To Do or Not To Do: Rural Secondary School Teachers' Perceived Self-Efficacy Levels To Conduct Learner Counselling In Zimbabwe

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Abstract: *The paper explored the professional self-efficacy levels on the part of rural secondary school classroom practitioners with regard to undertaking learner counselling in Masvingo province in Zimbabwe. Theoretically the study was grounded in the domain of Psychology of Education focusing on Bandura's social learning theory, Rogers' person-centred theory and Freud's classical psychoanalysis together with Maslow's need theory. The study adopted a mixed method approach in which the descriptive survey research design was paired with a chi-square test as a means of methodological triangulation. Open-ended questionnaires and telephone interviews were used as data gathering instruments during the empirical investigation. A gender balanced sample of 80 secondary school teachers based in rural areas took part in the study. The stratified random sampling method,in which stratification was done relative to gender and highest professional qualifications, was employed during the sampling process.The study revealed that about 55% of the respondents felt imbued with ample self-efficacy to undertake learner counselling at secondary school level. That category of research participants believed that their teacher-training and teaching experience have arguably equipped them to play a crucial role in the counselling of rural secondary school learners across a myriad of issues. However, there were some teachers who confessed that they were not very comfortable to undertake learner counselling due to a multiplicity of variables. The researchers recommended that classroom practitioners should continue upgrading their professional qualifications so as to elevate their self-efficacy levels. The need to have nationwide counselling workshops to staff-develop classroom practitioners was also recommended.*

Key Words: *Adolescence, social challenges, child-headed families, self-efficacy, poverty, emotional unfinished business*

I.   Introduction And Background To The Study

According to Nayak (2004) human holistic development is to a large extent under siege because of a multiplicity of inimical variables which are at play in modern society. The physical, emotional, moral, personality, intellectual, social and spiritual development of humanity seems to be in jeopardy (Kufakunesu, 2011). Life changing challenges such the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty, the fragmentation of the extended family network and crunching industrial and commercial meltdown have all rendered human existence a dicey adventure in which the general populace operate on the edge of precipice(Van Niekerk &Prins, 2001). It was noted by Kufakunesu (2011) that the cited social, economic and allied challenges do not respect age since they inundate people of practically all ages and from all walks of life. It can be safely argued that some learners at all educational tiers labour with such challenges and secondary school learners are not immune to these problems. It is when one thinks about such overwhelming challenges that one tends to consider the utility of counselling as one of the intervention measures. The main thrust of the current study was to scrutinise the levels of professional self-efficacy on the part of rural secondary school learners to carry out learner counselling in Masvingo province in Zimbabwe.

In 1998 the Zimbabwean government assigned a commission called the Nziramasanga Commission toexplore the state of education and training in the country (Nziramasanga, 1999:1). The commission produced a detailed and comprehensive set of recommendations on many educational aspects one of which is Guidance and Counselling (Nziramasanga, 1999).In the report, the commission recommended that Guidance and Counselling treated as a compulsory academic discipline in Zimbabwe from kindergarten to university. Efforts were made by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education to heed

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these recommendations. In response to the stipulations of the Nziramasanga Commission of inquiry of 1999, the Ministry of Education, Sport, Art and Culture's in Zimbabwe issued the Education Director's circular number 23 of 2005 stipulating that Guidance and Counselling be part of the Zimbabwean school curriculum at both primary and secondary school levels (Musiiwa, 2014). In 2013, the implementation of a number of recommendations by the Nziramasanga Commission rowed into life through what has come to be called the Updated New Curriculum in Zimbabwe. The advent of the New Curriculum saw Guidance and Counselling being made compulsory at all educational tiers in the country. Unfortunately, Guidance and Counselling is still not an examinable subject and those who teach it sometimes do not have specialist training. It is also worth mentioning that Guidance and Counselling has been incorporated into teacher training programmes well before the Nziramasanga commission commenced its work. However, it has to be admitted that Guidance and Counselling is not given sufficient weight and time relative to other aspects which are taught at various teacher-training institutions. The researchers' own experiences revealed that there are some teacher-training institutions in Zimbabwe where Guidance and Counselling is simply taught as a topic in a module and not as a full module.

Challenges in the provision of guidance and counselling services sometimes emanate from lack of understanding what the terms Guidance and Counselling actually mean (Kufakunesu, 2011:16; Zindi & Makotore, 2000). According to Gladding (1988) and Kufakunesu (2011:16) guidance is the process of furnishing individuals with valuable information which they are to subsequently utilise to craft realistic goals, do strategic planning and to make informed choices when confronted by a myriad of alternatives. This implies that guidance is undertaken not in direct reaction to an immediate challenge, but as a way of equipping people to navigate challenges, opportunities and threats at a subsequent and future time in their lives. For instance, in rural areas, some adolescents may not be aware of the various career prospects which they can pursue upon matriculating from high school. On the other hand, counselling is reactionary in nature. According to Cormier and Hackney (1993:2) in Kufakunesu (2011:16) professional counselling is, "an interpersonal relationship between someone actively seeking help and someone willing to give help, who is capable of or trained to help in a setting that permits help to be given and received". Therefore, counselling refers to the interaction between someone who is provisionally unable to handle a particular social, emotional, physical, academic, moral or even spiritual problem and another person who knowledgeably and skilfully encourages the troubled individual to mobilise his or her internal potentialities to ultimately solve the problem (Kufakunesu, 2011:16; Mpofu, 2006). This definition implies that one has to be committed and knowledgeable to undertake fruitful counselling especially when dealing with individuals who are heavily influenced by erratic hormonal influence in their bodily systems.

