vocational issues. In 1918, it was recognized in China as key factor in teaching learning process and was introduced in more than 900 high schools

The role of the school counselors is different with respect to the stages and grades of the students. They are equally important but different in elementary and secondary schools. Counselors may deal with the students individually or in groups and even while sitting in the class they can observe the problems of the students and proceed for guidance and counseling to resolve them.

In middle and high schools, the role of counselors is performed at a large scale. They concentrate on the problems of the students relating to educational, academic, personal and career planning. At these levels counselors are highly professional and equipped with the expertise of modern educational needs. They apply different strategies and approaches to solve the problems of the students

The word "Guide" means to give directions and to act as a torch bearer to help someone in attaining his/her goal. Guidance is a scientific process of constant help to the students from his teachers, parents and the school management. The major objective of the guidance is provision of assistance by professional and qualified student councilors/advisors so that students may avail themselves of their time and make right decisions to reach their destinations in a smooth way (Nayak, 2004).

Guidance is multi dimensional with profound and systematic process in terms of different contexts (Sultana, 2004) it has been used and is being used in different concepts in educational and career counseling. The persons who provide guidance and counseling to the students have different titles in different countries. In some countries they are called guidance counselors (Sultana, 2004).

According to Watts and Kidd (2000) guidance is a broad concept and refers to a “range of processes designed to enable individuals to make informed choices and transitions related to their educational, vocational and personal development” (p.489). According to this, there should be a difference in personal, educational and vocational guidance. As per arguments of Watts and Kidd (2000, p.490), educational and vocational guidance help students to determine their options for learning and work. It is this reason that guidance is relevant to the educational and vocational tasks. As per the European Commission, guidance is considered to be “a range of activities designed to assist people to make decisions about their lives (educational, vocational, and personal) and to implement those decisions” (EC, 2002, p.57).

Hui (2002) describes that guidance may be remedial, preventive and developmental. As remedial guidance is concerned, it is related to immediate actions for the students. Others are also very important for a student’s problems to be addressed on urgent basis.

These are included to provide information, advocacy and counseling to the students (Millar & Brotherton, 2001). Developmental guidance deals with topics relevant to self-awareness and decision making. In this process the student is guided how self awareness and understanding of the things around the student are created and how to improve the decision making power within the required time (OECD, 2004a).

Counseling is a systematic way to provide help to the students by some concerned top professionals against the emotional and social issues with the objective to educate (Landy, 2006).

Burnard (1999) stated that “counseling is the means by which one person helps another through purposeful conversation. It is a process in which two people meet to explore personal problems and to identify solutions.”

This process does not mean advice or teaching, rather it is a type of assistance which is given by the counselor to the counselee. It is a two way process in which at least two members are required; one is the counselor and the other is the counselee. It helps the young ones to understand the situation and to overcome their problems, overcome their weaknesses and cope with their disabilities. Counseling provides and enhances the understanding and self-realizing process in a cordial and friendly environment. Through this students can modify their learning outcomes by eliminating their weak points.

Counseling follows a specific pattern and certain steps which are indicated by Rao (2002) "The educational and vocational counseling usually proceeds in a step wise manner starting with 1) establishing a relationship 2) stating the problem 3) elaborating and explaining the issues 4) exploring the relevant psychological aspects of the counselee's background 5) structuring the nature of the process 6) collecting the needed data and individual appraisal 8) discussing the data in the light of occupational and educational choices of the client 9) discussing alternate approaches or plans and trying out the plan(s) 10) reassessing and if necessary altering the plan(s)."

When the counselor interacts with the counselee, he, as a first step develops understanding with the client by friendly attitude, then for establishing confidence in himself and the counseling process, he tries to get information in a professional manner and discloses the weak points of the counselee in front of him by exploring problems of educational life or vocational field selection. Then he highlights areas of the client's deficiencies and offers solutions. It means that it is a step by step process which proceeds in an organized pattern.

The counselor by face to face interaction can judge the counselee psychologically and emotionally. Thus, he can present a better solution by getting direct or observational knowledge about the student. Counseling process can be done individually and in the group. However, it depends upon the nature of the problems. Counseling process is done in three different ways; i) Directive counseling ii) non directive and iii) eclectic counseling

Directive counseling is that type in which the counselor is dominant in the decision of the counselee; in non-directive type, the counselor does not impose his decision over the counselee and leaves him to choose what is best for him while in the last type, the counselee illustrates the ways and leaves the decision with the counselee. In any condition, the student gets the ability to understand the actual problem of his life and tries to select the best and appropriate method from those suggested by the counselor.

