



The Provision of Students' Career Guidance and Counseling in Tertiary Learning Institutions in Arusha Region

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Abstract: *The process of making career decisions is an important part of students' growth in higher education. The provision of effective guidance and counseling services has proven to have a substantial impact on career decision-making, assisting students in matching their abilities and interests with job prospects. However, limited research exists on the provision of guidance and counseling in tertiary learning institutions in Arusha region. Thus, this study examined the accessibility and availability of guidance and counseling services and ascertained the usefulness of guidance and counseling in helping students make career decisions in tertiary learning institutions in Arusha Region, Tanzania. The research utilized a descriptive survey design, in which self-made questionnaires were administered to 248 randomly chosen students from a total population of 1,862 students for data collection. The results indicated that tertiary learning institutions in Arusha region had limited and sometimes completely absent guidance and counseling services. Nevertheless, students in tertiary learning institutions in Arusha region pointed out that guidance and counseling services are crucial in shaping their future career paths. Thus, it is concluded that despite the fact that students showed that guidance and counseling services are crucial in shaping their future career paths, tertiary learning institutions in Arusha region had limited and sometimes completely absent guidance and counseling services. Based on the results, tertiary learning institutions are recommended to strengthen and improve the provision of career guidance and counseling services to assist students in making well-informed career decisions which match with their abilities and interests.*

Keywords: *Guidance and Counselling, Tertiary learning institution, career choices, counseling services*

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1. Introduction

Career decision is among the most important verdicts students make in their lifetime (Azhenov et al., 2023; Kulcsár et al., 2020; Mohammed et al., 2021). To do this right, career guidance and counselling services plays crucial role (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018; Bell, 2017). Globally, literature has indicated a positive relationship

between career guidance and counseling services and students' career choices (Wambu et al., 2016; Watts, 2011). Additionally, studies have shown that a thorough career guidance program can equip students with fundamental career knowledge and help them gain self-awareness to explore educational pathways for advancing their careers (Mchuchury & Gwajekera, 2023). These services assist students in recognizing their strengths,

interests, and requirements of the job market, ultimately leading to a better match between their personal objectives and potential professional opportunities (Mchuchury & Gwajekera, 2023). Thus, career guidance and counseling are essential in helping students make well-informed decisions about their careers (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018).

In tertiary learning institutions that prepare students to transit from academics to the professional workforce world, career guidance and counselling is much more needed (Wambu et al., 2016). This is because studies show that, many students enter into tertiary learning institutions with limited knowledge of the job market and the different career paths available within their fields of study (Kulcsár et al., 2020; Mohammed et al., 2021; Wambu et al., 2016). For students to make well-informed choices about their career, it is important to be provided with insights about different industries, job roles, and emerging trends through career guidance and counselling services. Through career guidance and counselling students are provided with the necessary information, skills, and confidence to make informed career decisions (Gatua, 2014; Martin & Kuboja, 2022, 2022). Additionally, it assists them to gain an understanding of the skills and qualifications required for different professions, so that they can plan their studies accordingly, selecting the right courses, specializations, and extracurricular activities that enhance their employability (Lubawa et al., 2021; Mchuchury & Gwajekera, 2023).

Despite the fact that there are several studies which were conducted in universities and secondary schools, evidence shows that students in tertiary learning institutions in Tanzania experience psychological and emotional problems that affect their academic achievement and their well-being in general (Mchuchury & Gwajekera, 2023). Furthermore, studies focusing on investigating the provision of career guidance and counselling in tertiary learning institutions in Arusha region in Tanzania are lacking. Given the need for guidance and counseling in Tanzania education, thus this study aims to investigate the provision guidance and counseling in tertiary learning institutions in Arusha region.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Career guidance and counseling services are critical for making students make an informed career choice. The provision of effective guidance and counseling services has proven to have a substantial impact on career decision-making, assisting students in matching their abilities and interests with job prospects. To fully utilize these services, learning institutions such as schools, colleges and universities need to provide career and guidance and counselling programs. This is because career guidance and counselling help students with knowledge of the job market

and the different career paths available within their fields of study (Kulcsár et al., 2020; Mohammed et al., 2021; Wambu et al., 2016). However, evidence shows that most of the studies which focused on investigating the role of career guidance and counselling were conducted in secondary schools and universities. There is limited information about the provision of career guidance and counselling in tertiary learning institutions in Tanzania. To address this gap, this study aimed at investigating the provision of guidance and counseling in tertiary learning institutions in Arusha Region.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study sought to address the following objectives:

