

**INDIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS' AND TEACHERS'  
PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR  
AS THE PREFERRED HELPING AGENT**

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UNLESS SPECIFICALLY INDICATED TO THE CONTRARY  
IN THE TEXT, THIS THESIS IS THE ORIGINAL  
WORK OF THE WRITER.

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceptions of secondary school pupils and secondary school subject teachers concerning the effectiveness and utilization of school counselling services. The purpose was to establish the extent to which secondary school pupils: 1) would choose, in various areas of concern, the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent in comparison to other helping agents; 2) would perceive their school counsellor to be approachable, and 3) would consider their schools to provide adequate assistance with their personal concerns. The study also examined the perceptions of the teachers of the pupils with regard to the above three areas. A review and theoretical consideration of pupils' and teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent is provided. The sample consisted of 202 standard nine pupils and 20 teachers from two co-educational Indian Secondary schools. The subjects completed pupil and teacher questionnaires compiled by Skuy, Hoar, Oakley-Smith and Westaway (1985). These instruments included sections in which the respondents had to indicate, from a list of five helping agents (teacher, parent, friend, school counsellor, "other") whom they would approach if they were experiencing difficulties in seven areas of concern (future careers, friendships, family, schoolwork, teachers, appearance and "other"). Pupils and teachers were also asked to respond on a Yes/No basis as to whether they/their pupils felt comfortable approaching the school counsellor, and whether they felt their schools provided adequate assistance with pupils personal

concerns. The results were analyzed by Cluster Analysis, correlation (Pearson Product-Moment) and the following statistical procedures: Chi square and Two Way Analysis of Variance. The investigation revealed that pupils did not perceive the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent in any of the seven areas of concern listed. Friends were perceived by pupils as the most preferred helping agent in six areas of concern (friendship, family, teachers, appearance, schoolwork, "other") while parents were perceived as the preferred helping agent in one area of concern (future careers). The investigation also revealed that teachers generally overrated the counsellors perceived helpfulness. Both pupils and teachers were of the opinion that the school counsellors were approachable but that the schools did not provide adequate assistance with pupils personal concerns. The findings are compared and contrasted with those of other studies and some conclusions are drawn with regard to counsellor training and role clarification.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background and Objectives

The effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in the schools may be influenced by pupils' and teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor's role. Much of the research of the last two decades concerning the perceptions of the school counsellor's role has been confined to Britain and the United States, although some research has been conducted in, inter alia South Africa, Nigeria, Nassau, Kuwait and Indonesia.

Perceptions of the school counsellor's role have been well documented (Amod, 1983; Atkinson and Schwartz, 1971; Best, Jarvis, Oddy and Ribbons, 1981; Burleson, Nelson and Tollefson, 1980; Cole, Miller and Splittgerber and Allen, 1980; Darfo Menanteau Horta, 1986; Denga, 1983; Gray, 1980; Gibson, 1990; Hutchinson and Reagan, 1989; Jampies, 1981; Leviton, 1977; Lytton, Kline and Webster, 1970; Murgatroyd, 1977; Mc Phee, 1985; O Leary, 1990; Remley and Albright, 1988; Rowe, 1989; Russo and Kassera, 1989; Skuy, Hoar, Oakley-Smith and Westaway, 1985; Stinzi and Hutcheon, 1972; Siann, Draper and Cosford, 1982; Van Schoor, 1981; Van Riper, 1971; Wells and Ritter, 1979; Williams and Haynes, 1984; Wiggins and Moody, 1987; Wilgus and Shelly, 1988).

Various researchers have highlighted the confusion experienced by pupils and teachers concerning the counsellor's role and have emphasized the need for counsellor role clarification (Deitz, 1972; Hutchinson and Bottorf, 1986; O Leary, 1990; Wiggins, 1977). Cutbacks in educational counselling services in the United States during the late 1970's and early 1980's influenced the demand for counsellor accountability and hence role clarification (Bradley, 1978; Ebrahim, Helms and Thompson, 1983; O Leary, 1990). Despite the fact that researchers have called for counsellor accountability in the field of counselling, research has shown limited change as counselling services continue to be involved in the maintenance of routine matters (Wells and Ritter, 1979).

