

ISIR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISIRJAHSS)
ISSN: 3048-7463 (Online)
Frequency: Bimonthly
Published By ISIR Publisher
Journal Homepage Link- https://isirpublisher.com/index.php/isirjahss

RETHINKING TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON SCHOOL COUNSELORS' EFFECTIVENESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BUEA SUB-DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON.

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Article History

Received: 05/10/2024
Accepted: 16/11/2024
Published: 18/12/2024

Vol – 1 Issue – 3

PP: -15-36

Abstract

This paper assessed teacher's perception on school counselor's effectiveness in secondary schools in Buea Sub-Division. The objectives were to examine the influence of teacher's beliefs, teacher's knowledge, and teacher's experiences on school counsellors' effectiveness. The article was anchored on the Gestalt Theory (Wertheimer et al., 1880s), Theory of Planned Behavior Ajzen (1991 and the Self - determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985). The convergent mixed parallel research design was used. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches and instruments were used to collect data at the same time for the purpose of understanding. The population of the study comprises male and female teachers in eleven selected secondary schools with a total population of one thousand four hundred and fifty (1450) teachers. The purposive sampling technique was used with a sample size of 500 with potential respondents of one hundred and eighty (180) teachers. The instrument used for the data collection were a structured questionnaire for teachers and an interview guide designed for school counselors. Frequency tables and weighted mean score were used for data analysis while z-test statistical tool was used for the test of hypothesis with 0.05 level of significance. Based on the analysis, the findings reveal that teachers" beliefs, knowledge and experiences with teachers in secondary schools in Buea Sub-Division Influences collaboration between teachers and school counselors, academic performance of the students and how effective a counselor may or may not play their role. It also shows that teachers beliefs towards guidance and counselling have been repulsive and that guidance and counselling constraints can affect information and awareness service. Based on the findings, it is recommends that: school management should organize awareness or sensitization campaign to enlighten the principals, teachers, counsellors and students on their work relationship, school management should integrate counselling service into the school academic timetable and government and school management should provide office space and equipment for the counsellors.

Keywords: Teachers, Perception, School Counsellors, Effectiveness

Introduction

Counselling is gaining a new dawn with the school counselor spearheading this course in schools. The establishment of a guidance and counselling unit in school is essential as the educational mission in Cameroon has expanded to include Guidance and Counselling services in elementary, secondary, and higher institutions. The establishment of guidance and counselling and the introduction of school counselors in schools is important because, the advancements in the world today poses vocational, occupational, educational, and personal-social challenges which put the learners in challenging situations which require guidance and counselling services. These services enable students to function effectively within the school system in particular and the community at large thus making the child well-fulfilled (Yunusa, 2020).

Effective Guidance and counselling programmes and the introduction of school counsellors in secondary schools was aimed at assisting students harmonize their abilities, interests, and values and thereby develop their full potential. All this is geared towards improving the self-image of the students and facilitating better achievement in academic performance. An

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organized guidance and counseling programme are essential in assisting students cope with the stresses they face while in and out of school. Some of these stresses according to Melgosa (2001) include physical and psychological changes they face due to adolescence.

The challenges of adolescents according to Melgosa (1997) include adapting to their new image, facing the growing academic demands, establishing vocational goals, learning to control sexuality, emotional and psychological independence from their parents. Some of the learners in secondary schools are at an adolescence stage and an effective guidance and counseling programme in schools must be availed to assist these students (Melgosa, 2001). School counsellors play very vital roles in all secondary schools. Teachers as well as school counsellors are educational leaders in today's schools. Both of these professionals are accountable in ensuring the socio-academic welfare and for enhancing the academic achievement of all students in their care. School counselors have played an integral role within the school setting since the early 1900s (Gysbers, 200]). Their contributions in meeting the needs of all students, not just those who have been most successful or least successful in the classroom (c. Johnson, personal communication, September 10, 2007) is disputable. School Counsellors play roles such as counselling students, assessing students' learning and behavior, helping families make informed decisions about their child's education, identifying adjustments to support students' learning, and liaising with external agencies regarding students' wellbeing.

Tracing the link between teachers' perception and school counselors' effectiveness

School counseling first emerged as a distinct subfield within the broader field of education in the early 20th century. The field has seen many changes since its inception in response to changes in the needs of students and the development of new legislation that has expanded the responsibilities of school counselors. Traditional vocational counselors were the first type of school counselors to emerge in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Vocational counselors were responsible for ensuring students stayed in school and completed graduation requirements, providing academic support to prevent students from failing classes, and guiding students toward vocational training that prepared them for work. The education system began using psychological testing, an idea borrowed from military intelligence testing conducted during World War I, to assess the intelligence of students. Counselors used this information to help them determine which vocational program to recommend to different students.

School counseling in the time between 1920 and 1940 was focused on guidance toward vocational training. The George-Deen Vocational Law was passed in 1936 and provided federal funding for schools and colleges to use to improve vocational education. The field of school counseling was also influenced during this time by Carl Rogers and his humanistic theory of personality development. This theory stated that optimal growth in individuals occurred when they were provided with genuineness, acceptance, and openness. The humanistic theory contributed to the development of a more person-centered approach to school counseling where counselors focused on building a counseling relationship with clients.

During the early 20th century, Makinde (1983) points out that Jesse Davis within 1907-1913 began his work on guidance and influenced schools to have school programmes on personality, culture, and character development and also promoted vocational information which was related to the regular curriculum subjects. Jesse Buttrick Davis is considered to be the 1st school counselor in the United States because he was the 1st to implement a systematic guidance program in the schools. Through his work in the Michigan public schools, he became an important leader in the development of vocational guidance in the late 1800s and early 1900s. His pioneering work in the Detroit and Grand Rapids public schools laid the foundation for the counseling specialties of career counseling and school counseling. He was also 1 of the founders of the National Vocational Guidance Association (now National Career Development Association) and National Association of Secondary School Principals.

The role, functioning, and training of school counsellors have been directly influenced by societal changes and fluctuating social concerns. In addition, media attention, technological advancements, and current educational reforms have led to an increase in expectations for school counselors. These additional expectations will require school counsellors to periodically reevaluate guidance program priorities and their own productivity and effectiveness (Baker & Gerler, 2004; Erford et al., 2003; Myrick, 2003; Schmidt, 2003).

In Africa, guidance and counselling started in the form of an informal or traditional guidance and later on became an aspect of formal education. In Africa, a common observation of the reminiscence of the traditional system of guidance reveals that from time immemorial and before the advent of western education, counselling was practiced in various forms, the most common of which were giving advice and sharing wisdom. Giving advice has been a common way of providing help for other people. The advice offered was frequently instrumental in helping people to consider their future. Thus, vocational and career counselling had been part of our African traditional customary practices. The literature on formal guidance and counselling in African countries is rather scanty and traces the guidance movements in Africa back to the fifties in Nigeria and sixties in Botswana, Tanzania, Zambia, and Swaziland (Biswalo, 1996). Within the African context and Cameroon in particular, the people have been held together by elements unique to their regions.

Most sub-Saharan African societies have, in the past, been held together by elements unique to their region. The village is the focal point of society. Most sub-Saharan African societies have, in the past, been held together by elements unique to their region. The most outstanding of these elements are; the extended family system, including the clan and the tribe, the chieftaincy, taboos, various forms of initiation, and close links with ancestors and elders. The village is the focal

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point of society. While each one of these elements is important only a few are used to illustrate the role of counselling in present-day sub-Saharan African societies. Basically, traditional chiefs had multiple roles which included serving as a symbol of authority and as a regulator. Since these roles were accepted and respected by all, there was a clear direction in the day-to-day affairs of society. The elders, the chief included, were a valuable source of guidance and counselling for boys and girls. In most cases, the chiefs were regarded as a vital link between ancestors and the present generation. According to Witmer (1990), African traditions and cultures guided youths in social roles, values, belief system, and skills they would need to enhance their culture. Before the white men came with formal education, the traditional African practitioners functioned as advisers. Most of these practitioners functioned as advisers in marriages, morals, and other societal conducts and sanctions. They also operated through a media like poetry, music, dance, traditional medicine, religious beliefs, and practices so as to bring to bear on the individual societal and psychological checks.

More so, Witmer (1990) opined that all members of the community including the older people (elders, clans heads) was looked on to for counselling the younger members of the community. Therefore grandparents, aunts, uncles, older brothers, or sisters were involved in informal counseling. Skills in carving, hunting, and other occupations needed later on in life were passed on to young people by parents at different stages in the development of each child. Some of the behaviour and skills were learnt either by observing adults, or acquired through other means of training. The objective of the guidance was to mold the individual in such a way that he or she becomes a responsible member of the society or community.

The education system in Africa did not emphasize formal school or guidance and counselling up until iindependence. it was presumed that guidance and counselling was an informal and non-formal activity which was to be offered by parents at home, within the community or even within religious settings by the religious leaders and other religious persons (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). In zambia, guidance and counselling is in different forms and with different interpretations, has existed in societies for a long time before colonial era. The differences and contradictions in present-day, have their origin in the social and historical forces that have shaped modern culture. In Zambia people in all traditional societies, and at all times, have experienced emotional or psychological distress and behavioral problems. Young people needed to be guided into the occupations of the traditional societies that met the expected needs and goals of society. In each culture, there have been well established ways and methods of helping individuals with their problems and occupations. From the scholarly work of Snelson (1978), guidance and counselling were traditionally provided to young people during social and moral orientation, apprenticeship training and initiation ceremonies. In Nigeria, the history of guidance and counseling in Nigeria can be traced back to the 1960s. The first expansion of these two terms began in the primary and secondary schools shortly after independence.