One reason why counselling remains crucial is that the well-knit original African society in which people were readily poised and zealous to assist any person needing help has to some extent undergone metamorphosis is the negative direction. According to Kufakunesu and Dekeza(2017) most people in Zimbabwean communities have to some extent adopted lifestyles characterised by self-centredness, independence and individualism principally due to globalisation and cultural diffusion. Such a trend has altered and debilitated the symbiotic communal way of life and people now strongly lean towards solving problems wihin their immediate families (Kufakunesu & Chinyoka, 2017). According to Kufakunesu and Chinyoka (2017) the traditional roles of the aunts, uncles and grandparents as well as parents themselves in helping adolescents as they walk along the road to adulthood has been distorted by numerous of factors. Zarrett and Eccles (2006:20) posit that the family is a crucial institution which contributes significantly to the positive development of adolescents through providing financial, emotional, social and achievement-related buttress. Unfortunately, some adolescents come from families in which parents are unavailable, unable, or, in some cases, reluctant to provide the support their adolescent children need to make a successful transition into adulthood (Kufakunesu & Chinyoka, 2017).Such a phenomenon is normally a consequence of variables such as unemployment, death, parental divorce, poverty, or psychological estrangement and polarisation of parents and their children (Settersten, 2005; Zarrett &Eccles , 2006:20). The current study attempted to establish the extent to which the rural secondary school teachers believe in their own abilities to successfully counsel adolescent learners living in a comparatively culturally fragmented traditional African society.

In all cases where teaching and learning occur,classroom practitioners arguably remain a critical variable for a number of reasons (Kufakunesu & Chinyoka, 2017). Just like parents, teachers remain inevitable role models in the lives of adolescent learners. Herrero, Este´vez, and Musitu (2006:674) maintain that teachers as professional adults are very vital in assisting the adolescents to deal with a multiplicity of challenges which they encounter at school in particular and in society in general. According to Kufakunesu and Chinyoka (2017) classroom practitioners can plug the loopholes of flawed and mediocre parenting styles which sometimes prevail. It was upon realising the vital role played by educators in the lives of learners that the researchers deemed it appropriate to explore rural secondary school teachers' self-efficacy levels to carry out learner counselling.

The researchers deemed it appropriate to briefly shed light on the ethnographic state of rural schools in Zimbabwe. According to Kufakunesu and Chinyoka (2017) in Zimbabwe there are secondary schools in rural areas, peri-urban settings and urban settings with more secondary schools in Zimbabwean rural areas than in urban areasmainly because the greater part of Zimbabwe is rural. Characteristically most Zimbabwean urban secondary schools have comparatively better scholastic resources and amenities such as libraries, internet connectivity and laboratories (Chinyoka, 2013). According to Chinyoka and Kufakunesu (2017) highly qualified and experienced teachers usually prefer to work in urban settings where the standard of living and general amenities are comparatively better. It has to be acknowledged that in Zimbabwe there are some rural areas where there is electricity and the standards almost match those of urban secondary schools. Nevertheless, there are many rural secondary schools in Zimbabwe where there are no vital material and human resources such as electricity, libraries, laboratories and highly qualified and experienced teachers (Chinyoka & Kufakunesu, 2017; Chinyoka, 2013). In the past decade, some satellite schools with extremely depleted human and material resources emerged in the country and they are usually attached to established host schools. Poverty is a defining attribute in a significant number of rural communities as a result of little or virtually no family income due to poor educational background and allied variables (Chinyoka & Kufakunesu, 2017; Connolly, 2005; Jensen, 2007). All these hostile factors cannegatively impinge upon rural secondary school learners' holistic development thereby making them good candidates for counselling (Evans, 2004:80; Chinyoka & Kufakunesu, 2017).

