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## CONTRIBUTION OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN ADDRESSING EARLY PREGNANCIES AMONG GIRLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A Case Central District Unguja

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### Abstract:

This study investigated the contribution of guidance and counseling in addressing early pregnancy among girls in secondary schools. The study was conducted in Central District Unguja, located at South Region in Zanzibar. The study has applied a qualitative research approach during the process of gathering and analysing the data. The total sample size is 65: by five (5) teacher counselors, fifty (50) students, five (5) head teachers and five (5) discipline teachers from five selected schools. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and documentary reviews. The data was analyzed thematically and the results revealed academic guidance was the most kind of guidance and counseling service offered in secondary schools. The study found that guidance and counseling for prevention of early pregnancy was indirectly delivered through academic. The finding also indicated that in studied areas guidance and counseling were not taken as effective ways to solve the problems. Furthermore, the results showed that different problems hampered effective provision of the services to students. The problems include girls students' negative perceptions towards the service, lack of designed area for provision of service, lack of skilled counselors and lack of financial support from stake holders. It is therefore recommended that the guidance and counseling services in schools should be directed towards reducing early pregnancies in schools. Head teachers should also take into consideration their supervisory control of the guidance and counseling programmes to encourage teacher counselors to perform their responsibilities with seriousness and effectiveness in accordance with government policies. Also, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training should inform all teachers the significance of the students' willingness to inform and discuss their difficulties with them.

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**Keywords:** Guidance, Counselling, Early pregnancy, Negative perception, skilled counsellor

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counselling is an important educational tool in moulding the child's future life and shaping their orientation from negative to positive ideas. Guidance programmes for secondary school students are designed to address the physical, emotional, social, vocational and academic difficulties of adolescent students (Eyo, Joshua, & Esuong, 2010).

The present study explored the contribution of guidance and counselling services (GCS) in addressing early pregnancies among girl students in Central District Unguja.

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### **A. BACKGROUND**

The concept of guidance and counseling has existed since the beginning of human being society (Mtima, 2016). Guidance and counseling were developed in America at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century as a humanitarian endeavor to alleviate poverty, misery, and unemployment (UNESCO, 2000) and it further gained momentum in the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Issa, 2018).

In England and Northern Ireland, counseling in schools has been supporting a large number of distressed school children (Irungu, 2019), while in Europe, school counselors are responsible for demonstrating their accountability just as teachers and administrators (Ntilisinda, 2017). Similarly in Spain, Escapa and Julià (2018) reported that, effective G&CS have shown positive outcomes in improving levels of students' discipline such as reducing disruptive behaviour.

In Tanzania, guidance and counseling services have been established in schools and other settings since 1984 (Marandu, 2018; Issa, 2018). This programme have been put in place to help students on the choice and selection of subjects which suits labor market, to guide and counsel students so as to help them to cope with school environment (Minga, 2018). Through guidance and counseling services, students are being helped to use their common senses to see reality and make an informed decision rather than being driven by emotions and external forces (Zuberi, 2020).

These ideas were supported by Lubawa, Ngirwa and Shavega (2021) who conducted a study on the influence of psychosocial guidance and counselling on secondary school students' academic performance in Tanga City. The findings revealed that G&CS benefitted students in receiving appropriate education on psychological and social difficulties which aided their academic achievement.

According to URT (2014), the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MOEVT) has developed a G&CS section to coordinate G&CS issues in schools. In Tanzania, there were no policies to formalise the provision of guidance and counselling in schools. So, it has been regarded as a minor educational provision, with unprofessional dominating its practice (Biswalo, 1996).

In Zanzibar, the G&CS were introduced in schools since the late 1990s, the Ministry currently has guidance and counselling unit that is in charge of coordinating guidance and counselling services in schools. Each school has two teacher counselors, one male and one female (MoEVT, 2006). Although, G&CS help to brighten the lives of many young people (Mtima, 2016), pregnancies among adolescent females aged 15-19 years are common, and nearly all adolescent girls who have been impregnated have dropped out of school (WHO, 2016). Every year, the number of teens who become pregnant rises dramatically and it is estimated that over sixteen million teenagers give birth in the world (WHO, 2016).

