

Parents' and Students' Perceptions of Secondary School Counselling in Nagaland, India: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Based on the notion that stakeholder perceptions affect service effectiveness, this study looked at how parents and students felt about Guidance and Counselling services in Nagaland schools. Literature review revealed the absence of prior research on this issue within the state. Adopting a descriptive survey design, the study was guided by two research questions emphasizing on parents' and students' perception. Sample comprising of 100 secondary school students from Classes 9 and 10 and 100 parents, were drawn using simple random sampling from three schools across three districts. Data were collected using two validated questionnaires and analysed utilizing frequencies and percentages. Findings revealed the endorsement of Guidance and Counselling services by both stakeholders as being essential for holistic development, with beneficial effects on mental health, social skills, academic performance, emotional well-being, and behavioral adjustment. Nevertheless, lack of resources, lack of professional training, and poor integration were among the major challenges noted.

Keywords: Guidance and Counselling services; perception; secondary students'; parents'; Nagaland

Introduction

Guidance and Counselling are defined as an enlightened process whereby people use self-awareness to promote development and constructive adjustment (Kolo, 2001). Guidance provides information for informed decision-making, while counselling supports students in managing personal, social, and psychological challenges. Together, they help students overcome academic and personal difficulties, build self-awareness and confidence, regulate learning and behaviour, and promote holistic development and emotional resilience (Praveen & Akhtar, 2023). The needs of learners in secondary schools are constantly changing as the society is changing paving way for counselling services to be up scaled to address both academic and other issues (Godfrey, 2022).

The effectiveness and use of Guidance and Counselling services are significantly influenced by perception. Perception is the primary means through which humans cognitively engage with the world, forming the foundation of all conceptual knowledge (Efron, 1968). When approached from psychology, as one example, perception is closely linked with embodied action; it involves selectively processing and integrating sensory stimuli based on associated memory and it is shaped by each perceiver's selective

attentional focus (Hansen & Vass, 2022). Perceptions of the stakeholders, particularly parents and students, significantly affect the acceptance, effectiveness, and sustainability of counselling services (Mundia, 1993, as cited in Arfasa, 2018) as parents and students are primary stakeholders in the educational setting. Understanding parents' perceptions enables counsellors to strengthen parental involvement and improve the delivery of guidance services (Harrison et al., 2023). Collaboration with parents also facilitates early identification of mental health concerns and timely intervention, as parents expect counsellors to provide academic, behavioural, and career-related support (Collins et al., 2024). Students' perceptions directly influence their engagement, trust, and willingness to seek counselling services. Negative or inaccurate perceptions have been associated with the failure of counselling programmes and reduced utilization of available services (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). Students with positive attitudes toward help-seeking are more likely to access counselling support, whereas negative attitudes hinder effective use of these services (Yunis, 2006). Assessing the perceptions of parents and students therefore provides valuable feedback for improving guidance programmes (Hughey et al., 1993). Children today face increased stress and anxiety due to modern complexities, while teachers and parents often lack the professional expertise to address these challenges, increasing the need for counselling services in Nagaland (Rume, 2023). Counselling serves as a proactive intervention for addressing mental health concerns, academic pressures, and cultural adjustments, highlighting the critical need for a robust counselling infrastructure in the state (Khape, 2024). Despite the increasing need for counselling support among secondary school students in Nagaland, no research has been found examining stakeholders' perceptions of Guidance and Counselling services in the state. Therefore, the current study aims to compare how parents and students view Guidance and Counselling services in secondary schools in Nagaland in order to improve counselling practices, inform policy decisions, and foster the academic and psychosocial development of students.

Reviews

Guidance and Counselling services have been the subject of numerous studies, with a focus on how parents and students perceive them. Eyo et al. (2010) discovered that students' opinions of Guidance and Counselling services were largely favorable, with notable variations according to gender and school location. Comfort (2014) reported a strong correlation between students' attitudes and their perceptions of school counselling, with low perceptions negatively impacting attitudes and being influenced by socioeconomic and educational characteristics. Eliamani et al. (2014) found that, even in the absence of licensed counsellors, students' views regarding their studies and career choices were greatly impacted by the availability to Guidance and Counselling services. Mander (2015) highlighted that unfavorable opinions held by both students and teachers reduced the efficacy of Guidance and Counselling services in Kenyan secondary public schools. Emde (2015) reported that school counsellors improve student achievement by empowering parents, building relationships of support, and increasing parental involvement. Arfasa (2018) revealed that although South West Ethiopian instructors and students acknowledged the necessity for Guidance and Counselling services, they had unfavorable opinions about their ability to handle personal and professional issues. Atsuwe & Albert (2018) found that, in spite of the lack of counselling skills, Guidance and Counselling programs had a favorable impact on students' academic performance in Nigeria. Jeyachandran & Kumar (2018) reported that successful school counselling was hampered by parental expectations and views, suggesting the need for evidence-based procedures and improved counsellor training. Wilder & Ray (2018) revealed that parents preferred school