According to Adediran, the organized formula for guidance and counseling in Nigeria started at St. Theresa College in 1959. It was started by the reverend sisters who felt the need to guide secondary school leavers. They asked outsiders to consult with children about possible future professions. The Federal Ministry of Education encouraged guidance and counseling development in schools by establishing guidance and counseling unit in 1961. It was suspended later during the civil war but re-established shortly after the civil war. It was during that time that they introduced the new system of education – 6-3-3-4. The Federal Government finally recognized the importance of guidance and counseling at the end of the 1970s. According to the third National Development Plan, the main efforts were focused on manpower needs. Therefore, to achieve this goal, it was adopted to give the sense of fulfillment to the people. It led to the creation of the Counseling Association of Nigeria. This organization was connected with the American Personnel and Guidance Association.

In Malawi, Chireshe (2012) notes that guidance and counselling services aid learners to better comprehend their individual potentials, capabilities and interests and subsequently how to make sound career choice decisions. Unlike the usual, guidance and counselling in Tanzania was found to be Lacking and it lacked qualified human resource to offer professional services. According to Kelleher (2003), guidance and counselling in schools remains ineffective and patchy since the policy and decision makers are ill-formed. The end question is how beneficial guidance and counselling services will be if institutions take upon themselves to train their personnel's. Guidance and Counselling was introduced in schools in Africa to meet up with economic and social changes in the African continent (UNESCO, 1998). These changes have been adapted due to rapid changes coming from modernization and urbanization which stress on students (UNESCO, 2002). Learners had a problem with career choice therefore counselling services were introduced in Botswana in (1963) to provide students with career and higher education information (Navin 1989).

Guidance and counselling services were adopted in Africa with the view to improve academic performance of learners and curb juvenile delinquency in schools. Though it is still a new concept within systems of education, it has been welcomed by majority of the nations (UNESCO, 2001). Since the introduction of guidance and counselling, a great progress has been reported which implies the introduction of gguidance and counselling has enabled African nations with a trusted means of handling problems in this age of complicated technological and scientific growth (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2004).

Guidance and Counselling thus has existed for a long time with counsellors playing an important role in the general welfare of individual. Over time, people have tried to understand each other, offer advice and develop gifts and

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potentials, become aware of opportunities and help each other in ways associated with formal guidance. Till date, people still trust and seek counsel or advise from the people around them just as Nwoye, (2009) stated in his works. In schools presently, learners learn practically from associating with teachers and they have opportunities to communicate with school counsellors and get professional guidance. Guidance and counselling are aimed at helping persons overcome life's challenges, Unprecedented economic and social issues that one may face within the course of life. Learners have increasingly seen the need for professional guidance and counselling services instead of the traditional advice they would get from non-formal and informal agencies. The need for counseling has become paramount in order to promote the well-being with the child. Effective guidance and counselling are aimed at empowering learners and assisting them integrate into the society.

The role of School counsellors in schools cannot be undermined. School counselors play roles in listening to patients, developing treatment plans, and creating coping strategies. These students are faced with numerous personal, academic, social and emotional needs and problems when unattended could lead to host patterns of undesirable behaviours (Weiten, 2007) hence making the school counselor an important part of the learner's life.

School counsellors is mostly expected to be a trained professional; however, there are cases of untrained persons who are in charge of guidance and counselling in the schools. Several scholars such as Ormrod (2003), Heward, (2003), Wadsworth, Milson and Cocco (2004) opined that guidance counsellors are to be professionals trained in psychological perspective who can typically render numerous tangible services to parents, students and teachers of all students. The school counsellor thus, is an important team player or part of the educational leadership team that provide valuable assistance to students (Sari, 2010 citing Lapan, Gysbers and Keyson, 2007; Stone and Dahir 2006; Lee, 2001; Sandhu, 2000).

Perception consists of the beliefs relevant to an object or a situation. They involve a high degree of subjectivity. According to Smith (2001) perception is related to belief and although we do not necessarily believe in the existence of the objects we perceive, nor that they actually have their ostensible characteristics the relation between perception and belief is more than merely contingent. Perception is concerned with both sensual (usually visual) responses to nature and with the way, people attach meaning and value to it (Swanwick, 2009). Principal's perception about counselling is defined as students' beliefs or feelings about the guidance programme.

Perception is the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the environment. Perception is a process where people take sensory information from the environment and make sense of the surrounding with the information in order to give an appropriate response. Perception is the process by which an individual select, organizes, and interprets information to create a meaningful picture (Hwang, Wang, & Pomplun, 2011). The way teachers perceive the role of counsellors is based on their interpretation of the role played by counsellors in schools. However, what one perceives can be substantially different from objective reality. It is the process through which the information from the outside environment is selected, received, organized and interpreted to make it meaningful.

The school teacher plays key role in determining the implementation, acceptance and success of guidance counsellors and services in a school especially by learners consequently, it is important that school teachers possess a positive attitude towards school counsellors. Guidance and counselling in education institutions act as vehicles for ensuring good discipline of the students. Thus, it is the role of the school teacher to ensure that guidance and counseling activities that have been well planned, organized, coordinated and controlled to achieve the utmost advantages are introduced and accepted by learners. Inviting school counselors in cases that needs professional counselling intervention may go a long way, referring learners to school counsellors after they've observed certain things, they know the counsellor could handle.

According to Myrick (2003), some teachers hold misconceptions about the role and function of counsellors. Counsellors are sometimes reviewed as administrative assistants who have little time to counsel students. This misconception is as a result of teachers distrust for counsellors due to their apparent alignment with administration. Counsellors see or student performance. Myrick (2003) suggested that other misconceptions exist. For instance, some teachers believe that counselors always align themselves with the students, at the expense of the teacher. They claim that students go to the counselors to complain about unfair treatment.

Akinade (2012) also noted that several people in the society do not know the specific roles of the counsellor and even in the school setting where there is supposed to be an awareness. Para counsellors such as teachers may think school counsellors take up roles they've been performing before the introduction of a school counsellor. Teachers play a vital role in the wellbeing of learners not withstanding counsellors have been trained for the job.

In Cameroon formal vocational and career counselling started by 1945 during the colonial rule, with the need for manpower to work in factories. It experienced different Era's such as it was divided into three eras. These Era's include; the Era of Searching, the Era of Identity and the era of new directions. Efforts put in place so far to develop the counselling movement as an agent of change and to promote career development can be broken down into three distinct interrelated areas. (David ,2001) Ndongka and Leke, (2000), observed that the development of guidance and counselling in Cameroon could be traced from 1945, with an in-service unit of counselling opened in the Public Works Department. That

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is, by 1945, the French Administration was concerned with the crucial problem of selection of manpower (labour) to work in factories. An in-service was therefore created within the Public Works Department with its headquarters in Douala. Understandably, this service was essentially charged with the selection of executive staff, students and apprentices to undergo technical training. In 1949, this service was transformed by Decree No. 49-4192 of 26th December, 1949 into "The Centre for Psychological Counselling and Vocational Choice" C.P.O.S.P. The change was not only in title but in substance. C.P.O.S.P was placed not within the Department of Public Works, but under the General Inspectorate of Labour.

The identity that was mutely provided to guidance and counselling in 1963 was reinforced and enlarged during the life of the second 5-year Federal Development Plan (1966/1971). It was envisaged that beginning with the second 5-year plan, counselling will play a role in the promotion of students from lower to higher levels of the school system. To meet this objective, career and educational problems were separated from those of labour and employment. While labour and employment remained within the competence of the Ministry of Labour, by Decree No. 68/DF/268 of 12 July 1968 reorganizing the MINEDUC, a Guidance bureau was created within the Planning Service of MINEDUC. The bureau was given the assignment of providing parents and students with all necessary information relative to their studies; to orient students to follow the paths corresponding to their aptitudes both physically and intellectually in line with their personal interest and economic needs; to initiate and maintain school files and undertake studies on the most appropriate psychological methods for use in school and university counselling under Cameroon conditions. Ndongka and Leke, (2000).

In view of shortage of Cameroonians in this discipline, the Government solicited and received technical assistance from UNESCO and the French Government established the framework of executing this task. School files were established and tests administered to some students mainly in few schools in Yaoundé and Douala areas. (David ,2001). However, the necessary conceptual framework had been established. Consequently, by Decree No. 74/406 of 24th April 1974 reorganizing the MINEDUC a Division of Planning, Orientation and School Equipment was created and a service for education counselling created within the said division. (Tita,2016) David (2001), Guidance and counselling had received recognition as an agent of change or an intervention tool, but its impact on the society remained minimal for many reasons among them: The shortage of trained and qualified staff, the lack of national training institution for counselling and the high cost of training and the inadequacy of some practicing counsellors. However, the rapid innovations and advancement in science and technology as well as increased emphasis on the psychology of education present specialized needs which cannot be addressed without sufficient preparation and training. For these and other reasons, a section for training of counsellors was established within the Department of Science of Education in the "Ecole Normale Superieure", Yaoundé in 1982 by Decree No. 79/309 of the 10th of August, 1979. Admission of the two-year programme was by direct competitive examinations.