Adolescent pregnancy and teenage motherhood are more prevalent in low- and middle-income nations and families. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rate of adolescent pregnancies in the world, with 143 per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 years (WHO, 2014). Papri (2016) who remarked teenage pregnancy rates range from 143 per 1000 in some sub-Saharan African countries.

Furthermore, UNESCO (2017) emphasized that early pregnancy is common in Sub-Saharan Africa, both within and outside of marriage. This was further added by Vuai (2020) that most girls are expelled from schools because of early pregnancies in many of African countries. For example, in Ethiopia, students in grades 11 and 12 were more likely to become pregnant than students in years 9 and 10 (Mathewos & Mekuria, 2018).

East Africa has been rated second globally after West Africa as the region with the highest number of women reporting a birth before the age of 19. Not only that, but also Uganda leads the region in the number of teenage pregnancies at (33%), followed by Tanzania (28%) and Kenya (26%) (Kapileh, 2019).

In addition to that, in Tanzania, about 55,000 girls dropped out of school in the year of 2003 and 2011 because they were pregnant (UNFPA, 2018), while more than 70,000 girl students had been expelled out of schools for pregnancy between 2003 to 2015 (TWAVEZA, 2016). This was also reported by Shaaban (2015) that adolescent girls aged 18 to 19 are nearly three times more likely to be pregnant than girls aged 15-17 in Tanzania.

The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (RGoZ) has taken several efforts to address the problem of adolescent pregnancy. For instance, Zanzibar Education Policy (2006) has emphasizes on strengthening and diversifying guidance and counselling services in schools to meet development needs of learners. Additionally, in the year 2005, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (RGoZ) constitute a law which is known as ‘Spinsters and Single Parent Children Protection Act Number 4 of 2005’. The Law permits the girl who is pregnant while in schools to continue with her studies after delivery (MoEVT, 2014). However, the assessment from UNESCO (2021) revealed that there was low awareness and understanding of the Re-entry policy among students, parents, and pregnant adolescent learners, therefore the Ministry of Education has established the Inclusive Education and Life Skills Unit and Office of Education Registrar which are key players in the implementation of the policy.

Despite the efforts made by the Zanzibar government to allow guidance and counselling service in schools, the problem of early pregnancy in schools is still existing (MoEVT, 2016). Zanzibar has almost 5% of the students who left schools because of teenage pregnancy, similarly, between years 2012 and 2016, a total of eighteen (18) pregnancy cases were reported from secondary schools in Urban Region (Niboye, 2018). Furthermore, according to the data from the Registrar of Education, a total of 646 became pregnant from the year 2005 to 2020 in Zanzibar, out of them, 452 are learners at Ordinary Secondary level (UNESCO, 2021).

Generally, according to Nyangarika, Nombo and Mtani, (2020) factors for early pregnancy include poverty and economic status, peer pressure, lack of parental guidance and counselling, and lack of reproductive health education. This finding was also supported by UNESCO (2021) who observed that parent’s irresponsibility, peer pressure, low self-awareness, poverty, misuse of internet, single parent care, autonomy, life style, moral erosion revenge within or outside the family were the factors that increase risk of pregnancy to adolescent girls student. If effectively used, guidance and counselling might increase the rate of early pregnancy to school girls.

So, it is important to do this study to understand its effectiveness in addressing early pregnancies among girl students. Therefore, this study will explore the contribution of guidance and counselling services in addressing early pregnancies among girl students in Central District Unguja.

### ***B. PROBLEM STATEMENT***

An effective guidance and counselling in schools may lead the student to perform well and behave in an acceptable manner (Minga, 2018). Despite the G&CS being offered in secondary schools in Zanzibar, its effectiveness is still questionable (Issa 2018). Different challenges are facing the service including ineffective and less qualified counsellors in schools, (MoEVT, 2018). On top of that, the

number of teacher counsellors in Zanzibar schools does not correspond to the school population, only 18% of all schools in Zanzibar have counsellors with dedicated time for counselling activities (MoEVT, 2018).