The challenges besieging secondary school learners are compounded by the fact that secondary school learners are adolescents who have to grapple with the attendant problems associated with the transition from childhood to adulthood (Kufakunesu, Chinyoka & Ganga, 2011). By definition, adolescence is a developmental stage in which individual dramatic changes from childhood to adulthood (Kufakunesu, 2015; Mwamwenda, 2004). The transition is punctuated by the growth spurt which is characterised by rapid and noticeable increases in height and bodily mass together with gaining the ability to reproduce (Lahey, 2009). Adolescents are emotionally volatile because of the hormones which will be released into their systemsand this explains why the stage was described by Stanley G. Hall as a period of storm and stress (Kufakunesu,2017:15870).According to Erikson (1968) the incessant quest for an identity is another defining feature during adolescence. Individuals at this stage want to know who they are and how they will look like during adulthood (Feldman, 2009). The presence of both good and bad role models coupled with peer pressure makes identity formation very dicey. It remains arguably true that such a critical period in life needs informed guidance and probably counselling from adults principally because some of the mistakes which people make during adolescence can alter their life trajectories irrevocably. For instance, early and unplanned pregnancies or having a crime record as a slip during adolescence can dent one's career prospects and opportunities in a very grave way. It is when one thinks along such lines that one is persuaded to consider counselling as a means of shielding or insulating secondary school learners from such ravaging and nerve-wrecking experiences.

Closely linked to the commitment of the counsellor is the issue of the availability of material resourcesto ensure that proper counselling prevails. For example, schools would need spacious furnished offices and stationery to use during counselling. Given this tall order, it has to be seen if rural secondary school teachers feel confident enough to enter the counselling fray. Human resources are also crucial in the counselling matrix. Musiiwa (2014) posits that the effectiveness of counsellors hinges upon a number of variables which entail personal background, level of education, skills and experience. Mwamwenda (2004) laments that numerous schools in Africa fail to offer quality learner counselling due to lack of qualified and experienced personnel. Musiiwa (2014) reiterated that having unqualified counsellors in the school system also reflects that counsellors in schools may not be aware of the qualities they are supposed to have, effective counselling techniques to employ in various situations and ethical principles to observe during counselling. It has been observed by a number of researchers that lack of specialist training in the counselling field is one of the major challenges hindering effective guidance and counselling in African countries including Zimbabwe (Chireshe, 2006; Ireri&Muola, 2010).

Technological innovations are dynamic and ever-changing the world over and even rural areas are not an exception. The advent of technological innovations has to a large extent significantly altered the lifestyles of adolescence in particular and everyone in general (Kufakunesu, et al, 2011). Dissemination and dispersal of information on virtually every aspect of life has dramatically increased in speed and volume. Indecent details regarding sexuality and violence find their way into the eyes and ears of youngsters, a phenomenon which was not very prevalent especially in rural African societies at least two decades ago (Black, 2009:688). Goldin (2008) and Monroe (2008) warn that technological transformations can negatively impinge on learners' scholastic achievement. Kufakunesu and Chinyoka (2017) established that internet facilities, sophisticated mobile telephones, video games and movies, among other things, have all been implicated for stealing learners' study time. Black (2009:696) admits that adolescents' online technological escapades are dominantly leisure-time pursuits which contribute minimally to their academic efforts. According to Subong (2008) technological

innovations such as internet connectivity have brought about great convenience in virtually all facets of human functioning including education although theyunfortunately expose adolescent minds to emotionally absorbing materials thereby interfering with their smooth transition to adulthood. One challenge which is associated with technological advancement is that it renders adults such as teachers and parents practically unable to limit and ascertain the amount of information at the disposal of children and adolescent learners. It was against this backdrop that the level of teacher self-efficacy to carry out learner counselling in Zimbabwean rural secondary schools was scrutinised.

One variable which can have a serious bearing on the way classroom practitioners at all educational tiers perform their duties is time which is available to them. At secondary school level, one teacher can teach more than one class at different grade levels. The situation is aggravated by the fact that currently in Zimbabwe teachers who go on different forms of leave such as sick leave or maternity leave are not replaced for the entire duration of their leave. The teachers remaining at work are expected to reshuffle their timetables to absorb the additional teaching load emanating from the absence of a colleague who would have gone on leave. Mwamwenda (2004) posits that sometimes teachers do not have adequate time to meaningfully attend to learners with individual needs. Gysber and Handerson (2000) concur that teachers usually encounter difficulties in finding adequate time to offer direct counselling to learners. The same sentiments were echoed by Barker (2000) who asserts that teachers' non-counselling duties usually interfere with the entire counselling programme and with learner counselling. It has to be acknowledged that classroom practitioners would have to tactfully balance their time between the real counselling of learners and the various non-counselling professional duties which entail administering scholastic achievement tests, updating professional documents, extra-curricular activities, supervising learners and covering for fellow teachers who would be on leave (Barker, 2000; Gysber&Handerson, 2000). One wonders how teachers operating under such stringent conditions would have time to undertake learner counselling over and above their non-counselling professional duties. It was with such considerations that the researchers investigated the self-efficacy levels of rural secondary school teachers regarding learner counselling.