Today many more counselling programs have been introduced in other state universities in the country. There exists the department of counselling in the Universities of Maroua and Bamenda precisely in the Higher Teacher Training Colleges of these two universities. Counsellors are also trained in other schools like the Higher Technical Teachers Training Colleges of Kumba, Douala, Ebolowa and Bamenda. In addition, the department of Counselling Psychology has gone operational in the Faculty of Education of the University of Bamenda while the Department of Educational Psychology in the University of Buea and that of Psychology in the University of Yaoundé all run training programs for counsellors. This has broadened the scope of the discipline hence many more people are beginning to see the need for counselling in our schools (David 2001). With the evolution of guidance and counseling programs couple with the presence of trained counsellors in almost every public secondary school, it is most likely that students would be able to access guidance and counselling services that will help them in their academic, vocational and personal development.

The reason for offering guidance and counselling to students in Cameroon is to provide direction which promotes the student self-growth and wise decision making. The objectives of guidance and counselling in Cameroon schools is to promote students' academic, vocational and social development. The Cameroon school system has a number of guidance programmes and services stated in it (MINESEC, 2009). The terms of reference outline a summary and recurrent guidance and counselling activities that should be carried out in an academic year in educational establishments under the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC). These programmes include: educational, vocational and personal/social guidance programmes. The services within these programmes include: appraisal, orientation, information, counselling, consultation, placement, referral, and follow-up and evaluation services.

School counsellors are responsible for the day-to-day implementation and activities of the counselling services. As such, they are in the powerful position of identifying learner problems, identifying and applying unique counselling techniques that fit every learner. When schools function in an ineffective and inefficient system, the potential for discontent, lack of progress, and frustration among employees exists (Buchanan & Studer, 2011). School counselors often experience role confusion as a result of school stakeholders such as teacher's perception and expectation of them that conflict with the duties that school counselors are trained to perform (Brott & Meyers, 1999: Lieberman, 2004). Part of teacher's confusion is related to the evolution of the profession and the lack of clarity regarding the roles and functions of the school counselor (Lieberman, 2004). The meaning of the title counselor remains a puzzle in some

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quarters such questions as the counselor as a teacher, an administrator or a principal are asked.

The counselor is a very different person to place within the professional hierarchy of the school personnel. The trained school counselor therefore is someone who possesses the skill and qualities that could facilitate the decision-making activity of both students and parents. The counselor's work is that of growth, of change of personal expansion in a world that does not always make sense. The counselors are therefore placed on highly unusual position unlike most of his colleague who are placed under direct supervision (Dengal 1983). The school administrators including teachers are sometimes ignorant of the need for guidance services in their school because, they sometimes see the school counselor as a threat to their status as the head of the school. Counselling on the other hand helps prevent frustration, restore self-understanding and educate on tasks necessary for good adolescent growth.

The Expectancy-Value Theory by Eccles &Wingfield (2002)

This theory explains that individuals are motivated by the expectation of achieving a goal and the value they place on that goal (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). This theory holds that individuals are motivated by the expectation of achieving a goal and the value they place on the goal (Eccles &Wingfield, 2002). This theory describes the relationship between expectancy for success at a task or achievement of a goal in relation to the value of task completion or goal attainment. Expectancy refers to expectation for success in a given task. The theory further explains behavior is a function of the expectancies one has and value of the goal towards which one is working. It therefore predicts that when More than one behavior is possible, the behavior chosen will be the one with largest combination of expected success and value. Contextually, this theory suggests that teachers' perception on school counsellor's effectiveness is influenced by their expectation of helping students achieve their goals and the value they place on the role of guidance counselors in supporting students' academic, social, and personal development.

In conclusion, teacher's perception on school counsellor's effectiveness can be explained through various theoretical reviews including the Social Cognitive Theory, Self-Determination Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior, Ecological Systems Theory, Expectancy-Value Theory and Gestalt Theory. These theoretical reviews suggest that teachers' perception on school counselor's effectiveness is influenced by their interaction with school counselors, the school environment, their motivation to help students achieve their goals, their attitude towards the role of guidance counselors, the subjective norms surrounding the role of school counselors, and their perceived behavioral control in implementing guidance counseling strategies in their classrooms. Understanding these theoretical reviews can help guide teachers understand how effective school counsellors are.

Teacher's beliefs about school counsellor's effectiveness

Past research (Cole, 1991; Homburger, 1991; Remley & Albright, 1988; Snyder & Daly, 1993; as cited in Burnham & Jackson, 2000) indicated that the role of the school counselor has been in question for years School personnel (from administrators, principals, teachers, to counselors themselves) and even parents have different views about how a counselor's time and skills are best utilized from day to day What is evident is that counselors' job satisfaction is strongly related to the amount of support given by the principal and other administrative staff (Perusse, et aI., 2004). Teachers' beliefs on school counsellor's effectiveness will determine they get right knowledge and experience on school counsellors effective.

Other research by Zalaquett (2005) examined 500 teacher's perceptions of the role of the elementary school counselor in the state of Florida. Specific variables of study included: satisfaction with the school counselors' performance; their perceptions of the counselors' ability to impact students' lives; their perceptions of overall effectiveness in working with students, teachers, and parents; and their perceptions of the school counselors' role in upholding a positive school environment. Results indicated that support from other school personnel appeared to be a key component to counselor job satisfaction, as 89% of elementary school staff would "most definitely" or "probably" recommend that a friend or a child become a school counselor (Zalaquett, 2005). On the other hand, working with administrators who expects the school counselor to maintain a heavy focus on administrative tasks, thereby taking time away from direct contact with students, can result in more counselors looking for alternative careers (Monteiro-Leitner, Asner-Self, Milde, Leitner, & Skelton, 2006).

A survey conducted by Saleh (1987) showed that most teachers in Kuwait were satisfied by the counseling services even though few schools had counselors. In Kuwait, Al Sarraf (1997) found that teachers believe counseling to be very essential to the quality of their schools. Similarly, Al-Amir and Brinson (2006) found that students and teachers consider counseling as essential in the United Arab Emirates. These findings indicate that counseling as a profession is still young in the Arab region, but seems to be growing and gaining some interest; although it remains to be further understood and accepted by teachers and parents. Resistance to counseling is still present however, for example El Sherbeiny and Ayab (1995) found that most Kuwaiti's prefer to seek traditional healers to deal with psychological problems than to seek a counselor. The interview results were analyzed using constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1976). Through this qualitative method, the interview results are analyzed a number of times until overarching categories of meanings generated by interviewees are identified. The analysis revealed the following four key themes which are further discussed below: solving problems, collaboration and support, referral, disadvantages of school counseling, and improvement of counseling it discussed Teachers who were consulted symbolize a population that varies in knowledge, background, and the level of the school at which they teach. They

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expressed several worries about their needs and feelings toward counselors. The themes extracted from the results reveal teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward school counselors. A number of important themes were found.

Most teachers know some of the roles of the counselor even if they do not have a licensed school counselor in their school or even if they did not have a counselor at all. They identified the job of the counselor based on what the counselor does in their schools. If the counselor was only helping students deal with psychological problems, that is what they mentioned as most important job. Since teachers did not have enough workshops to know the exact job of the counselor, they were general and unspecific. Most teachers interviewed are aware of the fact that a student's academic achievement might be blocked if he/she is facing any kind of nonacademic problem, however, not all of them would refer to the counselor but instead deal with it on their own. That could be the case due to our culture and religion that makes the family comes first. Moreover, they know that the counselor cannot work alone, he/she needs the teacher who usually refers the case to him. Most teachers who accepted the help of the counselor knew the difference between their job and his/her job. They understood that they detect or identify the problem in the classroom while teaching and the counselor then deals with it outside the classroom.

In a study conducted by hale (2011) she identified that not many studies have been conducted regarding teacher's perceptions of the responsibilities of school counselors (Beesley 2004; Clark and Amatea, 2004), and most of the ones that have been done emphasized teacher-counselor collaboration rather than teacher's insight about specific school counselor duties (Reiner, Colbert, & Pérusse, 2009). One study that examined the perceived role of guidance counselors from teachers' perspectives found that counselors were viewed as both helpers and consultants (Ginter & Scalise, 1990). As helpers, teachers believed counselors were responsible for group and individual counseling, interpreting tests, making referrals, and conducting classroom guidance lessons. As consultants, teacher believed counselors were responsible for providing professional advice in classroom assessment. In a national study of teacher perceptions of the professional school counselor's role, Reiner et al. (2009) examined to what extent teachers agreed that school counselors should engage in appropriate and inappropriate duties as defined in the ASCA National Model (2005).

The findings revealed that teachers endorsed school counselor's engagement in 5 of the 12 inappropriate activities and 13 of the 16 appropriate activities. The inappropriate tasks endorsed by teachers included the following activities: maintaining student records, administering tests, computing grade point averages, and registering and scheduling students. The findings also revealed that the teachers did not believe counselors were often or consistently engaging in the appropriate tasks that they endorsed, but they believed counselors were engaging in the inappropriate tasks they endorsed. The most important functions of a school counselor, according to the teachers in the study, included interpreting and ensuring that student records were maintained in accordance with state and federal regulations; developing counseling program goals and activities based on the needs of assessments; registering and scheduling all new students; assisting students with academic and career planning; assisting student with personal and social development; working with students in a therapeutic, individual counseling mode; and assisting the principal to identify and resolve student issues, needs, and problems. Reiner et al. (2009) corroborated the findings of a study conducted by Aluede and Imonikhe (2002) in regards to teacher's endorsing both appropriate and inappropriate school counseling duties.