counsellors to concentrate mostly on academic guidance, behavior-related counselling, and coordination. Dhiwal (2019) noted that Guidance and Counselling services provided by NCERT enhanced student behavior, academic performance, and the school environment while highlighting the necessity of institutional assistance and qualified counsellors. Anyi (2020) highlighted that good Guidance and Counselling in Cameroonian schools improves instruction, student growth, and educational initiatives, emphasizing the need for increased understanding and acceptance. Kiptala & Kipruto (2021) discovered that students in Kenyan secondary schools had a favorable opinion of Guidance and Counselling services and that they significantly improved their academic performance. Saxena & Wadhwani (2022) found that, on general, Indian school children had favorable opinions about Guidance and Counselling, with neither gender nor age having a major impact. Godfrey (2022) reported that Guidance and Counselling services had a favorable impact on secondary school students' satisfaction with their academic needs in Kenya. Rahman & Azmi (2023) emphasized the value of Guidance and Counselling in high school for professional decision-making, personal growth, and academic adjustment. Harrison et al. (2023) revealed that while parents appreciated school counselling as a means of providing mental health support, participation was hampered by ambiguous counsellor roles, stigma, and confidentiality issues. Khape (2023) highlighted the necessity of mentorship and counselling services in Nagaland's higher education system to promote students' overall development and mental health. Parveen & Akhtar (2023) reported how Guidance and Counselling services aid in students' academic, social, and emotional growth, highlighting how crucial it is to incorporate counselling within educational systems. Perera (2023) discovered that, despite favorable student opinions of Guidance and Counselling units in Sri Lanka, their effective use was constrained by a lack of awareness and poor implementation. Mukandoli et al. (2024) reported that students of private secondary schools in Rwanda thought Guidance and Counselling services were useful for raising self-esteem, behavior, and academic achievement. Collins et al. (2024) highlighted that although restricted role visibility hampered collaboration, parents respected the academic, behavioral, and career support aspects of counsellors. Deb & Deb (2025) emphasized the need for family-based counselling and the pervasiveness of mental health issues among Indian school children as well as the dearth of school-based help. Ibrahim et al. (2025) revealed that although teacher recommendations increased engagement, students' use of Guidance and Counselling services in Ghana remained low despite intermediate knowledge because of stigma and trust issues.

Research Questions

Research questions are concrete questions, carefully composed in order to address the research objectives, to constitute a fair operationalization and embodiment of a valid set of indicators for addressing the research objectives, providing answers which address the research purposes with warranted data (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 165). Two research questions were used in the study:

1. What are parents' perceptions about the Guidance and Counselling services offered in Nagaland's secondary schools?
2. What are students' perceptions regarding the Guidance and Counselling services offered in their educational institutions?

Methodology

Research Method: Descriptive survey method was employed for the present study.

Research Tool: To fulfil the research questions, two structured questionnaires were developed for parents

and students, each initially comprising 20 items. Content validity was established through consultation with nine experts from the Departments of Psychology, Teacher Education, and Education at Nagaland University, resulting in the revision and elimination of the irrelevant items. Face validity was assessed by two practicing school counsellors from secondary schools in the Kohima district, whose feedback led to further refinement, including the addition of relevant items and the removal of unsuitable ones. Pilot study was eventually conducted with 10 parents and 40 students from Classes 9 and 10 in selected secondary schools of the Kohima and Dimapur districts to examine the clarity, relevance, and practicality of the tool. Analysis of the pilot data indicated that all retained items were appropriate and feasible for administration, leading to the finalization of questionnaires comprising 10 items each for parents and students to assess their perceptions of Guidance and Counselling services.