1. To examine the accessibility and availability of career guidance and counseling services in tertiary educational institutions in the Arusha Region.
2. To ascertain the usefulness of career guidance and counseling in helping students make career decisions in the Arusha Region.

2. Literature Review

Worldwide, several studies have been conducted about career guidance and counselling in schools, colleges and universities. In Uganda, Otwine et al. (2022) observed that career counseling and guidance in secondary schools in Uganda face a number of difficulties, including unfavorable attitudes from students and a lack of cooperation during the implementation of these services. This is thought to be caused by limited access to career information and a packed school schedule. In Pakistan, (Keshf & Khanum, 2021) reported that, despite existence of several career guidance and counseling in universities, undergraduate students are seldom utilizing them.

In Tanzania, Shuma (2017) studied the role of career guidance and counseling in enhancing employability skills among students in two universities in Dodoma. The study reported that, despite the fact that students were aware of the available career guidance and counseling services; however, such services were inadequate and not to be formalized within the two universities in Dodoma. On the other hand, Rushahu (2017) investigated the provision of guidance and counselling among students with disabilities in higher learning institutions in Tanzania. The study revealed limited provision of such service to students with disabilities due to lack of specialized training for counselors, inadequate facilities, and negative perceptions about disability.

Martin and Kuboja (2022) examined how guidance and counseling bring about students' emotional stability in higher learning institutions in Arusha region. The findings

showed that, despite the fact that partially done or not done at all, guidance and counseling services found to have significantly strong positive relationship with students' emotional stability. Ngussa and Charles (2019) reported promising findings that shows parents and teachers play a greater role in their secondary school students' career choice and preparedness in Meru District, Arusha. Studies have shown that a thorough career guidance program can equip students with fundamental economic knowledge and help them gain self-awareness to explore educational pathways for advancing their careers (Mchuchury & Gwajekera, 2023). On the other hand, Bell (2017) highlighted that career guidance counselors' efforts can assist parents in effectively and wisely influencing their children's career development, leading to their collective success.

All this evidence underscores the role of well-trained career guidance counselors who can work hand in hand with students to guide them towards selecting careers relevant to their aspirations. Furthermore, studies focusing on investigating the provision of career guidance and counselling in tertiary learning institutions in Arusha region in Tanzania are lacking.

2.1 Importance of Career Guidance and Counselling in Tertiary Learning Institutions

The objective of education is to provide opportunities for students to reach their full potential in different fields opted by the students. However, research has shown that majority of students do not choose the right path of study due to lack of proper guidance. According to Rose (2022), guidance and counseling are the bedrock for achieving self-actualization. It helps students discover their needs, interests, and capabilities to formulate their own goals and make plans to realize them. The more sufficient the perceived guidance and counseling services offered to students, the less the degree of difficulty they experience in their lives. Guidance and counseling programs help every student develop competencies in academic achievement, personal, emotional, and social development, and career planning (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018).

Rushahu (2017) found that most of the higher learning institutions in Tanzania do not provide guidance and counseling services because of the negative perception of the service and inadequate facilities to facilitate the whole process of guidance and counseling. Ngussa and Charles (2019) examined the effectiveness of guidance and counseling in facilitating learning among secondary school students in Tanzania. Despite the efforts made by the government of Tanzania and other stakeholders to ensure guidance and counseling are well-practiced in educational institutions, most of the institutions still lag behind

schedule. From this context, the researchers sought to examine the effects of guidance and counseling services on students' career choices in tertiary learning institutions.