Beale and McCay (2001) made several suggestions in their study on teachers' perceptions to school administrators including teachers looking to hire a school counselor regarding the specific characteristics that every good school counselor should possess. Included in this list of qualities are, among others: the ability to articulate the counselor role in advocating for all students; the desire to contribute to curriculum development; an understanding of the counselor role in discipline; and leadership qualities that can be transferred from the school environment to positively impact the entire community. While all of these appear to be important traits to consider when hiring a school counselor to be part of an educational team within the school, what happens when administrators and teachers do not believe teachers can or cannot play very active roles or contribute positively to the enhancement of learning.

Kenneth & Adams (2014) argued that as a member of the school staff, the counsellor supports the educational philosophy of the school, even when he disagrees with it personally. Above all the school has a right to expect that the counsellor will be proud to be known as an educator that he will make no pretenses, either publicly or privately of being something better than just an educator. Those counsellors who want to hold a primary identification with either clinical or counselling psychology should not seek employment in the public school.

Teacher's experiences with school counsellors

A survey conducted by Saleh (1987) showed that most teachers in Kuwait were satisfied by the counseling services even though few schools had counselors. In Kuwait, Al Sarraf (1997) found that teachers believe counseling to be very essential to the quality of their schools. Similarly, Al-Amir and Brinson (2006) found that students and teachers consider counseling as essential in the United Arab Emirates. These findings indicate that counseling as a profession is still young in the Arab region, but seems to be growing and gaining some interest; although it remains to be further understood and accepted by teachers and parents. Resistance to counseling is still present however, for example El Sherbeiny and Ayab (1995) found that most Kuwaiti's prefer to seek traditional healers to deal with psychological problems than to seek a counselor. The interview results were analyzed using constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1976).

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Through this qualitative method, the interview results are analyzed a number of times until overarching categories of meanings generated by interviewees are identified. The analysis revealed the following four key themes which are further discussed below: solving problems, collaboration and support, referral, disadvantages of school counseling, and improvement of counseling. Teachers who were consulted symbolize a population that varies in knowledge, background, and the level of the school at which they teach. They expressed several worries about their needs and feelings toward counselors. The themes extracted from the results reveal teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward school counselors. A number of important themes were found. Most teachers know some of the roles of the counselor even if they do not have a licensed school counselor in their school or even if they did not have a counselor at all. They identified the job of the counselor based on what the counselor does in their schools. If the counselor was only helping students deal with psychological problems, that is what they mentioned as most important job. Since teachers did not have enough workshops to know the exact job of the counselor, they were general and unspecific. Most teachers interviewed are aware of the fact that a student's academic achievement might be blocked if he/she is facing any kind of nonacademic problem, however, not all of them would refer to the counselor but instead deal with it on their own.

Mime (2010), identified that one of the most striking differences in counselling activity concerns the "reality gap" between what is taught in the universities and what, is practiced in the schools. At this point, according to the National Survey on Guidance and Counselling Practice, it becomes crucial that a counsellor must be very skillful and diplomatic in performing his functions. He must be able to relate well with the principals, teachers and students. Liaison work between classroom teachers and counsellors aids the growth of educational guidance. Personal and emotional conflict of students can also be resolved if teachers and counsellors work together amicably. The existence of good relationship between the school authorities and counsellors enables counsellors' function effectively in schools.

One study, conducted by Beesley (2004), found that a stratified sample of 300 teachers from across the southwestern United States believed that counselors' strengths were most clearly seen and best utilized when there were more opportunities to perform classroom guidance lessons, facilitate individual counseling or group counseling sessions, provide consultative/collaborative activities, and work with special education services to meet the needs of all students. In this study, an attempt is made to define each of these distinct professional areas, and their relevance, to educational development. Though the fundamental function of the school is to provide instruction, all other activities in the school are designed to help accomplish this function with maximum effectiveness. According to Tuel (2012), the purpose of education is transmission „of knowledge and skills, the preparation of the learner to actively and effectively appropriate new knowledge and skills as well as, prepare the learner to effectively apply his skills, to practical problems or new learning situations.

One approach by Gesinde & Supo (2012), form increasing participation of the school authorities is through education as to roles and functions of Guidance and Counselling in the school system. To be successful, this technique must involve the counsellor as well. The counsellor should be educated about the basis of the perceived resistance of the school authorities to understand their reactions. The counsellor must attempt to reassure the school authorities that his role is not necessarily at odds with others. He must try to help them through the anxiety and disruption attendant upon change. According to Patterson (2010) fortunate is the counsellor who has a knowledge of the professional nature of counseling. Such an administrator will understand the goals of the counsellor and will accept the need for the establishment of the conditions necessary for professional counseling. He will recognize the importance of privacy in interview and confidentiality of information and records.

Kenneth & Adams (2012) said that if the counsellor is seen in a supervisory relationship or, even worse, as a "spy" for the principal, his chances of being included as an active participant in such discussion are slight. They improve little, if at all, where the counsellor is viewed as one who is a logical candidate to replace the principal in and when the principal leaves the school. Another desirable teacher perception is that the counsellor should be viewed as a consultant to the classroom teacher. This in no way should be taken to imply that the counsellor is more of a specialist in a different field. We also have those aspects dealing with the administrators" perceptions of the counsellor's availability.

Teacher's Knowledge on school counsellor's effectiveness

Kansa (2015) conducted a study on teachers' perception on school counsellor's effectiveness in private schools in Lebanon. The purpose of the current study is to investigate teachers' perceptions toward school counselors in Lebanon. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 100 teachers from 13 private schools in Lebanon. The interview questions were adapted from Amatea and Clark (2004), and Beesley (2005), who interviewed teachers concerning their perceptions toward counselors in their schools. The interviews were analyzed mainly using descriptive qualitative grounded theory in order to identify how teachers perceive counselors and the various rationales behind their perceptions. The sampled teachers held varied perceptions, some negative and some positive, depending on their personal experiences with counselling. The interview results were analyzed using constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1976). Through this qualitative method, the interview results are analyzed a number of times until overarching categories of meanings generated by interviewees are identified. The analysis revealed the following four key themes which are further discussed below: solving problems, collaboration and support, referral, disadvantages of school counseling, and improvement of counseling. The study further discussed

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Teachers who were consulted symbolize a population that varies in knowledge, background, and the level of the school at which they teach. They expressed several worries about their needs and feelings toward counselors. The themes extracted from the results reveal teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward school counselors. A number of important themes were found. Most teachers know some of the roles of the counselor even if they do not have a licensed school counselor in their school or even if they did not have a counselor at all. They identified the job of the counselor based on what the counselor does in their schools.

If the counselor was only helping students deal with psychological problems, that is what they mentioned as most important job. Since teachers did not have enough workshops to know the exact job of the counselor, they were general and unspecific. Most teachers interviewed are aware of the fact that a student's academic achievement might be blocked if he/she is facing any kind of nonacademic problem, however, not all of them would refer to the counselor but instead deal with it on their own. That could be the case due to our culture and religion that makes the family comes first. Moreover, they know that the counselor cannot work alone, he/she needs the teacher who usually refers the case to him. Most teachers who accepted the help of the counselor knew the difference between their job and his/her job. They understood that they detect or identify the problem in the classroom while teaching and the counselor then deals with it outside the classroom.

A sample size of 72 respondents was randomly selected from a population of 247 public senior school teachers in Rivers State. The data collected were analysed using criterion mean for the research questions and t-test for the hypotheses. The study revealed that, there is no significant difference in the perception of public-school stakeholders and school counselling a significant difference in perception of school counselors was found between urban and rural, pilot and non-pilot school stakeholders. It was also found that this difference in perception was based on the knowledge they held on counselling. The study in line with the findings recommended amongst others that, principals in non-pilot schools for counselling should be enlightened about guidance and counselling and be encouraged to cooperate and support counsellors in the discharge of their duties. The state government should post counsellors to all the schools within her domain for all to benefit.

A nationwide study of teacher perceptions of school counselors' responsibilities according to the ASCA model was conducted to investigate teachers' knowledge and expectations of the school counselor's role (Reiner, Colbert, & Perusse, 2009). The conclusions were believed to be helpful for Professional school counsellors in obtaining support from teachers. Participants were high school teachers from every state in the nation. High school teachers were the focus due to the lack of conformity in elementary school counseling positions. The sample sizes were proportional to the size of each state. The majority of participants was female, working in a suburban school, and had been teaching in their current school between 6-10 years. 56-item Likert-type questionnaire adopted from the ASCA National Model was developed listing appropriate and inappropriate Professional school counsellors' activities for the purpose of illustrating the best use of time for a Professional school counsellor. Limitations were noted because the participants were restricted to high school teachers only, and those employed only in public schools. The study revealed that for 13 of the 16 appropriate responsibilities, the mean participant response fell between agree and strongly agree that PSCs should engage in that duty (Reiner et al., 2009).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Self - determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985)

This theory explains that individuals are motivated to achieve their goals and desires through self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The theory explains It is a macro theory of human motivation and personality that concerns people's innate growth tendencies and innate psychological needs. It pertains to the motivation behind people's choices in the absence of external influences and distractions. It focuses on the degree to which human behavior is self-motivated and self-determined.