Similarly, the sample for pupil counselling session's issues is not enough to discuss in schools, about 62% indicated that counselling session are used to discuss academic problems (MoEVT, 2018), and so leaving aside only less time for other personal issues, including those that may help reducing early pregnancy. According to UNESCO (2021), 13.4% of learners were dropped out of school due to early pregnancy in Central District in Unguja and 18.5% in Chake Chake District in Pemba. The three high factors for learners to fall pregnant were peer pressure, parent irresponsibility and lack of self-awareness.

Because of those problems, it is equally important therefore to explore the contribution of guidance and counselling in addressing early pregnancy among girl student in secondary school in Zanzibar.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The history of guidance and counselling act as practiced today was established in the United States of America (USA) at the end of the 19th century and it further gained momentum in the world in the 20th century (Issa, 2018). The need for guidance and counselling services nowadays could be due to the over-changing in development of the society and people have to cope with the environment (Biswalo, 1996). Gonzalez (2008) argued that, in most Latin American countries, there were no career with a degree in Guidance and Counselling, apart from Venezuela and Costa Rica.

According to Fong (2013), guidance is a Western concept, its introduction to Hong Kong schools at first led to strong struggles and conflicts from the traditional discipline approach. At that time, secondary schools had a discipline team and a guidance team, whereby discipline team was responsible for handling students' behavioural and discipline problems, while the guidance team looked after the students' emotional development and helped them cope with the distress brought on by the family, studies and social circle. Makinde, (1984) as cited in Zuberi (2020) noted that, provision of G&CS in African societies was practiced by traditionally accepted and trusted people advise and wisdom when needs arose.

In Tanzania, guidance and counselling services seemed to be less experienced in many schools. But due to its importance, all teachers were emphasized to be involved in guidance and counselling services in schools due to the requirement of the students (Issa, 2018). Similarly, the ultimate goal of counselling in Tanzania is self-helping, so that the clients become their own best counsellors.

In Zanzibar, MoEVT has institutionalized guidance and counseling service to be within the educational system. Unfortunately, the number of teacher counsellors does not correspond to the school population where only 18% of all schools in Zanzibar have counsellors with dedicated time for counselling activities (MoEVT, 2006). Similarly, school counsellors varies across districts, from as high as 70% of all schools in South to as low as 35% in Micheweni (MoEVT, 2018).

Therefore, this study explored the contribution of guidance and counselling in addressing early pregnancy among girl student in secondary school in Central District in Zanzibar.

### **A. ROLE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN EDUCATION**

The roles of G&CS in education have been revealed through many studies in the world. In America, the role of school counsellor as a main facilitator of the service is to collaborate with stake holders to

promote mental health and academic achievement, as well as act as advocates for all students (ASCA, 2012).

In Africa, the study done by Nkechi, Ewomaoghene, and Egenti (2016) reported that the roles of guidance and counselling programme in Nigeria was to bring about the maximum development and self-realization of human potential for the benefit of the individual and society. Furthermore, Omoniyi (2016) agreed with Nkechi et al., (2016) that provision of G&CS in the secondary schools is to assist the students to understand themselves and to take appropriate steps in making educational, social, vocational and psychological lifelong decisions.

On the other hand, Mulenga and Mukaba (2018) discovered that, the school lacked skilled guidance and counselling teachers to adequately conduct the sessions with the girls. This was because it was found that many cases occurred inside and outside the school were related with girl's students. Also, there is lack of school-based sensitization on safer sex and absence for girls, as well as a lack of good relationship between teacher counsellors and re-entered girls.

In addition, Minga (2018) argued that, the role of G&CS is training the students to become acceptable members of the society and successful in all spheres of life including, academic, social as well as in career decisions. Similarly, Kyaruzi and Nkuba (2015) insisted that, school counsellors are supposed to be competent enough to understand the personal world of students and help them to understand themselves and adjust to school life accordingly.

Likewise, the study done by Zuberi (2020) that assessed the role of School-based guidance and counselling services in shaping students' discipline, found that, stakeholders acknowledged the use of guidance and counselling services as effective means of shaping students' discipline in schools.