2.2 Studies on Guidance and Counselling based on observation and experience

Students at every educational level require support and counseling in order to achieve success. It is recommended that students seek guidance and counseling to help them deal with various situations they encounter in their school life. The advice provided to students regarding how to handle psychological issues can negatively affect their academic performance. According to Gatua (2014), guidance and counseling play a crucial role in equipping students with problem-solving skills that empower them to address various challenges in their lives and expand their decision-making capabilities.

Guidance and counseling services are becoming more crucial in higher education institutions to support the overall well-being of students. These services have been created to assist students in managing their studies and participating actively in the institutions according to their preferences. Martin and Kuboja (2022) state that students who have difficulty controlling their emotions often display disruptive behavior towards their peers, roommates, and teachers. Therefore, if not properly guided, they can pose a threat to society. Teachers need to instruct students on how to have control over, as well as maintain and manage their affairs for their future endeavors.

In a study conducted by Aluede and Adubale (2020), they examined how Nigerian counselors perceive the role of school-based counselors. Some similarities were uncovered, along with potentially significant variations. Nigerian counselors deemed the educational and career planning dimension as the most crucial aspect in influencing students' career decisions. The study also found that Nigerian counselors believe that counseling is important in schools and colleges to support students dealing with stress and depression.

Mwape's (2015) study in Zambia found that in selected public secondary schools in Mansa district, not all components of guidance and counseling services were provided, despite the nature and benefits of these services being examined. The schools that were surveyed did not have a guidance and counseling program in place, and the teachers were not properly trained but were simply assigned to the department. The research found that despite the difficulties students faced, the schools surveyed did not adequately provide guidance and counseling services, resulting in many students not receiving any help.

In his study, Wachira (2018) investigated the implementation of guidance and counseling in Kenyan secondary schools. The research revealed that around two-thirds of the professionals practicing guidance and counseling in schools did not meet the necessary qualifications of having at least a diploma. The guidance and counseling facilities in most schools in the study area were insufficient to support the proper delivery of guidance and counseling services. According to the results, it was suggested that there should be an increase in the frequency of workshops on guidance and counseling for public secondary school teachers and other service providers. This will help them to make significant improvements in their teaching methods and effectiveness.

Research has been carried out in Tanzania to explore the impact of guidance and counseling in the field of education. An example is Amani and Mkumbo (2014) research on the support and advisory services for students with disabilities in universities in Tanzania. According to the study, the majority of higher education institutions do not offer guidance and counseling services due to a negative perception of the service and a lack of facilities to support the process, despite its importance. The study, however, specifically targeted students with disabilities. This study aimed to examine the impact of guidance and counseling services on the career decisions of students attending tertiary education institutions in the Arusha Region.

In contrast, Shuma (2017) focused on improving the employability skills of college students through career guidance and counseling at the University of Dodoma and St. John's University of Tanzania. According to the study, college students knew about career guidance and counseling services, but the study revealed that these services were not sufficient, which could potentially hinder the students' development of employability skills. In addition to the emphasis on developing students' job skills, the study revealed that there is a lack of formal career guidance and counseling services within higher education institutions, with no dedicated professional career counselors employed. This research specifically addressed the significance of career guidance and counseling in

universities and colleges. The purpose of this study is to investigate the provision of students' guidance and counseling services in tertiary education institutions in Arusha Region.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The researcher utilized a descriptive survey research design to gather numerical data from students in conducting this study. Kothari (2004) explains that the purpose of survey research design is to investigate the relationship between two or more variables. Hence, the use of a survey research design enabled the researcher to accomplish the primary goal of the study by gathering sufficient and dependable information from the students. The research utilized a quantitative methodology. According to McCombes (2019), quantitative methods entail collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting the findings of a study using different designs such as surveys and experimental research designs. This method proved to be effective as it minimized the time needed for data collection and allowed for the inclusion of large groups within a short timeframe. The researcher utilized a quantitative approach in this study to gather numerical data from students on the impact of guidance and counseling services on tertiary students' career choices in Arusha.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population of the study was 1862 students from four tertiary learning institutions. Out of the 1,862 students, a sample of 248 students was subjected to the questionnaire instrument. This study adopted a stratified random sampling technique. The sampling method has been used because the researcher selected students from different institutions (strata) with similar characteristics. Through this technique, students from the selected tertiary learning institutions had an equal chance of being included in the sample. Therefore, the technique was suitable for this study. Out of 248 sampled students, males were 112, and females were 136.