Pupils' perceptions of the school counsellor's role have been reported as contradictory (Amod, 1983; Skuy, 1985). According to Murgatroyd (1977) pupils perceived the school counsellor largely in terms of offering help on career and school related matters and few pupils indicated a willingness to approach any of their counsellors voluntarily with personal problems. This led him to conclude that the counsellor was not seen as a person vitally and centrally concerned with pupils overall development, but rather as someone who was strongly identified with institutional status and duties. The reasons for pupil's negative perceptions of the school counsellor have been identified by various researchers. For example, Porteus and Fisher (1980) reported that pupils were reluctant to go for counselling as the counselling services available to them did not appeal to them. Remley and Albright

*perception of counsellor*

*Confidential*

(1988) stated that pupils seemed to have little confidence that counsellors would keep their interviews confidential, and often associated visits to the counsellor with disciplinary problems. The findings of Skuy et al. (1985) indicated that pupils expressed a lack of faith in the school counsellor and that two-thirds of them expressed discomfort at the idea of approaching him. On the other hand, Williams and Haynes (1984) stated that larger numbers of pupils held a positive view of the counsellors role than those who held a negative view. This has been confirmed by Hooper (1978). According to Siann et al. (1982) pupils perceived the school counsellor as effecting a positive contribution for both school-based and personal familial problems.

*Counsellor's role in pastoral care*

Teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor's role have been generally more optimistic and supportive than pupils' perceptions (Amod, 1983; Best, et al. 1981; Cole, et al. 1980; Skuy, et al. 1985). Best et al. (1981) for example reported that the impression that prevailed in their study was one of acceptance of the school counsellor as a valued professional and an integral part of the pastoral service provided by the school. Remley and Albright (1988) stated that teachers especially felt a need for their pupils to be helped with personal issues. Gibson (1990) emphasized the fact that teachers currently continued to recognize that individual counselling was the most important and primary responsibility of the school counsellor.

Despite the fact that teachers perceived the school counsellor positively and that some pupils share in this perception, several researchers have investigated the types of problems reported by pupils, as well as their perceptions of the appropriateness of seeking help for these problems from alternative help-givers. Wells and Ritter (1979) reported that pupils did not perceive the school counsellor as useful when they had problems with friends, questions about sex, personal problems and when they were in serious trouble. Kagan's (1989) South African investigation into pupils preferred and actual sources of sexual information revealed similar findings. Pupils preferred to receive their sexual information primarily from their parents and the school counsellor was not a significant choice in any instance. Parham and Tinsley (1980) stated that students believed that their social and emotional problems were more appropriately handled by informal support networks such as friends and relatives. This was confirmed by Gray (1980) who reported that pupils preferred to choose their parents for both academic and personal problems. Whereas Ipaye in Skuy et al (1985) concluded that Nigerian pupils preferred to approach elders skilled in traditional healing methods with problems of a personal nature, Porteus and Fisher (1980) have cautioned that adults in general are not always regarded as the best sources of help by pupils.

An examination of the literature concerning teachers' and pupils' perceptions of the school counsellor in South African schools reveals a paucity of research in the area. This has been attributed primarily to the inequalities in the provision of

education for the different race groups (Amod, 1983). According to her the unique socio-political and historical circumstances prevailing in South Africa have contributed to the unequal provision of facilities in education, including guidance and counselling services for the different races. Dovey (1980) and Dovey and Mason, (1984) have severely criticized the nature of the guidance service provided to both black and white pupils in South African schools in terms of its underlying agenda of fostering "submission" and "social control".

Guidance and counselling services have been provided in Indian schools in Natal since 1973. A description of the background and the prevailing circumstances regarding guidance and counselling services in Indian schools is contained in Appendix 1.

In view of the fact therefore that:

- a) a viable and established guidance and counselling service does exist for Indian pupils in Natal;
- b) pupils and teachers have been exposed to qualified school counsellors in most schools; and that
- c) an extensive literature survey revealed a paucity of research utilizing Indian examples,

it was considered to be important and valuable to investigate the perceptions held by Indian pupils and teachers of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent.

The envisaged study partially replicates the study of Skuy et al (1985) where they investigated the perceptions of the guidance



teacher (as the counsellor is referred to in the Transvaal) as the preferred helping agent by pupils (n=359) and teachers (n=31) in seven, white, co-educational government schools in Johannesburg. Their findings revealed that:

- a) the school counsellor was not seen as a preferred helping agent by pupils in any major area of concern, and
- b) teachers overrated their pupils' tendency to choose the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent and underrated pupil's tendencies to perceive parents as a source of help.

However the present study differs from that of Skuy et al (1985) in one important way namely, that whereas in white education the school counsellor may be an experienced teacher without any formal qualifications in guidance this is not the case in Indian education. All counsellors in Indian schools possess the necessary post-graduate qualifications in school guidance and counselling.

The objectives of the present study co-incide with those of Skuy et al (1985) and are therefore to investigate the extent to which secondary school pupils:

- a) would choose in various areas of concern the school counsellor as a preferred helping agent in comparison to other potential helping agents;
- b) would perceive their school counsellors to be approachable; and
- c) would consider their schools to provide adequate assistance with their personal concerns.