As counseling is the basic tool of guidance, so the students having problems like giftedness, backwardness, maladjustment or dropping outs, can be helped easily by counseling or it can generate the capability to adjust with the existing problem.

Counselor can also guide a student for suitable courses, institutes, skills development trainings, and selection of vocational fields after completion of studies. Further, the counselor can promote adjusting capabilities in them by clear discussion on the issues of the concerned field through linkage with the vocational institutes. During counseling, if the counselor considers it necessary, he can suggest the help of any expert of a specific field for the counselee. Then with the help of this service, students know the ways of information, adjustment and realization of abilities for the active participation in curricular and co- curricular activities.

Guidance is considered to be a philosophy of human relationship. Indeed, it is the way of thinking and feeling (Blair, 1962). It clearly demonstrates the internal growth and progress of students. The management that executes the guidance and counseling process should keep in view both emotional and social guidance for better outcomes (Landy, 2006).

There is much resemblance and connectivity between guidance and counseling since “counseling skills underpin good guidance practice” (Watts & Kidd, 2000). Still these cannot be declared as the same. According to Hui (2002) ‘guidance’ has a limited scope but counseling has broader meanings and concepts. Counseling is considered to be more therapeutic and personalized intervention, whereas guidance “embraces a larger range of activities” (Herr, Cramer & Niles, 2004).

According to Watts and Kidd (2000), “feelings like worry, hurt, anger and enthusiasm are rarely discussed in the career literature, yet many guidance practitioners work regularly with clients who are rendered incapable of moving forward by emotional difficulties to do with their work or learning” (p.497). Watts and Kidd (2000) recommends that counseling skills should be one of the ranges of activities through which the aim of guidance is achieved.

The age group of higher secondary students ranges from 16 to 19, which extends to the adolescent period. Adolescence is considered as the most tumultuous period of life. Hall (1976) rightly remarked that adolescence is the period of stress and strain, storm and stiffness. The life of modern industrial societies is so complex that the intricacies of adolescence period become more hazardous. The basic characteristics of adolescence in modern times are increased emotional instability, period of unrealism, hero worship, moral dilemmas, faster changes in the physical and biological system, temporary imbalance of whole endocrine system, tendency to incline towards anti-social behavior, drug and sex abuse and several other unique characteristics. It is widely accepted that the adolescent students need counseling support when they face personal, social, familial and educational issues. (Biswas &

Aggarwal, 1971) Counseling needs are needs of a student that are required to resolve his/her problems which he/she confronts in day to day life and also to enrich his personal development. Every human being has a strong desire to achieve some goals. The satisfaction of the achievement needs leads a person to further activities. So this need is a motivating force which can be used properly for making teaching learning process effective. Adolescents with growing intellectual capacities find a great interest in acquiring new knowledge. The spontaneous urge for knowledge should be properly guided. Adolescent students have a strong desire to do things independently. So they start thinking about their future career and need vocational guidance.

“Educational guidance aims to maximize learning in students. The emphasis is on providing assistance to them to achieve the best of their ability in all the prescribed courses of study” (Chibber (1999). According to Chaube (1972) “Educational guidance is a service which provides the utilization of psychological aids for the development of students. At its root, there are many schemes that aim primarily at guiding students on right lines in the satisfaction of courses and helping the teacher to choose the necessary remedial measures to create a harmony between the ability and educational growth of the student”

### **Purpose of educational Counseling at Secondary School level**

The main objective of the guidance is to equip the students with better understanding and skills for their educational and personal development by providing comprehensive awareness. The work of the counselor and guidance teacher is quite different in many respects. The major area of the school counselor is to tackle the personal and development issues whereas the counseling deals with referral of students and parents to the other agencies and analyze the work of teachers and trainers at different levels with different approaches. They don't have to perform duties as teachers but they have to work three days in a week in a particular school to perform their designated task (Sultana, 2003a). The criteria for the selection of guidance and counselors are very tough based on their professional competency and commitment with work and interest in students.

The guide teachers are allocated students at the specific ratio of 1:300. Additional counselors can be appointed in case of special circumstances. They also conduct special group sessions to enhance the learning capacity of the students and also provide the basic information and training to the parents of the students (Sultana, 2003b).

The counselors are not normally permanent staff of the school but their postings are renewed after 2 years subject to the satisfactory performance assessed by a formal interview.

In schools, the individuals entrusted with the major responsibility of helping students deal with personal, social, educational, vocational or career problems of the students (Lindhard, Dlamini, Barnard, 1985). Counselors help students make appropriate choices and decisions for their future and are, therefore, involved with the critical processes of student development and transition. Career education informs students about the world of work and they gain knowledge about career expectations. Nelson-Jones (1995) views career education as an umbrella term used to cover a variety of interventions aimed at helping students, mainly at secondary school level to become more occupationally literate. Information on jobs and roles include the skills and tasks, tools and equipment, training and formal education, placement and advancement opportunities for various occupations. Job and role awareness ensures that students will make occupational choices based on true and complete rather than false or inadequate information.