Sample: Well-defined small representative portion of the population is called sample (Sansanwal, 2020, p. 36). The study sample comprised 200 participants which includes 100 secondary school students (Classes 9 and 10) drawn from three NBSE (Nagaland Board of School Education)-recognized secondary schools located in the Mokokchung, Kohima, and Dimapur districts of Nagaland using simple random sampling, and 100 parents of those students availing Guidance and Counselling services, using convenient sampling.

Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages with SPSS (Version 20), and tabulated to present comparative responses for each item. A frequency table or distribution shows how often each response (a value) was given by the respondents to each item (a variable). The frequency for each value is listed in absolute raw numbers of occurrence and in percentage relative to the number of total responses (Nardi, 2017, p. 134). Seven tables are presented, covering ten identified aspects: preference for Guidance and Counselling services, academic impact, institutional support and service utilization, emotional competencies, interpersonal and decision-making skills, behavioural adjustment, cognitive development, mental health support, perceived and expected benefits, and implementation barriers, and the results are interpreted comparatively based on the statistical results.

Results

Table 1: Parents and Students Preference of Guidance and Counselling services in Schools

Parents Response	f	%	Students Response	f	%
Yes	100	100%	Yes	96	96%
No	0	0%	No	4	4%

Table 1 indicates a highly positive attitude with regard to the preference of Guidance and Counselling services (Guidance and Counselling services) among both parents and students. All parents (100%) preferred these services in school, indicating universal approval and perceived importance. Congruently, majority of students (96%) favoured Guidance and Counselling services in school, reflecting strong acceptability and relevance, while only a small (4%) did not favour.

Table 2: Parents' Views on Guidance and Counselling Support, Students' Utilization of Services, and Perceptions of Their Effects on Academic Performance

Aspects	Response Category	f	%
Parents' Perception of School Support	Yes	93	93
	No	7	7
Students' Utilization of Guidance and Counselling Services	Academic counselling	53	21.8
	Personal and emotional counselling	39	16.0
	Career counselling	82	33.7
	Social skills development	53	21.8
	Conflict resolution and peer mediation	14	5.8
Parents' Perceived Contribution of Guidance and Counselling services to Academic Performance	Yes	91	91
	No	9	9
Students' Perceived Contribution to Academic Performance	Improved study skills and time management	65	24.5
	Enhanced motivation and goal setting	64	24.2
	Better coping with academic stress	22	8.3
	Clearer career path and future planning	70	26.4
	Increased classroom participation and engagement	44	16.6

Table 2 shows strong concordance between parents' perceptions of school-level support and students' reported utilization of the services. Majority of parents (93%) perceived adequate institutional promotion and support, reflecting high service visibility.

Consistently, students reported utilization of various types of these services, with career counselling most frequently accessed (33.7%), followed by academic counselling (21.8%) and social skills development (21.8%). Utilization of personal and emotional counselling (16.0%) and conflict resolution and peer mediation (5.8%).

Data also shows strong congruence between parental perceptions and students' reported experiences pertaining to the academic impact of Guidance and Counselling services. Majority of parents (91%) thought to have a favorable impact on academic achievement, while (9%) reported no impact.

Students correspondingly, reported specific academic outcomes, including enhanced career clarity and future planning (26.4%), improved study skills and time management (24.5%), increased motivation and goal setting (24.2%), greater classroom engagement (16.6%), and improved academic stress coping (8.3%).

Table 3: Parents' and Students' Perceptions of Guidance and Counselling in Emotional Support, Relationship Building, and Responsible Decision-Making

Aspects	Response	f	%
Parents' Perception of Effectiveness in Meeting Emotional Needs	Yes, always	32	32
	Yes, sometimes	59	59
	Rarely	5	5
	Not at all	4	4
Students' Perceived Helpfulness in Meeting Emotional Needs	Very helpful	38	38
	Somewhat helpful	52	52
	Not helpful	10	10
Parents' Perception of Improvement in Building Positive Relationships and Responsible Decision-Making	Yes, greatly	46	46
	Yes, somewhat	48	48
	Not much	4	4
	Not at all	2	2
Students' Perception of Improvement in Building Positive Relationships and Responsible Decision-Making	Yes, greatly	32	32
	Yes, somewhat	67	67
	Not much	1	1

Table 3 reveals strong coherence between parental perceptions and students' experiences regarding the impact of Guidance and Counselling services in addressing emotional needs. Most parents reported moderate (59%) to high (32%) effectiveness, with only a small percent perceived limited (5%) and no effectiveness (4%).

