



IMPACT OF COUNSELLING SERVICES ON THE AWARENESS OF EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract:

Secondary school education is an acute stage in the academic and career development of students. At this level, students are expected to make important decisions regarding subject selection, higher education, vocational training, and future careers. School counselling services play a vital role in helping students to understand available educational and vocational opportunities and assist them in making appropriate decisions. The present study examined the impact of counselling services on secondary school students' awareness of educational and vocational opportunities. A descriptive survey method was used for the study. The sample consisted of 200 secondary school students selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a self-constructed Awareness of Educational and Vocational Opportunities Questionnaire. The findings revealed that students who received counselling services validated significantly higher levels of educational and vocational awareness than those who did not receive counselling services. The calculated *t*-values for both dimensions were found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The study shows that counselling services contribute significantly to students' awareness of educational corridors, vocational options, and career decision-making. It praises the strengthening of counselling programmes in secondary schools through trained counsellors, career guidance activities, and structured awareness interventions.

Keywords: Counselling Services, Educational Awareness, Vocational Awareness, Career Guidance, Secondary School Students

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Introduction:

Education is a major tool of personal, social, and national development. Among the various stages of education, secondary education inhabits a particularly important position because it prepares students for higher studies, vocational training, and future occupation. During this period, students face academic, personal, and social extensions, which also help them in making decisions that influence their educational and occupational expectations.

In the contemporary world, students must navigate a rapidly changing environment manifested by technological development, globalisation, expanding

educational choices, and shifting labour market demands. Despite the accessibility of ample educational and vocational opportunities, many adolescents lack sufficient awareness of academic streams, professional courses, scholarships, entrance examinations, skill-based programmes, and career possibilities. As a result, students often make decisions based on parental expectations, peer pressure, or incomplete information rather than informed understanding.

School counselling services are planned to bridge this gap. Through guidance, information dissemination, aptitude exploration, and decision-making provision,



counselling services help students to identify their interests, abilities, and aspirations. Such services can improve both educational awareness and vocational awareness, empowering students to plan realistic and meaningful futures.

Educational awareness refers to knowledge related to academic streams, higher education options, admission processes, scholarships, and professional courses. Vocational awareness refers to understanding occupations, vocational courses, skill requirements, job projections, and employment pathways. The present study explores the extent to which counselling services impact these dimensions among secondary school students.

Need of the Study:

Secondary school students are often required to make essential educational and vocational decisions without possessing adequate information regarding available opportunities. In many schools, counselling services remain underdeveloped or unavailable. Consequently, students may experience confusion, indecision, and uncertainty regarding future career choices.

The present study is necessary because:

1. It helps to assess the effectiveness of counselling services in enhancing educational awareness.
2. It evaluates the role of the counselling service in developing vocational awareness among adolescents.
3. It provides evidence for strengthening the school guidance and counselling programmes.
4. It contributes to informed policy formulation in line with the National Education Policy (NEP 2020).
5. It assists schools in designing effective career guidance interventions.

Aim of the Study:

To study the impact of counselling services on the awareness of educational and vocational opportunities among secondary school students.

Objectives of the Study:

- To study the awareness of educational opportunities among secondary school students.
- To study the awareness of vocational opportunities among secondary school students.
- To compare the awareness levels of students receiving counselling services and those not receiving counselling services.
- To examine the impact of counselling services on educational and vocational awareness.

Hypotheses of the Study:

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

H01: There is no significant difference in educational awareness between students who receive counselling services and students who do not receive counselling services.

H02: There is no significant difference in vocational awareness between students who receive counselling services and students who do not receive counselling services.

Methodology of the Study:

The study employed the descriptive survey method, as it was considered suitable for investigating the existing status of awareness among students and comparing groups based on access to counselling services

Sample and Data Collection:

A sample of 200 secondary school students was selected using stratified random sampling. The sample consisted of students studying in class IX of secondary schools.

Tools for Data Collection:

The following tool was used:

Awareness of Educational and Vocational Opportunities Questionnaire (Self-constructed)

Techniques of Data Analysis:

The following statistical techniques were employed:

- i) Descriptive Analysis (Mean and Standard Deviation)
- ii) Inferential Analysis (t-test)

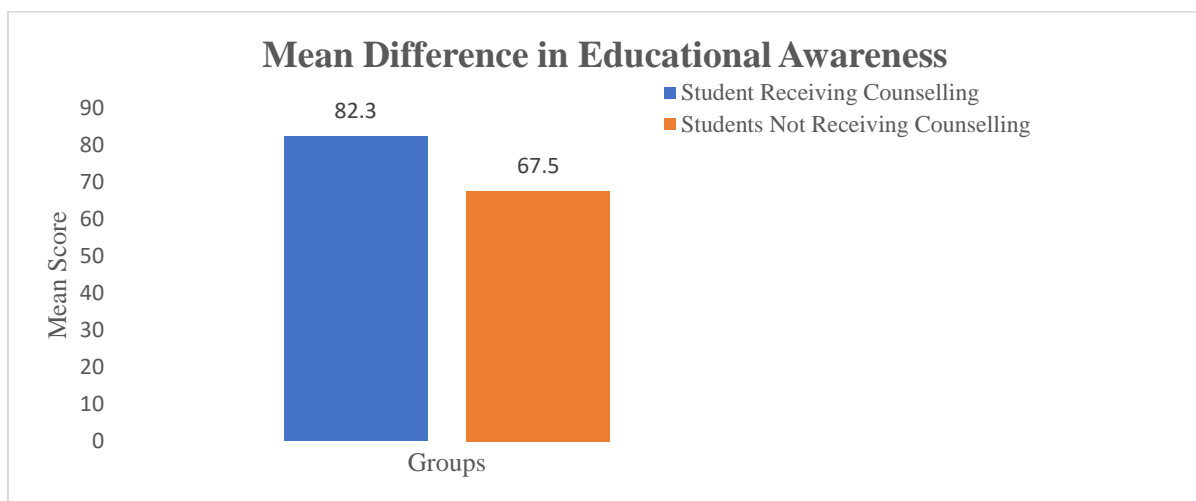


Analysis and Interpretation:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in educational awareness between students receiving counselling services and students not receiving counselling services.