In Zanzibar, Issa (2018) conducted a study that employed a descriptive survey design using qualitative research approaches in the process of collecting data. The purposive sampling technique was used in sampling four heads of schools, four teacher counsellors, four non-teacher counsellors and four students. The data were collected using face to face semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document. The researcher argued that, the role of guidance and counselling services was to mould the individual to fit into the society as a responsible member. Therefore, the provision of quality guidance and counselling services are very essential in schools.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative approach was used in this study with regard to the nature of study objectives that demand reality to be constructed through an in-depth sharing of experiences of the contribution of G&CSs in addressing early pregnancies among girl students between researcher and respondents. Creswel (2003) assert that, the qualitative approach gives room for a researcher to enter the respondent's personal world in order to gain deeper and clear understanding of the roles, experiences, challenges and feelings of a certain phenomenon.

This study used a case study design. A case study was used because this study is qualitative in nature, so, it assessed and gave a picture of the real situation on the contribution of G&CSs in addressing early pregnancies among girls' students in secondary schools. Kumar (2011) as cited in Minga (2018) contends that, a case study is a design in which a particular instance or a few carefully selected cases are studied intensively, thus, the study intended to collect data from the respondents concerning their opinions with regard to the contribution of G&CSs in addressing early pregnancy among girl's students in secondary school.

This study was conducted in Central District Unguja, located at South Region in Zanzibar. This area is chosen because there had a lot of reported cases of early pregnancy in the area (UNESCO, 2022). The targeted populations of this study were head teachers, teacher counsellors, discipline teacher, and students of the selected five schools. The choice of this population was simply because they were considered as the vital respondents in the study.

According to Kothari (2004) sample size refers to the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample. In this study the total sample size was 65, respondents whereby 5 teacher counsellors, 50 students, 5 head teachers, 5 discipline teachers in five selected schools. The choice of the sample size based on the fact that the researcher was able to manage this size and investigate it thoroughly, and was also able to reach the data saturation. Gill (2020) argued that, sufficient sample sizes are necessary for quality data because the study ought to make in-depth investigation and analysis

#### ***A. DATA COLLECTION TOOLS***

The study used semi structured interview, documentary review and focus group discussion for collecting data from the respondents. The interview was conducted in Kiswahili language for making sure that it was well understood. Head teachers, teacher counsellors, and discipline teachers were interviewed to get more in-depth information about the kinds of G&CSs provided in school, the role of G&CSs in addressing early pregnancies in secondary school. Moreover, students were interviewed to find out their views on the roles of G&CSs and how the services helped them in changing their behaviour and prevent themselves in early pregnancies.

The study also used Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to collect detailed information about group feelings and opinions on the contribution of guidance and counselling services in addressing early pregnancy. FGD allowed the participants to share ideas and discuss about some responses raised before coming to the finale conclusion. FGDs were conducted using Kiswahili language for easy understanding and interaction among the respondents. The respondent's responses were recorded and then transcribed for easy analysis and the discussion was translated into English language for reporting. This study also employed documentary review to collect most valid information found in different documents. The documents include articles, reports and other related documents that contained relevant information for the study.

#### ***B. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY***

To ensure validity of the results, data were triangulated through the use of multiple methods like focus group discussion, interview and documentary review, the researcher used varieties of techniques in order to enhance the tools and increase the validity of the study

Also, during the field work, a pretested method of the instruments was done by the researcher as the way to ensure the reliability of the data, interview, focus group discussion and documentation were used. Therefore, the reliability of the gathered data during field study was ensures by the instruments that have been used in the study which were well prepared and pre-tested before field work.

#### ***C. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION***

The study considered all ethical issues of research including getting the permission of doing research from appropriate authorities, such as the permission from the Second Vice President's Office, The State University of Zanzibar, also permission from the Central District and Head Teachers. Likewise, the researcher informed the study respondents about the nature and objectives of the study and asked for their consent before starting data collection exercise. Participants were also ensured of their safety and rights.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study aimed at exploring the contributions of guidance and counseling services in addressing early pregnancy among girl students in secondary school in the Central District of Unguja. This section of result was guided by the two research questions.

**Research Question 1:** What kind of guidance and counseling services are provided to female Students in secondary schools in Central District Unguja?