Similarly, students reported predominantly positive outcomes, with (52%) indicating moderate helpfulness and (38%) high helpfulness in addressing emotional concerns, and only (10%) reporting no perceived benefit.

With respect to parents' and students' perceptions of Guidance and Counselling services in improving positive relationships and responsible decision-making, the responses indicate a strong agreement. Among parents, (46%) reported high impact and (48%) moderate impact, with minimal reports of limited (4%) and no impact (2%).

Similarly, students reported predominantly positive outcomes, with (67%) indicating moderate improvement and (32%) high improvement, and only (1%) reporting limited benefit.

Table 4: Parents' and Students' Perspectives on the Contribution of Guidance and Counselling Services to Behavioural Adjustment and Cognitive Development

Aspects	Response Category	f	%
Parents' Perception of Contribution to Behavioural Adjustment	Improving communication and social skills	61	24.0
	Resolving conflicts and peer relationships	41	16.1
	Managing anger and frustration	34	13.4
	Overcoming behavioural challenges	47	18.5
	Developing positive habits and behaviour	66	26.0
	Others	5	2.0
Students' Perceived Helpfulness in Behavioural Adjustment	Very helpful	67	67
	Somewhat helpful	33	33
	Not helpful	0	0
Parents' Perception of Contribution to Cognitive Development	Enhancing study skills and time management	47	23.3
	Increasing motivation and goal setting	60	29.7
	Developing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities	37	18.3
	Improving decision making	54	26.7
	Others	4	2.0
Students' Perceived Helpfulness in Cognitive Development	Very helpful	31	31
	Somewhat helpful	60	60
	Not helpful	9	9

Table 4 shows strong congruence between parental perceptions and students' experiences in relation to how Guidance and Counselling services aid in behavioral adjustment. Parents identified key areas of impact as the development of positive habits and behaviours (26%) enhancement of communication and social skills (24%), followed by overcoming behavioural challenges (18.5%), conflict and peer relationship resolution (16.1%), and anger and frustration management (13.4%).

Consistently, students reported high perceived effectiveness, with (67%) rating the services as very helpful and (33%) as somewhat helpful in addressing behavioural issues, and none reporting not helpful.

Regarding cognitive development data indicates that parents perceive Guidance and Counselling services as substantially contributing to students' cognitive adjustment. Perceived outcomes included enhanced

motivation and goal setting (29.7%), improved decision-making skills (26.7%), better study skills and time management (23.3%), and strengthened critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (18.3%). Correspondingly, students largely reported positive effects, with (31%) rating the services as very helpful and (60%) as somewhat helpful in enhancing cognitive and academic skills, while only (9%) reported not helpful.

Table 5: Parents' and Students' Views on Support for Students' Mental Health in Counselling Services

Aspects	Response Category	f	%
Parents' perception of importance	Yes	90	90
	No	10	10
Parents' observed contributions to mental health	Providing private space to discuss mental health	59	29.1
	Teaching healthy coping strategies	59	29.1
	Creating supportive peer groups	55	27.1
	Providing immediate help during crises	30	14.8
Students' perceived helpfulness	Very helpful	31	31
	Somewhat helpful	60	60
	Not helpful	9	9

Table 5 reveals that parents largely perceive Guidance and Counselling services as prioritizing students' mental health, with (90%) affirming adequate emphasis and (10%) reporting insufficient attention. Parents identified key mental health focused practices, including provision of confidential spaces for disclosure (29.1%), psychoeducation on mental health and coping strategies (29.1%), and the facilitation of safe peer support groups (27.1%), with fewer reports of crisis intervention mechanisms (14.8%). Consistent with these perceptions, students predominantly reported positive mental health outcomes, with (31%) rating services as very helpful and (60%) as somewhat helpful in managing concerns such as stress and anxiety, while (9%) reported not helpful.