Two independent questionnaire research studies were carried out by Cooper (2005) exploring secondary school teachers' attitudes towards and conceptualisation of, school counselling in Scotland. The first study had a sample of 71 classroom practitioners while the second one had 33 teachers. The outcomes from the two studies confirmed the findings of earlier studies in the area of counselling, suggesting that in general, teachershave positive attitudes towards learner counselling. Nevertheless, a small proportion of teachers in the two studies were found to have very strong negative attitudes towards learner counselling (Kufakunesu, 2011). The two Scottish studies by Cooper (2005) further established that the school administrators had more favourable attitude towards learner counselling than ordinary teachers. Moreover, some teachers in these Scottish studies expressed concern that sometimes learners abused the available counselling services, thereby rendering the coordination of the entire counselling process difficult. Cooper (2005) also found through these studies that a large proportion of teachers conceptualised counselling in the form of advice giving. Among those teachers who had positive attitudes towards counselling in schools, the majority of them believed that counselling should be done by qualified Guidance and Counselling personnel (Kufakunesu, 2011:23). Only 44% of the respondents in this category believed that counselling should be done by all teachers. It is worth admitting that the study by Cooper was conducted in a setting which is different from the Zimbabwean rural setting relative to a number of variables such as standard of living and cultural practices.

Kufakunesu (2011) undertook a study to determine the extent to which the attitudes of secondary school classroom practitioners were conducive to effective educational counselling at secondary school level. The study used a number of psychological theories as the theoretical underpinning. Methodologically, Kufakunesu (2011) adopted the qualitative approach with the descriptive survey as the research design. Questionnaires, interviews and observations were used as data gathering instruments. A sample of 52 qualified teachers from Masvingo urban secondary schools and eight school administrators comprising school heads and their deputies participated in the study (Kufakunesu, 2011). The study established that the attitudes of Masvingo urban secondary school teachers towards learner counselling were dominantly positive. Among other things, Kufakunesu (2011) established that the attitudes of a significant number of Masvingo urban secondary school teachers were largely conducive to sound learner counselling practices though more still needed to be done to further modify them. There were some respondents whoexpressed negative attitudes towards learner counselling in secondary school settings. It is worth noting that the study by Kufakunesu (2011) did not include rural secondary school teachers in Masvingo province in particular and in Zimbabwe in general. By focusing on respondents in Masvingo urban only, Kufakunesu (2011) only targeted respondents in one district out of the seven districts in Masvingo province. Therefore, the current study was an endeavour to involve rural secondary school teachers from a number of districts in Masvingo province. In fact, the current study was a sequel to the study by Kufakunesu (2011) and was heeding one of the recommendations by Kufakunesu (2011:69) to conducted allied studies in rural areas.

Musiiwa (2014) undertook an allied study focusing on the effectiveness of Guidance and Counselling programmes in Harare urban primary schools. The descriptive survey research design was used with questionnaires, interviews and observations as research instruments. A sample of 40 respondents took part in the study. It was established by Musiiwa (2014) that Guidance and Counselling programmes in Zimbabwe were not as effective as expected since specialist counselling was only accessed by a meagre proportion of the learner population. The study also noted a number of militating variables such as lack of crucial human and material resources relative to Guidance and Counselling in Harare urban primary schools. The study by Musiiwa (2014) focused on Guidance and Counselling programmes at primary school level in an urban setting while the current study targeted rural secondary schools in a different province thereby plugging the gaps left by Musiiwa (2014).

II.   Theoretical Framework

The study was theoretically grounded in the field of Psychology of Education focusing on Bandura's cognitive social learning theory, Freud's classical psychoanalysis and Erikson's psychosocial theory. Peripheral reference was also made to two humanistic theories, that is, Rogers' person-centred theory and Maslow's need theory.The psychological concept at the fulcrum of the current study was self-efficacy, which is one of the principles of Bandura's cognitive social learning theory. Bandura postulated that self-efficacy is a fundamental determinant of human performance in virtually all domains of human functioning (Kufakunesu &Dekeza, 2017; Bandura, 1990). By definition, self-efficacy is the belief by an individual that he or she can undertake a given task and produce the desirable results (McLean, 2003:31; (Swartz, de la Rey, Duncan, Townsend & O'Neill, 2011:13; Kufakunesu &Dekeza, 2017). According to Bandura (1990:316) self-efficacy are people's "beliefs in their capabilities to mobilise the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over task demands". This implies that self-efficacy judgements focus on what one believes he or she can accomplish regardless of the level of training or skills which one possesses. It has been empirically established that there is a positive correlation between an individual's self-efficacy and the amount of effort that person exerts in an attempt to accomplish the task at hand (Kufakunesu, 2015; Kufakunesu &Dekeza, 2017). This implies that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy usually apply much effort to ensure that their original trust and belief in their own abilities is fulfilled (Santrock, 2004:226). Characteristically, an educator with a high level of self-efficacy is open-minded, creative and has good organisational skills (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001:800).