The study revealed that common kind of counseling offered in school were concerning academic issues, and other types of guidance such as prevention of early pregnancy were not given priority in the studied areas. These results were supported by MoEVT (2018) that counseling session in many schools in Zanzibar are being used to discuss academic problems. However, guidance and counseling services programmes' goals in schools is to assists students in balancing their skills, interests, and values so the students may completely develop well in their studies and other issues.

The result in Table 1 shows that, (73.3%) respondents among the teachers revealed the academic guidance were the most offered kind of guidance and counseling services in a studied area. Furthermore, (66.6%) respondents among the teachers confirmed, prevention of early pregnancies kind of guidance was less common. This indicated that, guidance and counseling services in studied area was not regarded as powerful instrument for prevention of early pregnancies among the teacher and students. The teacher counselors prefer academic-based guidance over other types of guidance, such as prevention of early pregnancies and carrier guidance.

According to Mtima (2018); Boitt (2016) guidance and counseling services is experienced differently due to the different status of economics and education in a particular country. In relation to this, young girl students in studied areas revealed to involve in love affair because of low economic status from their home. Although guidance and counseling are available in many centralized nations, their advantages have not yet been fully realized in third-world and emerging nations.

In general, guidance and counseling are important components of the educational system, during the times of personal hardship and as well as a part of learning process development, it should always be available to individuals or groups. It gives children the power to decide for themselves, enables them deal with behavioral difficulties, helps them develop coping skills, and helps them overcome whatever obstacles they may be experiencing both inside and outside of the school.

**Research Question 2:** What are the roles of G&CSs in addressing early pregnancy among girl students in secondary school in Central District Unguja?

According to the study result, majority of respondents in studied areas revealed that guidance and counseling do not help to solve the problem of early pregnancy however the primary goal of guidance and counselling services is to support the student's improvement academically, socially, emotionally and personally. G&CSs assists students in achieving this goal by helping them better understand who they are and how to solve the challenges that arise on a regular basis. The study also revealed that, the number of cases for counseled student is not satisfied, similarly the student do not show fully respect in and out of school since they involve in love affair during their studies.

The table 2 shows, (53.3%) of respondents among the teachers commented that, guidance and counseling services do not help to solve the problem of early pregnancy in Central district. Although the G&CSs in school help in changing the behavior of the students in school, (73.3%) of respondents among teachers in studied areas confirmed that there is no successively of counseled student in school. Again, (60%) respondents revealed that the students had not changed, they are still ignored



the roles and regulations of the school and also they behaved badly in front of their teachers. Similarly, (53.3%) of respondents among the teachers revealed that students in secondary school are involve in love affairs, both with other students and with people outside of school.

Based on this finding, it is obvious that, implementation of guidance and counseling services in Zanzibar secondary schools has been negatively received, and this is due to various reasons as mentioned by the respondents during the interview in the studied areas such as cultural custom and peer pressure. According to UNESCO (2021) peer pressure is one of the risk factors for early pregnancy in Zanzibar. This implies that student get pressure from the fellow students and, as a result falls in love and get pregnant at the wrong age.