Table 6: Parents' Perceptions and Students' Expectations of Guidance and Counselling services

Aspects	Response Category	f	%
Parents' perceived benefits	Improve academic performance	64	21.5
	Enhance students' emotional well-being	60	20.1
	Support career planning and decision-making	71	23.8
	Develop social and interpersonal skills	63	21.1
	Address behavioural issues	38	12.8
	Others	2	0.7
Students' expected outcomes	Academic support and planning	77	27.3
	Emotional support and stress management	38	13.5

Aspects	Response Category	f	%
	Career guidance and exploration	77	27.3
	Peer relationship and conflict resolution	32	11.3
	Personal development and self-esteem building	58	20.6
	Others	0	0

Table 6 illustrates that parents perceive Guidance and Counselling services as providing multidimensional benefits across students' social, emotional, behavioral, academic, and academic. The most frequently reported benefit was support for career planning and decision-making (23.8%), followed by improved academic performance (21.5%) and enhanced social and interpersonal skills (21.1%). Emotional well-being was also substantially recognized (20.1%), while behavioural management was reported less frequently (12.8%), and negligible responses in the "other" category (0.7%).

From the students' views, expectations were primarily oriented toward academic support and planning (27.3%) and career guidance (27.3%), closely in alignment with parental views. Personal development and self-esteem enhancement (20.6%) were also salient, whereas emotional support and stress management (13.5%) and peer relationship and conflict resolution (11.3%) were comparatively lower priorities.

Table 7: Parents and Students Perceived Challenges in Implementing Guidance and Counselling Services in Schools

Response Category	Parents Response		Students Response	
	f	%	f	%
Limited awareness among parents and students	66	37.3%	57	31.5%
Insufficient resources	36	20.3%	40	22.1%
Inadequate training for counselling staff	31	17.5%	26	14.4%
Need for stronger integration into the curriculum	43	24.3%	58	32.0%

Table 7 shows that both parents and students perceive multiple structural and awareness-related barriers to the successful execution of Guidance and Counselling services. Among parents, limited awareness emerged as the primary constraint (37.3%), followed by inadequate curricular integration (24.3%).

Students, however, most frequently identified insufficient integration of counselling services into the academic program as the major barrier (32.0%), with limited awareness also prominently reported (31.5%). Resource constraints were comparably reported by parents (20.3%) and students (22.1%). Inadequate professional training of counselling personnel was also identified by both parents (17.5%) and students (14.4%).

Discussion

The comparative study of parents' and students' perceptions of secondary school counselling in Nagaland shows strong alignment between both groups across 10 key aspects. With regard to the preference for

Guidance and Counselling services in secondary schools, the findings indicate a high level of concurrence. The near-universal student acceptance and universal parental preference show that Guidance and Counselling services are widely acknowledged as being crucial to resolving the social, emotional, and intellectual difficulties that adolescents encounter in a socio-educational context. This agreement shows that parents and students in Nagaland are becoming more conscious of the necessity of Guidance and Counselling support. This finding is supported by Saxena & Wadhvani (2022), who reported that students had a favorable attitude on requesting Guidance and Counselling services.

Parents' perceptions and students' experiences are strongly aligned when it comes to institutional support and students' use of the services. The majority of parents (93%) report that Guidance and Counselling services are adequately promoted at the school level, and students actively use a variety of its services. Students' reported use of institutional support, especially in career and academic counselling, is in line with parents' positive perceptions of it, demonstrating that achievement-oriented needs are prioritized and services are effectively visible. This finding is consistent with Flames in the News (2024), which reported that (68%) of students in India have access to counselling services, (25%) lack access and (7%) have no access. The lower utilization of personal, emotional, and conflict-related services by students suggests possible stigma, limited awareness, or lower perceived need, highlighting areas for strengthening outreach and normalization of these supports in Nagaland secondary schools.

Concerning academic impact, Parents largely believed that Guidance and Counselling services had a positive academic influence; (91%) of them reported overall improvement. Emde (2015) provided confirmation for this finding, stating that parents believed school counsellors helped their children in three important areas: academic improvement, social-emotional development, and college readiness. Through specific academic outcomes, such as improved career clarity (26.4%), study skills and time management (24.5%), motivation and goal setting (24.2%), increased classroom engagement (16.6%), and improved coping with academic stress (8.3%), students confirmed this, showing that counselling supports learning readiness and resilience in addition to academic performance. These findings were consistent with (Godfrey, 2022; Atsuwe & Albert, 2018), who reported that the provision of Guidance and Counselling services is linked to higher students' academic satisfaction and positively impacts their academic performance. Thus, consistent with findings from studies conducted in diverse contexts, Guidance and Counselling services also play a significant role in enhancing students' academic outcomes in the context of Nagaland.