It explains in studies teachers, autonomous motivations (Roth et al., 2007), are associated with perceived accomplishment, teaching self-efficacy, autonomy-supportive teaching practices, and reduced burnout. Autonomous teacher motivation has additionally been found to be associated with autonomy-supportive teaching practices that furnish choice and relevance to students. In the context of guidance counseling, this theory suggests that teachers' perception of school counselor's effectiveness is influenced by their motivation to help students achieve their goals and desires. By desiring his or her students achieve every academic and social goal, the choose to accept and work with every staff that could play a role in attaining this goal.

The Theory of Planned Behavior Ajzen(1991

This theory explains that behavior is influenced by three factors: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). The theory further explains that individuals ACT rationally, according to their attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control Ajzen(1991). These factors are not necessarily actively or consciously considered during decision making, but form a backdrop for the decision-making process. In other words, people may not articulate a particular attitude, but it may none the less influence their decision making. The theory also explains that the theory was aimed at explaining all behaviors over which people have ability to exert self control. The key component to this model is behavioral intent, behavioral intents. In the context of guidance counseling, this theory suggests that teachers' perception of school counsellor's effectiveness is influenced by their attitude towards the role of school counselors, the subjective norms surrounding the role of school counselors in schools, and their perceived

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behavioral control in implementing guidance counseling strategies in their classrooms.

Gestalt Theory (Wertheimer et al., 1880s)

The main proponents of the theory were; Wertheimer (1880-1943), Koffka (1886-1941) and Kohler (18871967). Gestalt psychology was first introduced in 1912 by Max Wertheimer, a German psychologist, when he published a paper on optical illusion called apparent motion. Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler, and Kurt Koffka were German psychologists who were interested in investigating the role the human mind plays in perception. While followers of structuralism were interested in breaking down psychological matters into their smallest possible parts, Gestalt psychologists wanted instead to look at the totality of the mind and behaviour. Guided by the principle of holism, Wertheimer and his followers identified instances where perception was based on seeing things as a complete whole, not as separate components. In forming perceptions about guidance and counselling, principals counselling in its totality taking into consideration the programme and various services offered.

They were especially curious how the mind makes sense of the world-how we sort all of the information we perceive, moment-by-moment, from our senses. They were especially eager to demonstrate that the human mind played a substantive role in regards to what it perceives. They aimed to demonstrate humans were more than stimulus-response organisms. Based on their empirical observations and their theories, their suppositions about causal relationships, they theorized that the human mind does not focus on specifics details but rather focuses on the big picture. Rather than perceiving each of our senses as they bombard us moment-by-moment, they theorized the mind perceives the small details of life, the minutia, as a part of a greater whole.

Gestalt psychology helped introduce the idea that human perception is not just about seeing what is actually present in the world around us. It is also heavily influenced by our motivations and expectations. Wertheimer created principles to explain how Gestalt perception functions. One of the most important principles of Gestalt theory is the law of similarity in perception. This Gestalt principle of similarity suggests that we naturally group similar items together based on elements like color, size, or orientation. All counsellors are considered as being the same. For example, a principal whom 5 years ago had a counsellor who was never present in school will perceive all counsellors as being the same.

Gestalt therapy is based on the idea that our overall perception depends on the interaction between many factors. Among these factors are our past experiences, current environment, thoughts, feelings, and needs. Thus, as individuals interact with their environment, they gain experience and form a holistic picture of the environment. Gestalt theory has the basic premise that life happens in the present-not in the past or the future-and that when we are dwelling on the past or fantasizing about the future we are not living fully. Through living in the present, we are able to take responsibility for our responses and actions. To be fully present in the here and now offers us more excitement, energy, and courage to live life directly. This theory is relevant to this study as there is a tendency for teachers to perceive school counsellors negatively or based on their past experiences with counsellors. However, things change so do humans. A counsellor who may not be effective last year may be effective this here thus the need to focus on the present as stipulated by the Gestalts. Gestalt therapy focuses on the present. While past context is important for viewing yourself as a whole, a Gestalt therapist encourages individuals to keep their focus on their present experiences.

When one looks at this theory in relation to our school setup, one may perceive that some school stakeholders like school teachers have been influenced by their past experience with school counselors and therefore may have different perceptions and knowledge about them Such past experiences may include certain views about guidance and counselling being a waste of time, or guidance and discipline being inseparable to the extent where school teachers assume that guidance and discipline is one thing.

Problematizing School counselors effectiveness in Cameroon

Over the years, when guidance counseling was first initiated in the schools, teachers performed the role of school counselors. A counselor serving in roles outside of the classroom setting was not of great concern. Teachers were expected to prepare students to enter the workforce and ensure that both the school environment and work environment were safe places to learn and develop. Today, although there are more concrete guidelines and standards in place, many school personnel expect counselors to accept dual roles as administrative assistants, programmers, and record keepers so there is a misconception in roles.

Others serve as administrators, lead after school clubs, and facilitate programs that prepare students to transition from one grade level to the next. In addition, with more counselors serving in a dual role, the line between job responsibility and ethical responsibility in both roles is blurred, thus warranting further investigation. Anchoring to the above, with teachers performing para counselling roles, they might be a confusion in roles between school counsellors and teachers or one party might think another is crossing work boundaries.

Some educators may question the professional commitment of school counselors when the counselor serves in a dual role. School counselors may take up roles that do not directly relate with the professional school counsellor's role. Some roles school counsellors take up include; controlling the discipline unit of the school, filling in or teaching teachers' classes when they are not or are around, coordinating, organizing and maintain school test, records and evaluating students report, performing clerical responsibilities and keeping trace of learner, teacher and principals' attendance. All these roles may keep the teacher thinking if the school counselor is effective in his role or not thus reason for this research.

Objectives

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a) To examine the influence of teacher's beliefs on school counsellor's effectiveness in secondary schools in the Buea municipality.
b) To Investigate the influence of teacher's knowledge on school counsellor's effectiveness in secondary schools in the Buea municipality
c) To examine the influence of teacher's experiences with school counsellors in secondary schools in the Buea municipality.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The convergent mixed parallel research design was used. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches and instruments were used to collect data at the same time for the purpose of understanding. The quantitative dimension of the study focuses on the collection of numerical data while the qualitative approach allows the researcher to get closer to the respondents and their environment to get their actual real life experiences. These two approaches were considered appropriate because they enabled the researcher to exploit participants' opinions/views on the variables under investigation in greater detail.

Population of the Study

Table 1: Population of the study

S/N	Public secondary schools in the Buea municipality	Counselors	Number of teachers
1	**GHS GREAT SOPPO**	5	59
2	**GSS BOMAKA**	4	40
3	**GSS BWIYUKU**	6	44
4	**GSS BOLIFAMBA MILE 16**	5	45
5	**GSS BUEA TOWN**	13	80
6	**GSS BOKUVA**	3	37
7	**GBHS MUEA**	7	60
8	**GHS BOKWANGO**	17	170
9	**GHS BOJONGO**	13	25
10	**GBS MOLYKO**	14	250
11	**G.T.H.S MOLYKO**	22	320
Total		**131**	1450

Source: field survey, 2023.

Table 1 revealed that there are 131 counsellors and 1450 teachers in secondary schools in the Buea municipality.

Target Population

The target population for this study will be made up of teacher's in some selected secondary schools in the Buea Municipality. The target population consisted of 1450 secondary school teachers in the Buea municipality. The selected population is represented on the table below.

Table 2: Target population

S/N	Sub-Division	Counsellors	Number of Teachers
1	**GHS GREAT SOPPO**	5	59
	GSS BOMAKA	4	40
	GSS BWIYUKU	6	44
	GSS BOLIFAMBA MILE 16	5	45
	GSS BUEA TOWN	13	80
	GSS BOKUVA	3	37
	GBHS MUEA	7	60
	GHS BOKWANGO	17	170
	GHS BOJONGO	13	25
	GBS BUEA	14	250
	G.T.H.S BUEA.	22	320
Total		**131**	**1450**

Table 2 revealed that a total of 131 counsellors and 1450 secondary school teachers were targeted for the study.

Accessible Population

This is the portion of the population within the reach of the researcher and from which the sample is drawn. The accessible population of the study will consist of 500 teachers in some selected secondary schools in the Buea municipality. This is represented on the table below.

Table 3: Accessible population

S/N	Sub-Division	Counsellors	Number of teachers
2	**G.B.S Buea**	5	250
3	**G.H.S Bokwango**	3	100
4	**G. S.S Buea**	5	

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5	**Town G.T.H.S Buea.**	2	50 150
Total		**15**	**500**

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample population of the study was purposively drawn from secondary schools in the Buea Municipality. According to Krecjie and Morgan (1970) table as cited in (Amin, 2005), for a selection of a sample, a population of 500 (approximately 500) potential respondents required a sample of 180 respondents. The sample population of the study will consist of 180 teachers in the Buea municipality.