An individual's self-efficacy levels can hinge on variables such as previous experiences, vicarious reinforcement and social persuasion as well as physiological and emotional states (Kufakunesu &Dekeza, 2017; Schulze, 2010:434; Powell, Bordoloi & Ryan, 2007). Schulze (2010:434) maintains that a person's previous experiences act as the most powerful determinant of a person's self-efficacy. Taking stock of one's previous accomplishments can boost one's expectations and self-efficacy while previous failures or frustrating experiences can dampen hope for success in future. Schulze (2010:434 posits that a person's self-efficacy can be improved by vicariously observing a model registering success in undertaking a given task. Such vicarious modelling is highly probable particularly when the observer believes that there are some similarities between him/her and the observed model. An individual's self-efficacy can also be positively influenced by coaching and positive evaluative feedback on a task one would have performed. Schulze (2010:434) names this variable social persuasion and proceeds to remark that it is generally easier to decrease a person's self-efficacy than to increase it. An individual's self-efficacy can also be determined by the person's physiological and emotional states (Kufakunesu &Dekeza, 2017). According to Schulze (2010:434) negative emotions such as stress and anxiety together with physical fatigue can negatively affect a person's self-efficacy. With all these insights and explanations regarding self-efficacy as a psychological attribute, it was deemed appropriate by the researchers to examine it in the context of secondary school learner counselling.

Sigmund Freud is the proponentand father of the psychodynamic paradigm who advanced the classical psychoanalytic theory (Feldman, 2009). Among the various principles of Freud's psychoanalytic theory is the idea that people go through a series of five developmental stages which are the oral, anal, phallic, latency and the genital stages in that order (Santrock, 2004). This implies that adolescents fall in the genital stage whose onset is around 12 years of age and is characterised by the search for sexual gratification from non-relatives (Lahey, 2009; Mwamwenda, 2004). It is during the genital stage that adolescents instinctively find themselves cuddling, hugging, kissing and engaging in related activities in anattempt to achieve sexual satifaction (Lahey, 2009; Mwamwenda, 2004). It remains a poser to determine the extent to which rural adolescent school learners are ready to manage and negotiate their way around such seemingly overwhelming emotional and physical demands of the id if the external environment is not sufficiently supportive. It was through thinking along such lines that the researchers felt primed to undertake the current study.

Erik Erikson is a Neo-Freudian who crafted the psychosocial theory. According to Kufakunesu and Chinyoka (2017)Erikson's psychosocial theory has been rated by numerous scholars as more comprehensive and more convincing than Freud's psychosexual theory because Erikson's theory has eight stages which cover

the entire human lifespan. Of relevance to the current study is Erikson's the fifth stage named identity versus role confusion (Santrock, 2004). It is at this stage that adolescents seek an identity with more intensity than in all other stages(Meggitt, 2006:163). According to Erikson (1968), adolescents normally struggle with developmental challenges revolving around having of a sense of mastery, identity, and intimacy (Kufakunesu & Chinyoka, 2017). This implies that adolescentsattempt to establish autonomy, management of sexuality and intimacy, and making the right career choices as a way of preparing for adulthood. This acts as further evidence that secondary school learners are a unique crop of people who need assistance from committed and duty-conscious professional adults some of whom may be classroom practitioners.

While Abraham Maslow advanced a need theory in which human needs are said to be hierarchical arranged, Rogers as a fellow humanist developed a person-centred self-theory (Feldman, 2009). Maslow claims that people will only worry about higher order needs such as cognitive needs when lower order needs like physiological and security needs are at least first partially met (Mwamwenda, 2004). On the other hand, Rogers' person-centred theory places premium on giving the counsellee unconditional positive regard, empathy and genuineness (Kufakunesu, 2011:19; Musiiwa, 2014; Lahey, 2009). The person-centred theory was considered in the current study mainly because of its direct applicability during formal non-directive counselling (Austad,2009).

III. Guiding Research Questions

The study was a scholarly endeavour to generate solutions to the following research questions:
- To what extent does teacher-training equip secondary school teachers to undertake learner counselling?
- How high are the self-efficacy levels of rural secondary school teachers pertaining to conducting learner counselling?
- Which variables determine the rural secondary school teachers' self-efficacy levels to undertake learner counselling?

IV. Research Methodology

The mixed method approach was employed. One part of the research involved the interpretive research paradigm paired with the qualitative research approach accompanied by the descriptive survey as the research design.Kufakunesu (2011:31) defines a descriptive survey research design as an investigation technique in which the researcher focuses on describing and interpreting the existing phenomenon with regard to aspects such as effects, attitudes, processes and beliefs. The same was reiterated by Chinyoka and Kufakunesu (2017) who posit that a descriptive survey is a qualitative research design which tries to describe and interpret the existing situations in the form of processes, effects, attitudes and beliefs. The descriptive survey was deemed appropriate because it accorded the research participants the opportunity to pour out their hearts regarding their levels of professional self-efficacy to carry out learner counselling in rural areas. A chi-square test for independence was used to add a positivistic and quantitative flavour to the research methodology and also to foster methodological triangulation.