**5. TABLES, FIGURES, AND GRAPHS**

**Table 1: Guidance and Counselling Services Provided in Schools**

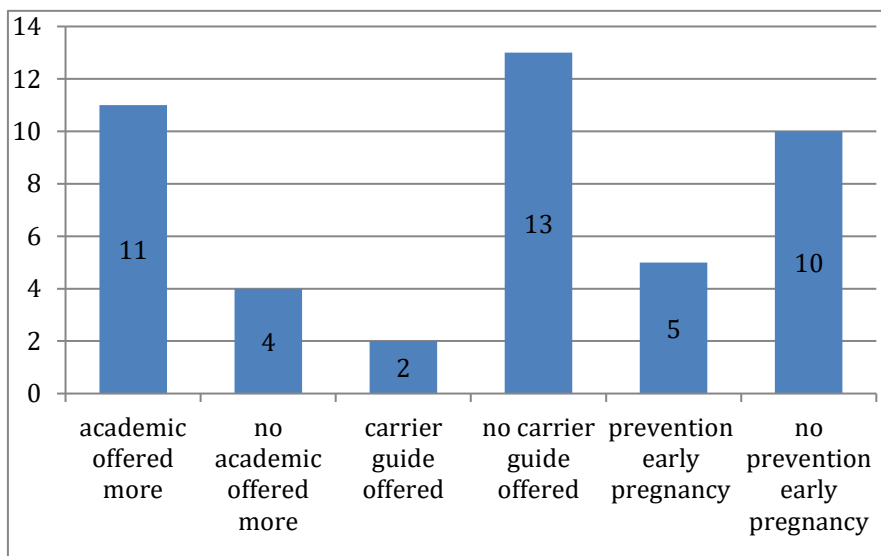
Types of respondents	Themes	Categories	S. Categories	Frequencies	Tools
Teachers		Academic	Provided	11(73.3%)	15(100%)
			Not provided	4(26.7%)	
	Kind of guidance	Carrier guide	Provided	2(13.3%)	15(100%)
			Not provided	13(86.7%)	
		Prevention of early pregnancy	Provided	5(33.3%)	15(100%)
			Not provided	10(66.6%)	
Students		Academic	Provided	41(82%)	50(100%)
			Not provided	9(18%)	
	Kind of guidance	Carrier guide	Provided	4(8%)	50(100%)
			Not provided	46(92%)	
		Prevention of early pregnancy	Provided	20(40%)	50(100%)
			Not provided	30(60%)	

Source: Field Data, (2022)

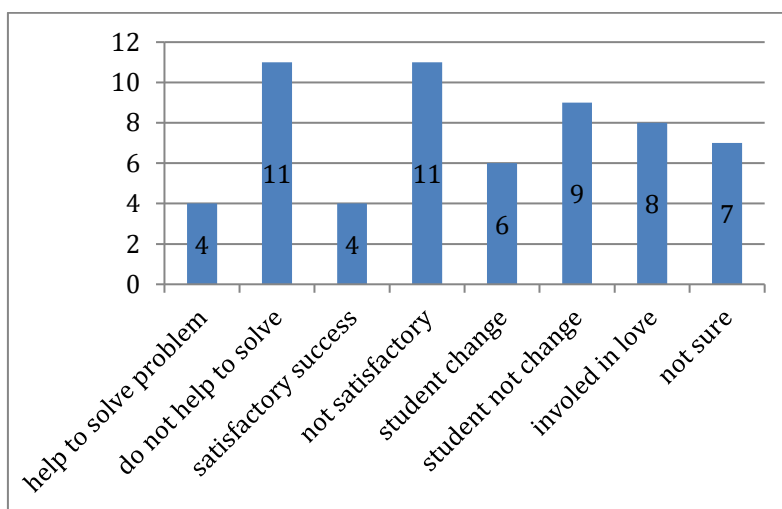
**Table 2: Roles of G&CS on Addressing Early Pregnancies in Schools**

Types of respondents	Themes	Categories	Sub categories	Frequencies	Total
Teachers	Solving the problems	Pregnancy cases	Help	7(46.7%)	15(100%)
			Not help	8(53.3%)	
		Successive student	Satisfactory	4(26.7%)	15(100%)
	Not satisfactory		11(73.3%)		
	Changing behavior	Respect	Student change	6(40%)	15(100%)
			Not change	9(60%)	
Involving in love affairs		Do involve	7(53.3%)	15(100%)	
	Not sure	8(46.7%)			
Students	Solving the problems	Pregnancy cases	Help	38(76%)	50(100%)
			Not help	12(24%)	
		Successive student	Satisfactory	15(30%)	50(100%)
	Not satisfactory		35(70%)		
	Help Changing behavior	Respect	Student change	14(28%)	50(100%)
			Not change	36(72%)	
Involving in love affairs		They involve	45(90%)	50(100%)	
	Not sure	5(10%)			

Source: Field data, (2022)



**Fig. 1: Kinds of Guidance and Counselling in Schools**



**Figure 2: Roles of guidance and counseling in schools**

**6. CONCLUSION**

According to the result, the study concluded that the academic guidance is the most kind of service offered in school leaving out direct guidance and counselling in relation to the prevention of early pregnancies. Additionally, the guidance and counselling services were not effectively used to solve the problem of early pregnancies in secondary schools in Zanzibar.

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