The purposively sampling technique was used in selecting some teachers with active school counsellors at their stationed schools.

Table 4: Distribution of sample size

S/N	Schools	Counsellors	Number of teachers
1	**G.B.S Buea**	5	80
2	**G.H.S Buea.**	5	30
3	**G.S.S Buea Town**	2	20
4	**G.T.H.S Buea**	3	50
Total		**15**	**180**

Table 4 above indicates that 180 teachers and 15 counsellors were sampled for the study.

With regards to the sampling technique, the simple random technique was used to select the schools. Names of schools were written on pieces of papers, folded and mixed up in a box. Schools were randomly drawn from the box and any school that was drawn more than once was ignored. This process was undertaken till the required number of schools were selected.

The researcher also employed the purposively sampling technique by working only with government schools because they have trained counsellors. The purposely sampling technique was used to select a few counsellors for interview in each school. This is because to the researcher they were better placed to give valid and accurate information of how they've been treated and also how they feel. It was solely for the researcher's purpose but our target still remains teacher's perception.

Also, the snowball sampling technique was used to select participants for the study. The exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling was used to select the respondents within the sample size. This is a technique where one subject or respondents refers the researcher to multiple respondents within the environment. The researcher identified some teachers who directed her on how to have free access to other teachers.

FINDINGS

Table 5: Teachers' beliefs on school counselors' effectiveness

Test items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	SA	A	D	SD	SA/A	D/SD
The school can function properly without counselors	1 (0.5%)	2 (1.0%)	168 (87.0%)	22 (11.4%)	3 (1.5%)	150 (98.4%)
The school counselor plays very important role in discipline	32 (16.6%)	152 (98.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	193 (100.0%)	0 (0.%)
Guidance and counseling programmes should be included on the school time table	27 (14.0%)	161 (83.4%)	0 (0%)	5 (2.6%)	188 (97.4%)	5 (2.6%)
I see counselor's orientation role as necessary in a school	15 (7.8%)	160 (82.9.0%)	12 (6.2%)	6 (3.1%)	152 (99.3%)	1 (0.7%)
School counseling is a distraction to learning periods	2 (1.0%)	4 (2.1%)	179 (92.7%)	8 (4.1.0%)	6 (3.9%)	146 (96.1%)
I am in support of dedicating a standard office for the counselors' use	154 (79.8%)	11 (5.7%)	19 (9.8%)	9 (4.7%)	165 (85.5%)	28 (14.5%)

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Teachers already play the role of school counselors	0 (0%)	7 (3.6%)	179 (92.7%)	7 (3.6%)	7 (4.6%)	146 (95.4%)
School Counselors should teach classes and take up other administrative roles	7 (3.6%)	160 (82.9%)	19 (9.8%)	7 (3.6%)	148 (96.8%)	5 (3.3%)
Multiple Respond Set	**238 (15.5%)**	**657 (42.8%)**	**576 (37.5%)**	**64 (4.2%)**	**862 (64.2%)**	**481 (35.8%)**

N=193

In aggregate, majority (64.2%) of the respondents agreed (agreed and strongly agreed) that teacher's beliefs influence school counselors' effectiveness mean while 35.8% of the respondents are for the fact that teachers' beliefs are inconsequential on school counselors' effectiveness. For instance, all the school teachers (100%) agreed that school counselors play a very important role in the domain of discipline. Also, the majority (99.3%) of the school teachers see counselor's orientation role as a necessity in the school milieu school, while 97.4% of the school teachers agreed that guidance and counseling programmes should be included on the school time table. In addition, 85.5% of the school teachers are in support of dedicating a standard office for the counselors' use while 15% are not, while only 1.5% of the school teachers agree that schools can function properly without counselors while 98.4% of them disagreed.

Table: 6 Comparing the teachers' beliefs of school counselor's effectiveness by Demographic Information

Demographic information			**Teachers' beliefs of school counselor's effectiveness**		**Total based on MRS**	**Chi-square (χ2)**
			Agree	**disagree**		
Age Range	20-30 years	n	105	65	170	$\chi2=70.416^a$ *p* value=.000 Critical value=28.85 df=18
		%	61.7%	38.2%		
	31-40 years	n	95	30	125	
		%	76%	24.0%		
	41-60 years	n	25	15	40	
		%	62.5%	37.5%		
Sex	Male	n	287	379	665	$\chi2=20.235^a$ *p* value=.017 Critical value=16.9 Df=9
		%	56.91%	43.09%		
	Female	n	575	296	871	
		%	66.01%	34.0%		
Professional Experience	0-3 years	n	345	277	622	$\chi2=87.075^a$ *p* value=.092 Critical value=42.56 Df=27
		%	55.5%	44.5%		
	4-7years	n	167	103	270	
		%	61.9%	38.1%		
	8-11years	n	75	60	135	
		%	55.5%	44.5%		
	12-15years	n	12	5	17	
		%	70.6%	29.4%		
	16-19years	n	0	0	0	

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		%	0%	0%		
	20-23years	n	8	2	10	
		%	80%	20%		

Comparing school teachers' opinion on their beliefs of school counselors' effectiveness by demographic Information there was no significant difference (p-values all > 0.05) with the majority of the respondents irrespective of age range, 61.7%, for age range 20-30 years, 76% for 31-40 years, and 62.5% for 41-60 years, indicated that teachers' beliefs affect school counselors' effectiveness. Based on gender, the majority of the school teachers irrespective of their gender with percentage ranging from 56.9% male to 66.1% females indicate that teachers' beliefs affect school counselors' effectiveness. The table also shows that school teachers irrespective of their years of experience in teaching indicated that majority (55.5%) of the respondents with 0-3 years of experience, 61.9% with 4-7years experience, 55.5% with 8-11years, indicated that their beliefs affect school counselors' effectiveness.

Teachers' beliefs opinions on school counselors' effectiveness

Test Items	Responses	
	Yes	**No**
Do you think school counselors play an important role within a school system?	193 (100%)	0(0%)
Do you think there is need for a trained counselor considering teachers already play a great role in Para counseling?	190 (98.4%)	3(1.6%)

Findings from school teacher interviews showed school counselors play an important role within the school system. This is indicated by all (100%) the school teachers accepting the opinion "Do you think school counselors play an important role within a school system?", while no school teacher is for the contrary. Likewise, almost all the school teachers are for the opinion that there is a need for trained counselors even though teachers already play a great role in Para counseling

Table 7: Teachers' experience and school counselors' effectiveness

Test items	**Stretched**				**Collapsed**	
	SA	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**SA/A**	**D/SD**
Students behaviour problems are not be better handled by counselors	6 (3.1%)	153 (79.3%)	25 (13.0%)	9 (4.7%)	159 (82.4%)	34 (17.6%)
Guidance and counseling services can influence the academic achievement of students	4 (2.1%)	156 (80.8%)	5 (2.6%)	28 (14.5%)	160 (82.9%)	29 (17.1%)
Counselors are very idle in school	4 (2.6%)	146 (95.4%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (1.3%)	150 (98%)	3 (2%)
Counselors are just eating government money	1 (0.5%)	7 (3.6%)	160 (82.9%)	25 (13.0%)	8 (4.1%)	185 (95.9%)
Counselors have no role to play as far as students academics is concerned	0 (0%)	147 (76.2%)	9 (4.7%)	37 (19.2%)	147 (76.2%)	46 (23.8%)
Counselors have nothing doing in school	1 (0.5%)	11 (5.7%)	153 (79.3%)	28 (14.5%)	12 (6.2%)	141 (93.8%)
The presence of counselors have no significant impact on students behaviour	1 (0.5%)	44 (22.8%)	32 (16.6%)	116(60.1%)	45 (23.3%)	69 (76.7%)
Counselors are hardly available in school	3 (1.6%)	4 (2.1%)	167 (86.5%)	19 (9.8%)	7 (3.7%)	186 (96.3%)

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Multiple Respond Set	**20 (1.3%)**	**668 (44.4%)**	**552 (37.7%)**	**264 (17.6%)**	**688 (50.1%)**	**693 (49.8%)**

N=153

In aggregate, the majority (**50.1%)** of the respondents agreed (agreed and strongly agreed) teacher's experiencee affect school counselors' effectiveness while an aggregate of **49.8%)** of the respondents disagree (disagreed and strongly disagreed) that teachers experience can influence school counselor's effectiveness. For instance, 82.9% of the school teachers are in support of the fact that guidance and counseling services can influence the academic achievement of students while only 17.1% of them do not. However, 98% of the respondents agreed that Counselors are very idle in school, and that also a majority (76.2%) of them say that Counselors have no role to play as far as students academics is concerned

Table 8: Comparing the Teachers' experience of school counselors' effectiveness by Demographic Information

Demographic information			**Teachers' experience of school counselor's effectiveness**		**Total based on MRS**	**Chi-square (χ2)**
			Agree	**disagree**		
Age Range	20-30 years	n	98	72	170	$\chi2=65.414^a$ *p* value=.000 Critical value=41.33 df=26
		%	57.6%	42.4%		
	31-40 years	n	102	23	125	
		%	81.6%	18.4%		
	41-60 years	n	25	15	40	
		%	62.5%	37.5%		
Sex	Male	n	457	206	665	$\chi2=32.440^a$ *p* value=.000 Critical value=22.36 df=13
		%	68.7%	31.3%		
	Female	n	652	219	871	
		%	74.9%	25.1%		
Professional Experience	0-3 years	n	455	167	622	$\chi2=70.416^a$ *p* value=.000 Critical value=60.39 df=39
		%	73.2%	26.8%		
	4-7years	n	190	80	270	
		%	70.4%	29.6%		
	8-11years	n	79	56	135	
		%	58.5%	41.5%		
	12-15years	n	12	5	17	
		%	70.6%	29.4		
	16-19years	n	0	0	0	
		%	0%	0%		
	20-23years	n	7	3	10	
		%	70%	30%		

Comparing school teachers' experience of school counselors' effectiveness by demographic Information, there was no significant difference (p-values all > 0.05) with the majority of the respondents irrespective of age range, 57.6% for 20-30 years, 81.6% for 31-40 years, and 62.5% for 41-60 years, indicated that teachers' experience affects school counselors' effectiveness. Based on gender, the majority of the school teachers irrespective of their gender with percentage ranging from 56.9% male to 74.9% females indicate that teachers' experience affects school counselors' effectiveness. The table also shows that school teachers irrespective of their years of

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experience in teaching indicated that majority (70.6%) of the respondents with 0-3 years of experience, 70.4% with 4-7years experience, 58.5% with 8-11years, indicated that their experiences affect school counselors' effectiveness.