Regarding emotional needs concern, parents reported moderate to high effectiveness of the services (32% "always effective"; 59% "sometimes effective"), while students reported higher to moderate helpfulness (38% "very helpful"; 52% "somewhat helpful"). This finding is in contrast with Kanus (2017), who found that though many students perceived Guidance and Counselling services as important in addressing student emotional needs however there are many who are undecided or do not feel that the services are helpful. This finding also contrasts with the study by the Department of School Education, Government of Nagaland (2024), which found that students exhibited low or emerging emotional regulation and stress management skills, experiencing difficulty managing emotions and coping with stress at home, with peers, and in school settings. These contrasting findings suggest that, within the context of Nagaland, Guidance and Counselling services may be becoming more responsive and effective in addressing students' emotional needs compared to earlier study findings. While previous studies indicated limitations in students' emotional regulation and mixed perceptions of counselling effectiveness, the present findings reflect a more positive shift in both parental and student perceptions.

With regard to parents' and students' perceptions of improvement in building positive relationships and making responsible decisions through counselling services, (46%) of parents reported a high impact and (48%) a moderate impact, with only (4%) noting limited impact and (2%) no impact. Comparably, (32%) of students reported significant improvement, (67%) indicated moderate improvement, and only (1%) showed least benefit. This high level of agreement indicates that, in the context of Nagaland, both parents and students are aware of how well counselling services promote socio-emotional growth. Parents' assessments of strong impact show their awareness of the overall advantages, while students' response on moderate development might represent gradual advancement over time. These results highlight how beneficial counselling is for fostering interpersonal skills and responsible decision-making.

With respect to behavioural adjustment, the experiences of the students and the opinions of the parents were highly aligned. In support of Dhiwal (2019), who emphasized parents' recognition of counselling for behavioral adjustment and holistic development, parents reported the main areas of impact as developing positive habits and behaviours (26%) and improving communication and social skills (24%). These were followed by addressing behavioural challenges (18.5%), resolving conflicts (16.1%), and managing anger (13.4%). Similarly, Praveen & Akhtar (2023), who reported the function of counselling in addressing socio-emotional and behavioral problems, (67%) of students assessed the services as very useful, (33%) as moderately helpful, and none reported not helpful. These results demonstrate the effectiveness of counselling in Nagaland secondary schools in fostering positive behaviours, social skills, and conflict resolution, indicating the importance of maintaining such services for the comprehensive development of adolescents.

In terms of cognitive and academic development, parents noted gains in motivation and goal setting (29.7%), decision-making skills (26.7%), study skills and time management (23.3%), and critical thinking (18.3%). These opinions were strongly supported by the responses of the students, who reported moderate to high helpfulness in (91%) of cases, demonstrating the positive influence of Guidance and Counselling services on cognitive engagement and learning processes. These results demonstrate how Guidance and Counselling services support critical thinking, goal orientation, and decision-making skills necessary for negotiating academic paths and life decisions in Nagaland's changing socio-educational context.

Support for mental health was highly approved; according to (90%) of parents, schools place a high priority on students' mental health by providing private areas, coping skills instruction, peer support, and crisis intervention. With (91%) of students rating moderate to high helpfulness, the responses from the students were consistent, indicating that school-based counselling serves as an accessible and efficient system of mental health assistance in Nagaland secondary schools. These findings are in contrast with (Deb & Deb, 2025; Are Indian Schools & Colleges Ready to Prioritize Students' Mental Health and Wellness? 2026), both of which reported that most schools and colleges in India lack adequate mental health support systems, including mechanisms to identify at-risk students and provide timely intervention. These contrasting findings indicate that, in Nagaland, secondary schools appear to be more proactive in providing mental health support through counselling services, despite broader gaps reported at the national level.

In terms of perceived advantages and expectations, the findings reveal that parents most strongly emphasized career planning (23.8%) and academic improvement (21.5%), whereas students primarily prioritized academic support (27.3%) and career guidance (27.3%). Emotional and behavioural dimensions received comparatively lower emphasis, particularly emotional support (13.5%) and peer relationship and conflict resolution (11.3%). These findings indicate that Guidance and Counselling

services in Nagaland are largely viewed as mechanisms for academic success and career readiness, signifying the need to strengthen attention to students' psychosocial and emotional development for a more balanced approach.