This study also has as its objective the investigation of the perceptions of the teachers of these pupils with regard to these three areas.

A brief outline of the procedure to be utilized by the present researcher in conducting this study follows:

Chapter One contextualizes the area to be investigated and outlines the aims and objectives of the study. Chapter Two incorporates a literature review of pupils' and teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent. This section presents an overview of each groups general perceptions of the school counsellor followed more specifically by their perceptions of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent. Chapter Three describes the samples, instruments used and the procedure followed by the researcher in the empirical investigation. In Chapter Four a statistical interpretation of the data collected and the statistical procedures utilized are presented. Chapter Five explores the discussion of the results and the possible relationships between the findings of this study and those of other researchers. Chapter Six concludes the study, examines the limitations and presents recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A LITERATURE REVIEW OF PUPILS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR AS THE PREFERRED HELPING AGENT.

#### 2.1 Introduction

According to O'Leary (1990) in a recent review of the literature, research into the perceptions of the school counsellor by others has concentrated on two main areas, namely pupils' experiences of the counselling services at their schools and teachers' and principals' perceptions of the counsellor's role. For the purposes of this study only pupils' and teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor have been considered. Hutchinson and Reagan (1989) have emphasized the point that the mere fact that pupils constituted the primary group towards whom high school counselling was directed necessitated that feedback be obtained as to how they perceived counsellors, so that objectives may be developed to respond to their needs. Researchers in the field have tended to focus their attention on the various factors generally influencing pupils' perceptions of the counsellor. These may be identified as perceptions of:

- a) counsellor functions (Leviton, 1977; Murgatroyd, 1977; Wells and Ritter, 1979);
- b) Counsellor contact (Gelso, Brooks and Carl; and Paterson and De Gracie in Hutchinson and Reagan, 1989; Mc Gennis, White and Brady in O'Leary, 1990; Wiggins and Moody, 1987);

- c) counsellor approachability and helpfulness (Porteus and Fisher, 1980; Skuy, et al, 1985; Van Schoor, 1981; Wells and Ritter, 1979); and
- d) the counsellor as distinct from other personnel (Van Riper, 1971; Siann et al, 1982; Trotzer and Kassera, 1971).

With regard specifically to pupils' perceptions of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent, various researchers have established that despite differences in demographic characteristics and sample size, pupils relied consistently on informal sources of help for personal problems, while the school counsellor was perceived as the preferred source more for educational and vocational problems (Bolarin, 1989; Gray, 1980; Hutchinson and Reagan, 1989; Shertzer and Stone in Belkin, 1977; Wells and Ritter, 1979). Furthermore there is some evidence to suggest that factors such as <sup>\*</sup>race and sex influence pupil's preferences for the school counsellor while cultural background may not play a major role (Bolarin, 1989; Jugguth, 1984; Pinchot, Riccio and Peters, 1975; Rich, Brook and Yecheli, 1989).

According to Skuy et al (1985) teachers' perceptions of the role of the school counsellor may be a determining factor in the importance attributed by pupils to the service. Research on teachers' perceptions of the school counsellors' role has concentrated on:

- a) counsellor training and professionalism (Lytton et al, 1970; Mc Phee, 1985; Sherman and Belkin, 1977).

- b) counsellor time spent on different activities (Cole et al, 1980; Miller in Belkin, 1977; Wilgus and Shelley, 1988) and
- c) teacher involvement in counselling (Cole et al, 1980; Gibson, 1990; O'Brien, Tuite and Mc Donough and Defferly, 1982).

Studies on both pupils' and teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor have revealed confusion concerning the counsellor's role and researchers have urged role clarification on the part of school counsellors (Ibrahim, Helms and Thompson, 1983; Wiggins, 1977).

The limited research in the area of teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent has necessitated a cautious interpretation of the findings of Skuy et al (1985) as this was the only study in the area located by the researcher. They reported that teachers overrated the school counsellors' involvement in the various areas of pupil concerns and underrated parental involvement. Further while a large number of pupils expressed discomfort at approaching the school counsellor, most teachers believed the opposite, namely that pupils felt at ease and comfortable discussing their concerns with the counsellor.

## 2.2 Pupil's Perceptions of the School Counsellor

An overview of the literature covering the last two decades has revealed the various difficulties involved in determining pupil's perceptions of the school counsellor. Much of the difficulty lies in the different researchers' use of the term "school counsellor", to refer to a population that differs widely in terms of training, qualifications and expertise. This has been compounded by the use of firstly, diverse samples stratified according to race, sex, cultural background, nature of school attended and socio-economic background, and secondly, researchers' varied terms of reference. Further, researchers have generally ignored counsellor personality variables and school ethos as influences upon help seeking behaviour. Wells and Ritter (1979) referred to the paucity of research in the area and the conflicting findings of the different studies as further areas of concern. The findings of the various studies will now be discussed.