Table 1: Sample selected from each Institution

Name of Institution	Accessible Population	Sample
Institute of Accountancy Arusha	1,050	100
Arusha Teachers' College	517	70
Karatu Institute of Health and Allied Sciences	120	32
Arusha Institute of Tourism	175	46
Total	1,862	248

Source: Field data (2024)

3.3 Instruments

Information was gathered from tertiary learning colleges through the use of questionnaires. In Taherdoost (2017)

study, it was found that questionnaires have a wider coverage and scope compared to other research methods. Moreover, the use of questionnaires helps in minimizing biases. The data obtained from surveys can be confirmed

and compared with the data gathered through other methods of data collection. Generally, questionnaires are cost-effective and require less time to administer. The questionnaire method allowed the researchers to simultaneously reach all the groups involved in the study. A questionnaire with closed-ended questions was created in the English language. The questionnaires provided four choices for students to show their level of agreement or disagreement: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree; 3= Agree, 4= Strongly Agree.

3.4 Reliability of the Questionnaire

To assess the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach alpha was estimated for the accessibility and availability and usefulness of the career guidance and counselling provided items. The estimated internal consistency reliability of accessibility and availability and usefulness of the career guidance and counselling provided were estimated as .88 and .93 respectively which were greater than .70 (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Thus, this shows that a survey questionnaire demonstrated sufficient internal consistency.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) technique. This is a suitable analysis technique for determining accessibility and availability as well as usefulness of the career guidance and counselling provided in tertiary learning institutions in Arusha.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

To adhere to research ethical considerations, the researchers obtained an introduction letter from Arusha Technical College and used it to ask for the data collection permit from the Arusha Region Executive Director. Such a permit was then used to seek permission to collect data from each tertiary institution involved in this study. Furthermore, each student of this study was informed about the purpose of the study and asked for voluntary participation. Students were also informed that data collected was held in confidentiality and utilized solely for this research. Finally, the researcher made sure that the students' anonymity was protected to safeguard their identity.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings and discussion of this study are presented in Tables 2 and 3 below:

4.1 Accessibility and Availability of Guidance and Counseling Services

The research objective two focused on examining the accessibility and availability of guidance and counseling services in tertiary learning institutions in Arusha region. Table 2 shows that the survey students were presented with 10 items in the questionnaire to express their agreement or disagreement regarding the accessibility and availability of guidance and counseling services at their institution. The average mean of 2.2222 with a standard deviation of .79387 falls within the disagreement range of 1.50 – 2.49, indicating that students do not agree that their institutions offer guidance and counseling services. Students showed that they are also unable to use the service when they most need it (M = 2.2296; SD = .74606).

Table 2: Accessibility and availability of guidance and counseling services

<i>SN</i>	<i>Items in the Questionnaire</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
1	Guidance and counseling services are readily available in our Institution	2.3269	.72396	Disagree
2	I can easily access counseling services whenever I need them	2.2296	.74606	Disagree
3	I am aware of what is happening in the guidance and counseling unit	1.7625	.69670	Disagree
4	Guidance and counseling services are done regularly	1.7478	.51122	Disagree
5	Guidance and counseling are practiced regularly	2.3250	.72679	Disagree
6	I sometimes receive counsel on career choices from tutors and not counselors	3.6048	.96769	Agree
7	Counselors do their job very well in helping students with decision-making	2.3236	.36122	Disagree
8	Quality of counseling services on career choices are done professionally	2.4451	.64222	Disagree
9	The institution has adequate resources for guidance and counseling services	2.0399	.74512	Disagree
10	I am satisfied with the counseling opportunities at my institution	1.4233	.83441	Strongly disagree
Average M and SD		2.2222	.79387	Disagree