Open-ended questionnaires and telephone interviews were using as data gathering instruments during the empirical investigation. By definition, a questionnaire is a document containing relevant questions which the targeted research participants have to respond to as a way of furnishing a researcher in a given study. According to Kufakunesu (2011:34) together with Kufakunesu and Chinyoka (2017) a questionnaire is a document which contains relevant questions that the researcher intends to pose to the research participants. This implies that a questionnaire is a list of methodically and carefully structured items prepared by the researcher to elicit responses from respondents during the empirical investigation (Swartz et al, 2011:29; Shumbayaonda, 2011;Chiromo,2006). The researchers deemed it appropriate to use questionnaires because the target respondents who happened to be secondary school teachers were literate and therefore did not seem to have any limitations regarding interpreting and answering the questionnaire items. Telephone interviews were used to collect data from the respondents who could not be geographically accessed.

A gender balanced sample of 80 rural secondary school classroom practitioners in Masvingo province took part in the study. The respondents came from four rural districts in Masvingo province. Geographically, the districts considered are situated in the eastern, southern, northern and south western directions relative to Masvingo town. The stratified random sampling method, in which stratification was done relative to gender and highest professional qualifications, was employed during the sampling process.Swartz et al (2011:29) and Munzara (2016:12) describe the stratified random sampling as a sampling method in whicha given population is partitioned into non-overlapping subgroups before members of each stratum are selected in proportion to the size of the layer relative to the whole population. Of the 80 research participants, 24 had a Diploma in Education as their highest professional qualification while undergraduate and postgraduate degree holders were 34 and 22 respectively.

V. Research Findings

The following are the major findings which emerged from the data which was gathered by the researchers during the empirical investigation:

• The respondents conceded that almost all teacher-training programmes in Zimbabwe entail some elements of Guidance and Counselling although it is in a marginal and peripheral way.
• It was established that the self-efficacy levels to carry out learner counselling were satisfactorily high in more than half of the research participants.
• Fort-five percent of the informants expressed misgivings and diffidence with regard to undertaking learner counselling at secondary school level.
• The chi-square test revealed that teachers' highest professional qualifications crucially determined teachers' self-efficacy levels to engage in formal learner counselling.
• Gender and age were also found to be determinants of secondary school teachers' sense of competence to carry out student counselling.
• Other variables which emerged to be crucial in mediating teachers' self-efficacy levels with regard to learner counselling include teacher burnout, emotional intelligence and the nature of the community in which they operated.
• Knowledge of the formal counselling techniques based on psychological theories was found to be a crucial variable in determining teachers' enthusiasm and confidence to counsel secondary school learners.
• Almost all the research participants concurred that intermittent workshops and seminars to staff-develop them in the area of learner counselling would go a long way towards elevating their self-efficacy levels to conduct learner counselling at secondary school level.

VI. Discussion Of Findings

Seventy-two out of the 80 secondary school teachers who participated in the study acknowledged that they were exposed to the elementary aspects of formal Guidance andCounselling during teacher-training programmes. However, they were quick to comment that to a large extent, the fundamental aspects regarding Guidance and Counselling were not accorded the time and attention they really deserved. Most of the respondents indicated that Guidance and Counselling concepts and procedures were dominantly theorised and no effort was made to accord them the opportunity to engage in real life counselling. There were other respondents in this category who pointed out that during their college and university days, they devoted most of their energy to studying their main subjects simply because they wanted to amass content in reparation for teaching in the main subjects which were examinable. The fact that Guidance and Counselling is not an examinable subject tempts both teachers and learners to rate it as somewhat inferior to the examinable academic disciplines. The same sentiments also featured in the study by Kufakunesu (2011). Basing on the above sentiments, the respondents directly and explicitly implied that lack of rigour in studying Guidance and Counselling issues during teacher-training is a limiting variable with regard to their confidence to conduct counselling involving human beings with real challenges. This tallied with the findings of Kufakunesu (2011) and Musiiwa (2014)whose studies established that teacher-training programmes were not thorough enough with regard to equipping classroom practitioners to meticulously undertake effective learner counselling.

The current study generally revealed that 55%, that is 44 out of the 80 rural secondary school teachers believed in their professional prowess to undertake learner counselling at secondary school level.They exuded satisfactory levels of self-efficacy to positively intervene through counselling whenever learners encountered challenges pertaining to at least one aspect of human development. Quizzed to justify the basis of their substantial levels of self-efficacy to conduct formal counselling, some teachers pointed out that their experiences both at work and in society in general have equipped them and made them sufficiently wise to tackle the various life challenges which can affect the current crop of secondary school learners. Furthermore, other respondents in this category claimed that the secondary school learners were just like their own children whom they regularly assist to navigate the various challenges of life. They reiterated that they also went through adolescence and therefore, they were willing and capable ofassisting those who are passing through such a tricky developmental stage. It was interesting to gather that there were some research participants who believed that their passion to help learners was their main trump card and source of their high levels of professional self-efficacy to carry out learner counselling in rural secondary schools (Schulze, 2010). Closely linked to this was the argument by some teachers that they had travelled far and wide more than their rural secondary learners, hence the high probability that they would be able to assist the learners to solve any challenges they make bring for counselling. These findings were consistent with the findings of the already mentioned studies by Cooper (2005), Kufakunesu (2011) and Musiiwa (2014) which revealed that in any reasonably large sample of classroom practitioners, there is a significant proportion which believedit can carry out fruitful learner counselling.