Concerning implementation obstacles, both parents and students reported largely similar challenges. A lack of awareness (parents 37.3%; students 31.5%), inadequate curricular integration (parents 24.3%; students 32.0%), resource constraints (parents 20.3%; students 22.1%), and insufficient professional training (parents 17.5%; students 14.4%) were among the main obstacles to successful implementation that were identified by both stakeholders. These results show that the efficient provision of Guidance and Counselling services is severely hampered by deficiencies in professional capacity, awareness, resource allocation, and curriculum embedding. These findings were corroborated by (Marbaniang, 2017; Thomas, George, & Jain, 2017; Batra & Pyari, 2019; & Rahman & Azm, 2023), who documented systemic flaws in Guidance and Counselling services in India, such as policy gaps that restrict program efficacy, resource shortages like the absence of specialized counselling facilities, and ongoing implementation obstacles brought on by inadequate infrastructure and restricted access to professional assistance. Students' increased focus on curriculum integration emphasizes how important it is to systematically integrate counselling into the academic framework in order to increase its impact and accessibility in Nagaland's secondary schools.

Recommendations of the Findings

There is a clear need to operationalize Guidance and Counselling services as an integral component of the secondary school system in Nagaland. Given the strong degree of support from parents and students, state education authorities ought to create explicit policy directives requiring structured counselling programs in all secondary schools, complete with responsibilities, standards, and accountability systems. Counselling shouldn't continue to be a supplementary service, as indicated by the students' emphasis on the need for improved integration. It is possible to improve accessibility, lessen stigma, and guarantee continuous participation by including life skills education, career counselling, socio-emotional learning, and mental health awareness into the normal curriculum.

The necessity to hire certified school counsellors and give teachers ongoing in-service training so they may serve as first-level support staff is highlighted by the professional expertise gap that has been observed. Collaborations with academic institutions, mental health facilities, and other associations related to the field can facilitate the supervision and development of skills. Professional training and capacity building need to be reinforced.

Initiatives to raise awareness and sensitize teachers, parents, and children must be expanded. The entire range of Guidance and Counselling services, especially personal, emotional, and conflict-related counselling, which are currently underutilized, can be better understood through orientation programs, workshops, and community involvement initiatives.

Given the constraints revealed by the findings about the lack of resources, attention must be paid to infrastructure development and resource distribution. To improve service effectiveness, dedicated counselling facilities that guarantee confidentiality are necessary, as are suitable resources and time slots that fit into the school calendar.

Given the high level of parental and students support, schools should formalize and improve school-based counselling services by making sure that there are enough resources, qualified counsellors, and ongoing

private spaces, coping-skills programs, peer support, and crisis-intervention services available to maintain easily accessible and efficient mental health care.

A mechanism for regular monitoring and evaluation should be instituted to assess service utilization, outcomes, and stakeholder satisfaction. Incorporating feedback from both parents and students will help ensure that Guidance and Counselling services remain responsive to evolving academic, emotional, and developmental needs.

Conclusion

The study examined and compared parents' and students' perceptions of Guidance and Counselling (Guidance and Counselling) services in secondary schools in Nagaland, effectively addressing the research problem. Findings reveal strong alignment between both groups across 10 aspects, including preference, utilization, academic impact, emotional support, and developmental outcomes. Both parents and students widely recognize Guidance and Counselling services as essential and beneficial, indicating their growing acceptance and relevance within the school system. The study highlights a significant and positive shift toward the recognition of counselling services as integral to students' academic and holistic development. While academic and career-related services are highly valued, comparatively lower utilization of emotional and personal counselling points to the need for increased awareness and normalization of these areas. The findings imply the need for stronger institutionalization of Guidance and Counselling services through curricular integration, professional training, and improved resource allocation. However, the study's limited sample size and focus on only three schools restrict generalizability. Future research should include larger, more diverse samples, extend to other educational levels, and incorporate qualitative approaches to better understand underutilized aspects of counselling.

Limitations

Only three secondary schools from three districts in Nagaland were included, which would limit the data's generalizability to other districts or educational environments in the state. Only 200 sample, 100 parents and 100 secondary school students were selected for the present study, which may not fully represent the range of perspectives found in the broader population. And only secondary schools in Nagaland were included in the study's scope; therefore, the findings cannot be extended to primary, higher secondary, or other educational levels.

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