Source: Field Data (2024)

Students also mentioned that they were unsure if counseling services were available at their institutions (M = 1.7625; SD = .69670). The students have low confidence

in the ability of counselors to effectively assist them in making wise decisions (M = 2.3236; SD = .36122). There is no evidence to suggest that these services are performed

consistently ($M = 1.7478$; $SD = .51122$). Students also mentioned that the counseling services are not carried out professionally, as indicated by a mean score of 2.4451 and a standard deviation of .64222. The students confirmed that on occasion they seek counseling from their tutors rather than professional counselors ($M = 3.6048$; $SD = .96769$). Insufficient resources are available for guidance and counseling services ($M = 2.0399$; $SD = .74512$). Overall, students are dissatisfied with the counseling services offered at their schools ($M = 1.4233$; $SD = .83441$).

Only one of the ten items examined revealed that college tutors sometimes provide guidance and counseling services at their convenience instead of delegating these responsibilities to professionals. However, the remaining nine items suggested that guidance and counseling services are either inadequately performed or not performed at all. Literature has shown that guidance and counseling services are crucial in schools to help students succeed in their academic pursuits. Conversely, the institutions being examined in this study do not appear to have this element established. As a result, it is not possible to improve students' career choices.

The results of this investigation bear a strong resemblance to the findings of similar studies conducted in other locations, including Zambia, Kenya, and Tanzania. Mwape's (2015) study conducted in Zambia examined the type and advantages of guidance and counseling services provided by specific public secondary schools in the Mansa district. The research revealed that although some guidance and counseling services were offered, not all of their components were provided. Only discussions related to the examination were found to be significantly available. There were no records to demonstrate the existence of the other activities. The schools that were included in the sample did not have a guidance and counseling program to adhere to, and the teachers were not specifically trained for this role; they were simply assigned to the department. The research also found that students had not gained much from the available services, mostly because those services were not provided. The research found that despite the various challenges faced by students, there was a lack of adequate guidance and counseling services in the schools studied. As a result, many students did not receive much assistance, leading to concerns about their career choices.

Wachira (2018) conducted a study in Kenya on the implementation of guidance and counseling in secondary schools. The research found that around two-thirds of the professionals in this field did not meet the necessary qualifications of a diploma or higher. The lack of proper facilities for guidance and counseling made it difficult to effectively provide these services in most schools within the study area. The findings suggested that there should be an increase in regular workshops on guidance and counseling for public secondary school teachers and other service providers, to help them improve their pedagogy and effectiveness.

Research has been carried out in Tanzania to examine the impact of guidance and counseling in the field of education. As an example, Amani and Mkumbo (2014) investigated the practices and implications of guidance and counseling services for students with disabilities in higher education institutions in Tanzania. The research showed that although guidance and counseling services are important in higher education institutions, many of them do not offer these services due to a negative perception and a lack of adequate facilities for the process. The absence of guidance and counseling services is not good news for places like educational institutions where future careers and emotional stability are believed to stem from them.

4.2 The Usefulness of Counseling on Career Decision-making

The research objective two focused on ascertaining the usefulness of counseling on career decision-making for students of tertiary learning institutions in Arusha Region. The findings presented in Table 3 below show that students on average found career counseling to be highly beneficial ($M = 3.1389$; $SD = .78489$). The students reached a consensus that the guidance and counseling services offer them fresh perspectives on their career trajectories ($M = 3.3296$; $SD = .94606$). Students also reported that with the help of guidance and counseling services, they can make well-informed career decisions ($M = 2.8144$; $SD = .95309$). The students reached a consensus that guidance and counseling services enhance their confidence in making career decisions ($M = 2.5123$; $SD = 6.2988$). Students also agreed that counseling sessions provide them with practical advice (3.4625; $SD = .99670$) and help them to handle feelings of insecurity ($M = 3.0866$; $SD = .72159$).