Teachers' experience with school counselors' effectiveness

Test Items	Responses	
	Yes	No
Have your pleasant experiences with school counselors?	192 (99.5%)	1(0.5%)
Do the school counselors in your school pickup other administrative roles	184(95.3%)	9(4.7%)

Findings from school teacher interview guide on their experiences showed school teachers have a cordial experience with school counselors. This is indicated by a 192 (99.5%) of the teachers saying that they have a pleasant experience with school counsels. 184(95.3%) of the school teachers also accept that school counselors assist their schools not only in counseling related work, but also pick up other administrative roles when the need arises.

Table 9: Teachers' knowledge and school counselors' effectiveness

Test items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	SA	A	D	SD	SA/A	D/SD
Counselors are not different from teachers	8 (4.1%)	34 (17.6%)	136 (70.5%)	15 (8.7%)	34 (22.2%)	119 (77.8%)
Professional advice from the counsellor is very useful for any administration	22 (11.4%)	148 (76.7%)	14 (7.3%)	9 (4.7%)	170 (88.1%)	23 (12.0%)
Counselors worth in the school cannot be underestimated	10 (5.2%)	131 (67.9%)	43 (22.3%)	9 (4.7%)	141 (93%)	58 (27%)
Counseling involves mere advising	0 (0%)	157 (81.3%)	30 (15.5%)	6 (3.1%)	157 (81.3%)	36 (18.6%)
Counseling can be done by anyone	5 (2.6%)	143(74.1%)	40 (20.7%)	5 (2.6%)	148 (76.7.%)	45 (23.3%)
Counseling can be done even in the staffroom	1 (0.5%)	163(84.5%)	16 (8.3%)	13 (6.7%)	162 (85.0%)	24 (15%)
Counseling is useless because it is not written in official exams	1 (0.7%)	53 (27%)	129 (66.8%)	10 (5.2%)	54 (27.7%)	139 (72.%)
I appreciate the role of counselors in the school	164 (85.0%)	7 (3.6%)	17 (8.8%)	5 (2.6%)	171 (88.6%)	22 (11.4%)
Multiple Respond Set	**211 (13.7%)**	**836 (54.1%)**	**425 (27.5%)**	**72 (4.7%)**	**973 (62.9%)**	**575 (37.1%)**

N=153

In aggregate, majority (**62.9%)** of the respondents agreed (agree and strongly agree) that teacher's knowledge influence school counselors' effectiveness mean while **37.1%** of the respondents are for the fact that teachers' knowledge is inconsequential on school counselors' effectiveness. For instance, 81.3% of the respondents are for the fact that professional advice from the counselor is very useful for any administration, while only 18.6% of the respondents do not. Also, 93% of the school teachers say that Counselors worth in the school cannot be underestimated while 27% of them have a contrary view. In addition, 88.6% of the school teachers appreciate the role of counselors in their schools while only 11.4% of the respondents do not.

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Table 10: Comparing the Teachers' knowledge of school counselors' effectiveness by Demographic Information

Demographic information			Teachers' knowledge of school counselors' effectiveness		Total based on MRS	Chi-square ($\chi 2$)
			Agree	disagree		
Age Range	20-30 years	n	102	68	170	$\chi 2=42.019^a$ *p* value=.000 Critical value=28.87 Df=18
		%	60%	40%		
	31-40 years	n	85	40	125	
		%	68.0%	32.0%		
	41-60 years	n	29	11	40	
		%	72.5%	27.5%		
Sex	Male	n	485	180	665	$\chi 2=26.258^a$ *p* value=.002 Critical value=16.9 Df=9
		%	79.9%	27.1%		
	Female	n	578	293	871	
		%	66.4%	33.6%		
Professional Experience	0-3 years	n	456	166	622	$\chi 2=32.795^a$ *p* value=.204 Critical value=42.56 Df=27
		%	73.3%	26.7%		
	4-7years	n	157	113	270	
		%	58.1%	41.9%		
	8-11years	n	95	40	135	
		%	70.4%	29.6%		
	12-15years	n	14	3	17	
		%	82.4%	17.6%		
	16-19years	n	0	0	0	
		%	0%	0%		
	20-23years	n	6	4	10	
		%	60%	40%		

Comparing school teachers' knowledge of school counselors' effectiveness by demographic Information, there was no significant difference (p-values all > 0.05) with the majority of the respondents irrespective of age range, 60% for 20-30 years, 72.5% for 31-40 years, and 68.0% for 41-60 years, indicated that teachers' knowledge affect school counselors' effectiveness. Based on gender, the majority of the school teachers irrespective of their gender with percentage ranging from 56.9% male to 74.9% females indicate that teachers' knowledge affect school counselors' effectiveness. The table also shows that school teachers irrespective of their years of experience in teaching indicated that majority (58.1%) of the respondents with 0-3 years of experience, 82.4% with 4-7years experience, 70.4% with 8-11years, indicated that knowledge affects school counselors' effectiveness.

Teachers' knowledge on school counselors' effectiveness

Test Items	Responses	
	Yes	No
Do you think trained counselors are better skilled in counseling than Para counselors?	192 (99.5%)	1(0.5%)
Do you think the introduction of school counselors may reduce the high level of moral decadence in our schools?	191(99.0%)	2(1.0%)

Findings from school teacher interview guide on knowledge showed school teachers (99.5%) are of the opinion that trained

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counselors are better skilled in counseling than Para counselors. The findings also indicate that majority (99.0%) of the school teachers would expect a reduction of high levels of moral decadence in their schools if school counselors are introduced.

Interview guide for counselors

Findings from the school counselors interview shows that school counselors play a crucial role in the school system particularly in discipline and student orientation. As counselors, they assist students in improving their academic, social, and emotional success, making sure that they receive the appropriate resources and support they need. They also provide guidance and counseling to students in dealing with academic, personal, and career-related issues that affect their academic performance and well-being. All the school counselors concur that the role they play is imperative for the success of the school system. Through the implementation of comprehensive school counseling programs, counselors play a supporting role in role in inter disciplinary training that cuts across all other disciplines, providing students with the necessary information from a counseling perspective for their academic success.

Based on school counsellor's views about the way they are perceived by school teachers, the majority of the school counselors think that teachers view their role in the school system in a positive light. This is indicated by a 66% of them being for the fact that they are being viewed as a staff that brings positive outcomes while only 34% of them have a contrary view. This indicates that school counselors are prepared to use approved counseling programs and build positive relationships with teachers, which suggests that teachers may view their roles and contributions in a favorable light. School counselors take a lead in assessing school climate and countering negative attitudes toward vulnerable students, which may also contribute to positive perceptions among teachers.

Based on teachers' collaboration, it also suggested that school counselors build positive relationships with teachers by clarifying their roles and working collaboratively as 70% of the school counselors concur to the fact that they collaborate well with other teachers in their schools while 30% do not. Such collaboration with school teachers shows that there is a positive relationship between teachers and school counselors as school counselors' work with teachers to create positive school experiences for students and improve teacher-student relationships. It also shows that counselors take the lead in assessing school climate and partnering with teachers on the common goal of supporting students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs.

DISCUSSION

Teachers' beliefs about school counselor's effectiveness

The effect of teacher's perception on school counselor's effectiveness was examined and the findings revealed that teachers' beliefs have a significant influence on how they perceived school counselor's effectiveness and work with them. Majority of counsellors opined that, teacher's belief on whether the school counsellor is important and plays a vital role or responsibility within a school system affects how effective or not they are perceived. Most teachers also agreed their traditional beliefs of school counsellors Has over time greatly influenced how they perceive the school counsellors and their role within a school system. Teachers are of the opinion that school counsellors are only eating government money, they are lazy, the role they play is not very different from what para counsellors such as teachers have been doing and this in turn limits the extent of collaboration between teachers and school counsellors in making sure school counsellors meet up with counselling goals and responsibilities which in turn determines effectiveness.