Table 1: Mean Difference in Educational Awareness

| Group | N | Mean | S.D | t-value | LOS |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------|------|---------|-------------|
| Students Receiving Counselling | 100 | 82.30 | 6.80 | 9.21 | Significant |
| Students Not Receiving Counselling | 100 | 67.50 | 7.40 | | |



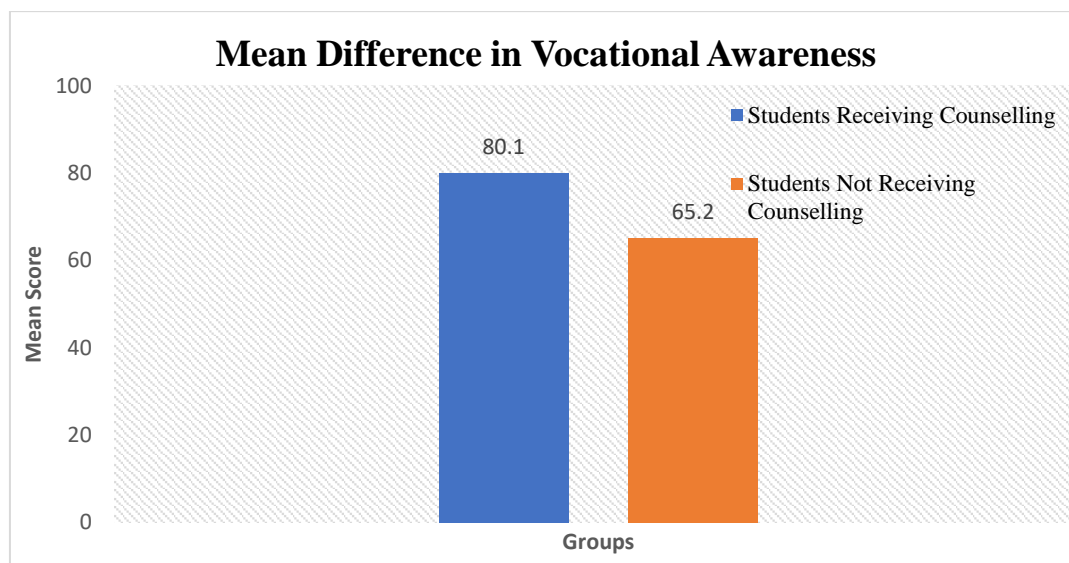
Interpretation:

The mean educational awareness score of students receiving counselling services (82.30) is substantially higher than that of students not receiving counselling services (67.50). The calculated t-value of 9.21 exceeds the critical value at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, H₀₁ is rejected. This indicates a significant difference in educational awareness in favour of students receiving counselling services.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in vocational awareness between students receiving counselling services and students not receiving counselling services.

Table 2: Mean Difference in Vocational Awareness

| Group | N | Mean | S.D | t-value | LOS |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------|------|---------|-------------|
| Students Receiving Counselling | 100 | 80.10 | 7.10 | 8.87 | Significant |
| Students Not Receiving Counselling | 100 | 65.20 | 8.20 | | |



Interpretation:

The mean of the vocational awareness score of students receiving counselling services (80.10) is higher than that of students not receiving counselling services (65.20). The calculated t-value of 8.87 is significant at the 0.05 level. Hence, H_0 is rejected. This shows that counselling services have a significant positive impact on vocational awareness.

Findings:

- Students receiving counselling services validated significantly higher educational awareness than students not receiving counselling services.
- Students receiving counselling services showed significantly greater vocational awareness.
- Counselling services certainly influenced students' knowledge of educational opportunities, career options, scholarships, and vocational pathways.
- Counselling enhanced students' confidence in educational and career decision-making.

Discussion:

The findings suggest that counselling services play an important role in broadening students' awareness of available educational and vocational opportunities. Students who received structured guidance are better able to understand the different educational streams, identify suitable career pathways, and make appropriate choices. This supports the view that school counselling is not purely remedial in nature, but

developmental and preventive, helping students prepare for future academic and occupational roles.

The results are consistent with the broader literature on school counselling, which emphasises its role in career development, academic planning, and psychosocial support. In the context of current educational reforms and career diversification, school counselling has become increasingly important for ensuring that students are equipped with relevant information and decision-making skills.

Conclusion:

The findings of the study reveal that counselling services have a substantial impact on improving students' awareness of educational and vocational opportunities at the secondary school level. Students who actively engage in counselling programs demonstrate a greater understanding of various educational options, career pathways, and vocational prospects. These services support students in making knowledgeable educational and career choices,

developing effective career plans, and fostering overall personal growth. The result highlights the importance of introducing guidance and counselling services in schools by appointing qualified counsellors and regularly organising career guidance and awareness programs to support students' future development.

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