Table 3: The usefulness of Counseling on career choices

<i>SN</i>	<i>Items in the Questionnaire</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
1	Guidance and counseling provide new insight into my career path	3.3296	.94606	Agree
2	They help in making informed career decisions	2.8144	.95309	Agree
3	They help in improving my confidence in career decision-making.	2.5123	.62988	Agree
4	Counseling sessions offer practical advice or resources	3.4625	.99670	Agree
5	Counseling sessions help me manage my feelings of insecurity	3.0866	.72159	Agree
6	They help me to avoid unnecessary and obvious mistakes in life	3.2865	.71511	Agree
7	They help me to manage my feelings of fear about life	3.4811	.81595	Agree
Average M and SD		3.1389	.78489	Agree

Source: Field Data (2024)

The findings further showed that students' support and advice they got from counseling services assist them in avoiding errors in life ($M = 3.2865$; $SD = .71511$). The average scores for seven items ranged from 2.50 to 3.49, indicating that students agreed on the importance of guidance and counseling services in influencing their career decisions. The findings play an important role in shaping an individual's future aspirations, with guidance and counseling services being instrumental in this process.

Guidance and counseling services are becoming more crucial in higher education institutions to support the overall well-being of students. These services have been created to assist students in managing their studies and participating actively in the institutions according to their preferences. Martin and Kuboja (2022) state that students who have difficulty controlling their emotions often display disruptive behavior towards their peers, roommates, and teachers. Therefore, if not properly guided, they can pose a threat to society. Teachers need to instruct students on how to have control over, as well as maintain and manage their affairs for their future endeavors.

Students at every educational level require support and counseling to achieve success in life. It is recommended that students seek guidance and counseling to help them deal with various situations they encounter in their school life. The advice provided to students regarding how to handle psychological issues can negatively affect their academic performance. According to Rose (2022), guidance and counseling play a crucial role in equipping students with problem-solving skills that empower them to address various challenges in their lives and expand their decision-making capabilities.

According to Mundi (2017), guidance and counseling are the bedrock for achieving self-actualization. It helps students discover their needs, interests, and capabilities to formulate their own goals and make plans to realize them. The more sufficient the perceived guidance and counseling services offered to students, the less the degree of difficulty they experience in their lives. Guidance and counseling programs help every student develop competencies in

academic achievement, personal, emotional, and social development, and career planning (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018). In a study conducted by Aluede and Adubale (2020), they examined how Nigerian counselors perceive the role of school-based counselors. Some similarities were uncovered, along with potentially significant variations. Nigerian counselors deemed the educational and career planning dimension as the most crucial aspect in influencing students' career decisions. The study also found that Nigerian counselors believe that counseling is important in schools and colleges to support students dealing with stress and depression.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Based on the results presented in this study it is concluded that tertiary learning institutions in Arusha region had limited and sometimes completely absent guidance and counseling services. This was clearly indicated by students after agreeing that they are unsure if counseling services were available at their institutions, presence of insufficient resources for guidance and counseling services and confirmed that they occasionally seek counseling from their tutors rather than professional counselors. Nevertheless, students in tertiary learning institutions in Arusha region pointed out that guidance and counseling services are crucial in shaping their future career paths. This was clearly indicated by students after agreeing that career guidance and counseling is highly beneficial to them as it offers them fresh perspectives on their career trajectories and helps them to make well-informed and confident career decisions.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, we recommend that:

1. Tertiary learning institutions to strengthen and improve the provision of career guidance and counseling services in to assist students in making well-informed career decisions which match with their abilities and interests. Such a significant

improvement in the provision of career guidance and counseling services in tertiary learning institutions will ensure that all students have access to effective and reliable career guidance and guidance.

2. Tertiary learning institutions should invest in career guidance and counseling programs and allocating resources such as offices and employment of professional career guidance and counselling staff. This will provide students with the opportunity to access formal counseling services. This will ensure that students' inappropriate behavior is eliminated, and their confidence is enhanced as they continue their studies and pursue future goals.

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