Some teachers were of the opinion that school counselors play no role in discipline in the school. They stood on the fact that, not much has changed since the introduction of school counselors in secondary schools. Some teachers stated cases of violence, rape, drug abuse and others are still recorded in schools. To them, there is no significant difference between when there were no counselors and now. This belief limits how much collaboration and referrals they get to do with the school counselors thereby affecting effectiveness.

The finding here is also supported by the Social Judgment Theory (Sherif, 1961) which posits that the attitudes and beliefs of school authorities regarding counselling are formed based on evaluation of counselling practices in school. Based on their experiences and knowledge, teachers can either form a negative or positive belief towards school counselors based on their judgment. Teachers beliefs towards school counselors will depend on their personal opinion regarding counselors. As they acquire knowledge regarding counselors, they will either accept or reject this information based on their evaluation of this information.

Teachers Experience with School Counselors

The influence of teacher's experience with school counselors was examined and the findings revealed that teachers experience has a significant influence on how they percieve school counselors and effectiveness. Findings revealed majority of teachers have had negative past experiences with counsellors which is affecting their perceptions of counsellors at the moment. Many believe that students' problems can not be more better handled by counsellors. This implies that to them personal-social counselling can be done by anyone includeing school heads and even teachers. Several people in the society and even in school do not know the specific roles of the counsellor. Some teachers do not understand or they misconstrue the functions of the counsellors. Most teachers see them as rivals-instead of helpers. This limits the support provided to counsellors and how much effectiveness they get to employ.

Also, some teachers articulated that counsellors have nothing to do in school as they are very idle and just eating government money for nothing. From their past experience's counsellors are hardly available in school and also believe that the presence of counsellors has no significant impact on students' behaviour. With this mentality, teachers may not see

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the need supporting counsellors to effectively play their roles. This therefore hinders the effectiveness of the school counselor.

Some teachers have a negative impression about counsellors and if they work or not based on their past experiences with some school counsellors. They believe counsellors have very little to offer in the school hence does not see the need for counselling in the school. To some teachers, schools have been doing well in the past without counsellors thus schools can still exist without them. As such, they do not provide the support the school counselor may need to effectively play his or her role. Where teachers value the school counsellor and counselling services, they do all they can to ensure its implementation and acceptance within a given school. This is in congruence with the opinion of Achebe (1986) who stated that some teachers are rigid and traditional and would not welcome new ideas. She said even when teachers are aware that modern schools require the practice of the counsellor, they may deliberately bark at the idea of implementing the guidance programmed in the school practice for the erroneous argument that historically, the school has operated successfully without formal guidance and counselling.

This finding is supported by the experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) which posits that teachers experiences shapes their perceptions about counselling. As teachers encounter and interact daily with counsellors, they reflect on the counsellors' duties and responsibilities thus concluding on the role played by counsellors in school. Thus, through teachers' daily interactions experiences with counsellors, they form perceptions about counselling and then to relate with counsellors based on their experiences. They will either support or object to counselling based on their experiences with them. Having encountered counsellors who were hardly in school in the past, there is the tendency for teachers to view each counsellor as same thus limiting their support for counselling services. This hinders the implementation of counselling services and the effectiveness of the school counselor due to the lack of support in terms of human and material resources. findings of this study concur to that of Anthonia (2015) who found tthat counsellors in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria perceived negative experience, negative beliefs of people and lack of funds as challenges to career counseling services.

Teachers' knowledge on school counselors.

The teacher's knowledge on school counselors and their effectiveness was assessed and the findings revealed that teacher's knowledge has a significant influence on their perception of school counselor's effectiveness in secondary schools in the Buea Municipality. Findings revealed majority of teachers have had negative past experiences with counsellors which is affecting their perceptions of counsellors at the moment. Many believe that students' problems can not be more better handled by counsellors. This implies that to them personal-social counselling can be done by anyone includeing school heads and even teachers. Several people in the society and even in school do not know the specific roles of the counsellor. Principals do not understand or they misconstrue the functions of the counsellors. Most head teachers see them as rivals-instead of helpers. This limits the support provided to counsellors fo effective implenmentation of guidance and counselling services.

Some teachers posited that counsellors are not different from teachers and counselling involves mere advising and can be done by anyone. Typical in secondary schools in Cameroon, many teachers claim that counselling can be done by anyone-teachers, discipline masters and mistresses thus not warranting the services of counsellors. Again, teachers were of the opinion that counselling can be done even in the staffroom. However, this limits the Counselors effectiveness and in keeping to counseling principles such as confidentiality. The presence of teachers in the staffroom may even scare students from coming to see the counsellor. Also, teachers may take what they hear the counsellor and student discussing outside which may lead to a bridge of confidentiality. Students will be more likely to stay away from counselling when they get to hear their problems outside. To add, most teachers see counselling as useless because it is not written in official examinations. They do not understand that counsellors have a very big role to play in students' success by teaching the examination techniques, time management among others.

When teachers have varying expectations of the function of counselors and expectations are unclear, the teacher-counselor relationship is sure to suffer. The result of a guidance program that is rendered ineffective. Real teamwork among school staff cannot take place when members don't understand their roles. Therefore, it is paramount that roles and expectations are clearly defined for each group. The theory is especially true of teachers as they spend most of the time with students in the school environment. According to Wittmer (1993), teachers must be considered an integral part of the guidance team. Others teachers and counsellors need adequate knowledge on this.

In the course of interview, counsellors revealed teachers have limited knowledge about what counselling is as well as the role of school counsellors and this limits their support for counselling. School counselors also noted that the teacher and other administrative staff who is not a professional offers advice to students and not actually professional counseling which of course has it's stages. To add, some teachers added they've received a few courses on psychology while in training which gives them full knowledge on counseling which is not completely true. The teacher is given a brief and let's call is "first aid" so they bridge the gap between the school counselor and students. Meaning, they start handling learner issues temporarily before referring to the professional after properly building a rapport of the counselor then he or she takes over. Yes, the knowledge they acquired is good but it's not enough. Limited knowledge on this causes an invincible fight between the teacher and school counselor which in turns affects if the Counselor does their work or not.

Also, some teachers and administrators with little knowledge on the duties of the school counsellor may find their positions threatened when he knows the counsellor requires facilities

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and resources (office space, finance, time, equipment) like theirs (Kolo, 1992). Teachers may need to be educated from the teacher training programme on the clearly stated effective role of the school counselor, where their work begins and ends in counseling, when and how to do referrals and also that the school counselor comes to add on to what the teacher has been doing and not take their place, the importance of collaboration with school counselors and a clear definition of job descriptions.

This finding aligns with the opinion of Bulus (2001) who believed that principals and teachers misconceived the counsellor's status, which often creates conflict between them and in most cases teachers and principals who believe in the need for counsellors in the school may see no reason why there should be full time counsellors in schools. findings here is also supported by the gestalt Theory. There always the tendency for teachers to perceive counselling negatively or based on knowledge gained from their past experiences with counsellors. However, things change so do humans. A counsellor who may not be effective last year may be effective this year. And one "ineffective " counselor cannot be a reference for the entire college of counselors. Thus, the need to focus on the present as stipulated by the Gestalts. Gestalt therapy focuses on the present. While past context is important for viewing yourself as a whole, a Gestalt therapist encourages individuals to keep their focus on their present experiences.

Implications of findings to Guidance and Counselling

The findings of this study revealed that teachers' beliefs, experiences and knowledge affect their perception of the School Counselors effectiveness. By implication, the behavior and professional conduct of counsellors affects the way teachers will view them. Where counsellors are lazy, do not go to school regularly, the principal too may not take them seriously where there is need to do so. Counsellors need to exercise professional attitudes and behavioral dispositions that will help teachers and other stakeholders form positive perceptions about them. Where perceptions about counsellors are positive teachers will give their full support for counselling thus effectiveness.

From the literature review and results of the survey, it is essential that future school counselors take the necessary time to educate other school personnel regarding the role of the school counselor Specific areas of focus may include the mission and vision of the school counseling department as well as a more detailed explanation of the services that are being provided to students. Focusing on a comprehensive program that addresses the needs of every student is also vitally important.

Teachers in training should not just be taught basic psychology and how to assist learners but also the line between their role and the school counselor's role, how and when to do referrals, how to adequately collaborate with school counselors for an effective job and the gross importance of the school counselor.

Concluding Remarks

School counselor play a great role in the School system and has a lot to offer as well as the teacher. A strong collaboration between the teacher and school counselor will produce unexplainable results. Both parties assist learners to are meant to adjust meaningfully to the environment, develop the ability to set realistic goals and improve on total education programmes meaningfully. The school counselor is daily striving to attain and achieve general and specific counseling goals and whether or not the teacher thinks the school counselor is doing so is dependent on how they perceived the school counselors. This study to investigate the effects of teacher's perception on school counselor's effectiveness in secondary schools in the Buea Municipality. Specifically, the study sought to find out the extent to which teachers' beliefs, experiences and knowledge influence school counsellors' effectiveness. Related literature was reviewed and empirical literature and methodology of other works and its relevance to this study also presented. The convergent parallel mixed design was employed in the study. The findings revealed that teachers' beliefs influence their perception of the School Counsellors Effectiveness. It was also revealed that teachers experience with counsellors negatively or positively affects their perception of the School Counsellors Effectiveness. It was also revealed that teacher's knowledge on school counsellors affects how they perceive the school counsellors.

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