The above sentiments were a direct opposite of what 36 out of the 80 participating secondary school teachers indicated. They openly pointed out that they were engulfed by significant feelings of doubt and

diffidence whenever the issue of learner counselling at secondary school level was in focus.One common reason for being jittery about undertaking learner counselling in a secondary school context was lack of the technical expertise to do the counselling. This concurred with the sentiments of Zindi and Makotore (2000) who remarked that lack of knowledge regarding what counselling entails hinders people's counselling efforts and aspirations. It was mentioned by 28 out of the 36 respondents that the least they understood was that formal counselling is a methodical undertaking involving high voltages of emotional energy and must be done procedurally guided by strict ethical principles since human life was involved (Kufakunesu, 2011). One female secondary respondent openly indicated that she was an extrovert who always talk about various issues and therefore she deemed herself unfit to do counselling because she was likely to have difficulties in observing confidentiality. Twelve other respondents pointed out that they were reluctant to labour with learners' developmental burdens since they were grappling with their own social challenges. In a bid to justify their subdued self-efficacy pertaining learner counselling, 20 out of the 36 rural secondary school teachers remarked that they were traumatised and haunted by some of the issues which are deliberated on during counselling sessions. They indicated that issues such as physical sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS, suicidal tendencies,teenage pregnancies and sour multiple love relationships were dicey and emotionally taxing to resolve. They were quick to remark that the requirement that the counsellor must not divulge the proceedings of counselling sessions implies that the counsellor would move around carrying the learners' sticky issues in his or her mind thereby exposing himself to emotional fatigue and allied ailments. Moreover, lack of convincing knowledge of the formal counselling techniques based on psychological theories was found to be a crucial variable in determining teachers' enthusiasm and confidence to counsel secondary school learners (Zindi & Makotore, 2000; Musiiwa, 2014).

Lack of adequate counselling resources was cited as one of the justifications for diffidence and ambivalence towards learner counselling in rural areas. Ten respondents took their time to annotate the magnitude of the depletion of both material resources necessary for counselling in rural secondary schools. They pointed out that most teachers operated in the staffrooms because they did not have separate offices to use. It was revealed that the physical infrastructures in schools were largely inadequate and therefore counselling offices and relevant Guidance and Counselling textbooks were virtually a luxury. The concerned research participants strongly expressed the view that their lack of confidence to counsel learners stemmed from the fact that they feared that their counselling efforts would be tantamount to trying to carry out experiments without any apparatus, let alone outside a laboratory. The extent of depletion in terms of resources as portrayed by the respondents agreed with the way Kufakunesu and Chinyoka (2017) portrayed the magnitude and degree of poverty in some rural schools in Zimbabwe.

From the data which was collected during the empirical investigation, the researchers generated a contingency table with counselling self-efficacy levels on one side and teachers' highest professional qualifications on the other side. The contingency had three rows headed by counselling self-efficacy levels, that is, low, moderate and highwhile the three columns on highest professional qualifications, that is, Diploma in Education, undergraduate degree and post graduate degree. The resultant chi-square test showed that there was an association between rural secondary school teachers' self-efficacy to conduct learner counselling and their highest professional qualifications. More precisely, the study revealed that secondary school teachers' self-efficacy to conduct learner counselling was substantially dependent on their highest professional qualifications. Secondary school teachers with postgraduate teaching qualifications exhibited more enthusiasm to engage learner counselling in secondary school settings. They were probably basking in the glory of the various researches which they undertook and volumes of literature which they interacted with during teacher training. Some of them remarked that they had an opportunity to know about the ethnographic attributes of people in different communities in different parts of the world. They said this came as a by-product of their studies. On the other hand, few Diploma in Education holders conceded that their meagre self-efficacy could be attributed to subdued professional self-esteem stemming from the fact they held the basic minimum qualification in the teaching fraternity yet some of their workmates had postgraduate degrees. As hinted by Musiiwa (2014) and Kufakunesu (2011), getting higher qualifications can enhance and modify classroom practitioners' attitudes towards and confidence to carry out learner counselling.