This study has its significance in a way that much research has not been conducted in this area in Baluchistan. As a member of teachers' community and being inhabitants of Balochistan, the researchers will utilize this research to identify the needs of guidance and counseling program, and to help design the modules for teacher educators on solving the problems about career counseling, selection of subjects, and behavioral problems.

### **Purpose of the Study**

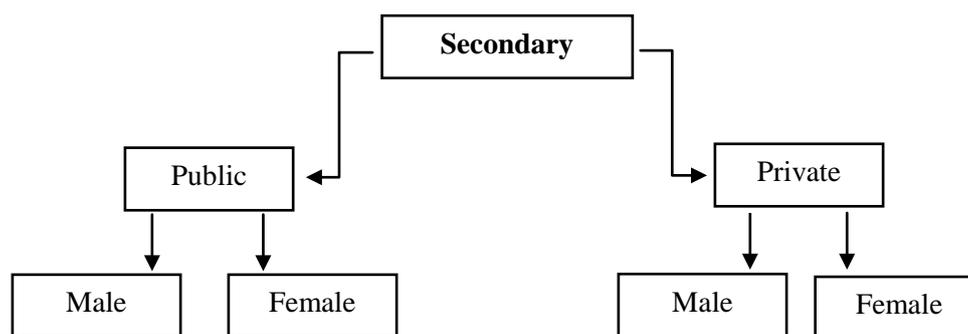
The main purpose of the study is to identify the strategies used for counseling of secondary school students to solve the problems of career selection, choice of subjects and behavioral problems during their study at schools.

### **Research Methodology**

The study was quantitative in nature. The researchers developed the questionnaire. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The population of the study was confined to all the students of public and private secondary school institutions at Quetta. All secondary schools (for males and females) were included in the study. At the first stage, the schools were divided into public and private. In the second stage, the schools were divided into male and female students. A stratified cluster random sampling technique was used to collect the data.

Using different statistical techniques, a school was selected from each stratum (male, female, public and private). All secondary classes students of selected schools were considered as sample of the study.



There were two major parts of questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire contained information about gender, age, type of school and geographical location. The second part had three factors i.e career counseling, educational counseling and behavioral issues. The tool was validated by four experts including the supervisors. After getting feedback from all the experts, the questionnaire was improved and finalized.

To check the reliability of the instrument, it was administered to 40 secondary school students (10 Public, 10 private, 10 male and 10 female) from Quetta city. Cronbach's alpha coefficient test was applied to ensure reliability.

The researchers visited the schools for data collection. The data was collected from 565 secondary school students. There were 148 male and 417 female students. Of them, 467 students were from public schools and 98 were from private schools. Mean, SD, *t*-test; ANOVA and Factor Analysis were used to analyze the data.

## Results and Discussion

The conclusions are drawn from the findings. There was a positive relationship between parents and friends as a counselor. It was found that a positive relationship existed between parents and school academic counselor as a counselor. Positive relationship was also found between parents and self-decision as a counselor. There exists no consistency of activities between public and private schools and their guidance and counseling activities are independent and do not resemble with each other.

The Government should appoint a counselor in a school to guide the students regarding their career path, subject selection and reduction in psychological issues. School administration should conduct a seminar about career counseling. There should be career week in each school. Schools should arrange career orientation visits for secondary school students. Schools should also involve parents in career selection, subject selection and in solving psychological issues. Career education should be a part of school life. Training should be organized for teachers to work as a counselor. The administration of schools should appoint a teacher for counseling in case of unavailability of counselors. School administration should organize workshops on career counseling for teachers, students and parents. School administration should provide necessary information to students and parents about subject options and career choices.

**Table 1**

*Reliability of the scale (Questionnaire on Need for Guidance and Counseling Scale)*

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.882	39

Table 4.48 shows that need for Guidance and Counseling Scale has high internal consistency, as the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .88.

**Table 2**

*Pearson Product-moment Correlations between perception on different factors regarding need for guidance and counseling*

Factors	Parents as Counselor	Teacher as Counselor	Friend as Counselor	Academic Counselor	Self-Decision
Parents as Counselor	1	.570(**)	.298(**)	.269(**)	.301(**)
Teachers as Counselor		1	.336(**)	.390(**)	.261(**)
Friends as Counselor			1	.333(**)	.527(**)
Academic Counselor				1	.178(**)
Self-Decision					1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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