Two other allied variables which seemed to mediate the level of self-efficacy on the part of rural secondary school teachers were age and gender. It seemed relatively younger and older educators were more enthusiastic to intervene in generating solutions to the challenges inundating secondary school learners than some of their middle aged counterparts. This came as a surprise to the researchers. Indications were that a significant number of middle aged teachers believed that secondary school learners needed to be subjected to disciplinary procedures to deal with their problems rather than employing counselling them. The same sentiments were established in a study by Kufakunesu (2011) in which some urban secondary school teachers advocated for disciplinary means of dealing with learner problems rather than employing counselling. On the other hand, younger educators maintained that they were aware of the contemporary dynamics pertaining to the challenges of modern society and were therefore more strategically positioned to undertake meaning learner

counselling. Relatively older educators claimed that their wisdom which came with age coupled with numerous years of professional experience have converted them into fountains of knowledge with could be quite handy in unravelling sticky social ills which secondary school learners grapple with. Regarding gender, the respondents to a large extent concurred that it was ideally convenient for male teachers to counsel male learners which female learners were counselled by female educators. They concurred that because of cultural reasons, it could be sometimes difficult to resolve some issues adequately when cross-gender counselling was undertaken (Kufakunesu, 2011). It also came to the attention of the researchers that female teachers appeared to be more zealous to conduct counselling than their male counterparts who seemed to be more inclined towards being disciplinarians. However, the differences were not very seriously pronounced in this regard.

One of the variables cited by the secondary school teachers who took part in the study as a determinant of their self-efficacy to undertake learner counselling was teacher burnout. The respondents intimated that they were to a large overwhelmed by their teaching loads and seldom had free time to further burden themselves with learner counselling. The respondents in this category stated that their situation was aggravated by the fact that their peers who go for various types of leave were not replaced thereby increasing their teaching leads. As a mitigation measure, the teachers recommended that each teacher should employ a qualified counsellor thereby allowing teachers to focus on teaching their respective main subjects. Moreover, more than half of the 18 teachers who admitted to having low counselling self-efficacy also indicated that they shuddered at the thought of undertaking learner counselling because their fears that they might find themselves at loggerheads of the very communities they are serving. They explained that some of the dramatic and sensitive details which might be discussed during counselling sessions may cause the parents and the guardians of the learners to view them as inquisitive and meddlesome people who involve themselves with issues which are not of concern to them. Examples of issues cited by these teachers included some rituals and ceremonies which some learners were compelled to take part by their parents against their better judgement. When such learners come for counselling, these teachers feared that they might recommend some actions which might contravene some cultural and tribal practices in certain communities.

Virtually all the research participants concurred that the self-efficacy levels of classroom practitioners' to undertake learner counselling could be boosted by organising workshops and seminars to staff-develop them in the area of learner counselling in secondary school settings. They pointed out that it would be during such seminars and workshops that the teachers would be reminded and refreshed on the basic principles needed to undertake formal learner counselling especially in rural areas. As already pointed out, these sentiments tallied with the recommendations made by Kufakunesu (2011) and Musiiwa (2014) that the counselling skills of classroom practitioners could be enhanced by in-servicing them through staff development workshops. Moreover, such workshops would broaden and deepen their understanding of the challenges, ambitions and characteristics of the current crop of adolescents especially considering that the world is not static given the advent of technological advancement.

VII.   Conclusions

The study was undertaken to scrutinise the level of rural secondary school teachers' self-efficacy levels to help secondary school learners to address some real life challenges through formal counselling. Self-efficacy, which is a principle of Bandura's cognitive social learning theory, is a crucial variable which can determine the dedication and efficiency of human functioning. It emerged from the study that a significant number of rural secondary school teachers believed in their own abilities to carry out learner counselling. However, some gave strong reasons to justify the diffidence with regard to learner counselling. The fact that adolescence is a period of storm and stress remained apparent in the way the respondents answered the research questions on the data gathering instruments which were employed. The findings were to a large extent consistent with the findings of earlier researchers such as Kufakunesu (2011), Cooper (2005) and Musiiwa (2014). The issueof self-efficacy to carry out learner counselling to some extent needs further exploration since the current study did not exhaust all its dynamics.

VIII.   Recommendations

The following are the recommendations which the researchers arrived at on the basis of the outcomes of the empirical investigation:

- Workshops and seminars should be undertaken at least once in a given school term to ensure that secondary school learners gain more confidence and skills to conduct learner counselling particularly in a society characterised by a multiplicity of challenges,.
- The study established that teachers with postgraduate professional qualifications exuded more self-efficacy to carry out learner counselling at secondary school level. Consequently, the researchers recommended that secondary school teachers should continue upgrading their professional qualifications so as to boost their self-efficacy levels when it comes to counselling in particular and professional functioning in general.

- One recommendation which was made by the respondents themselves was that there should be at least one qualified educational counsellor at each station who would be tasked to spearheadGuidance and Counselling activities in schools.
- The need to available resources such as well furnishes counselling rooms just in the same manner as laboratories are needed for Science subjects was also emphasised by the researchers.
- Future researchers who are interested in the subject of domain of Guidance and Counselling were urged to replicate the current study with variations in the researchmethodology and or theoretical orientation as well as geographical spectrum.

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