Heilfron in Belkin (1977) reported that high school pupils perceived school counsellors as individuals who devoted themselves mainly to those pupils who experienced academic and social problems to the exclusion of pupils who did not experience these difficulties. This point of view strongly suggests that pupils are unclear regarding the counsellors' role and function. Wells and Ritter (1979) have pointed out that pupil's perceptions of the school counsellors roles are greatly influenced by that which they are exposed to by the counsellors in the schools. Leviton (1977) maintained that pupils perceived counsellor

functions relating to curriculum planning, academic problems and post school planning as most important. These findings were supported by Wells and Ritter (1979) in their study of 550 pupils in an American high school employing eight school counsellors. They reported that pupils perceived the school counsellors primarily as credit evaluators and course changers and that counsellors by virtue of the functions they seem to be performing have become incongruent with the goals of counselling. Murgatroyd (1977) in related research provided support for this viewpoint. He reported that when role elements of his participants responses to the question regarding the counsellors role were analyzed, pupils perceptions of the counsellor's role focused primarily around administrative duties. These were of the nature of checking attendance registers for truants, being responsible for lost property and reporting truants to the education and welfare officer.

Stinzi and Hutcheon (1972) have attributed much of the confusion surrounding counsellor role to the conflicting expectations of school personnel and pupils. They maintained that pupils perceived the school counsellor as:

- 1) a source of information for career guidance and vocational opportunities;
- 2) someone with whom they could discuss social and personal problems;
- 3) someone who was available for consultation on discipline problems, but who was not a disciplinarian;



- 4) someone whose qualities should include sincerity and integrity so that pupils could trust him;
- 5) someone who should allow pupils to make their own decisions;
- 6) someone who should be available to orient new pupils; and
- 7) someone who should encourage an open door policy.

Stinzi and Hutcheon's (1972) overwhelmingly positive report of pupils perceptions of the school counsellor have however not been corroborated in the literature. This may be due to the fact that they elicited a more ideal than actual perception of the school counsellors' role.

Various researchers have maintained that an important variable influencing perceptions of the counsellor appears to be pupils' experiences of counselling received. Wiggins and Moody (1987) reported that those counsellors who spent the most time in the direct delivery of services through individual and group counselling were perceived by pupils as most effective while Leviton (1977) reported that of the 84 percent of the pupils in his study (n=550) who enjoyed some contact with the school counsellor, 75 percent rated their contact as helpful. This was confirmed by Gelso, Brooks and Carl and by Peterson and De Gracie in Hutchinson and Reagan (1989). Wells and Ritter (1979) also maintained that 66 percent of their sample (n=550) reported counsellor contacts as helpful. However Murgatroyd (1977) stated on the other hand that despite the fact that 41 percent of the pupils in his sample (n=424) had received some personal contact



with their counsellors, they still perceived the counsellor as a senior teacher with administrative duties.

According to Mc Gennis, White and Brady in O'Leary (1990) pupils time spent with the counsellor appears to be proportional to their length of stay at the school. For example they reported that 72 percent of final year high school pupils received an interview with the school counsellor compared to only 25 percent of second and third year pupils. O'Leary (1990) stated that this was plausible because final year high school pupils require the time to discuss their post school plans, and because the counsellor's time is limited. In related research however Rowe (1989) criticized the brevity of time pupils spent with the counsellors. He maintained that the senior high school pupils in his study averaged a total of only 15 minutes discussing post school plans with the school counsellor. This led him to question whether pupils were receiving adequate accurate information in this limited time.

A further question that seems to occur in the literature pertains to whether pupils perceive the counsellor's role as distinct or similar to that of other personnel at the school. According to Van Riper (1971) pupils do not perceive clear distinctions between the roles of counsellors, principals and teachers. Trotzer and Kassera (1971) have attributed this mainly to the amount of time spent by counsellors in activities that are unrelated to pupils' welfare and which may easily be undertaken by others. Siann et al (1982) on the other hand utilized the

semantic differential technique to determine whether pupils perceived the counsellor to be distinct from their subject teachers. Their results indicated overwhelmingly that pupils perceived counsellors more positively than subject teachers on the attributes of "fairness", "unselfishness", "helpfulness", "sympathy", "friendliness" and "displaying encouragement and interest". However, in areas related to their schoolwork, subject teachers outranked school counsellors. These were "effectiveness", "cleverness", and the "ability to make pupils do what they expect".

Various researchers have related pupils' negative perceptions of the school counsellor to the counsellors' approachability. Skuy et al (1985) for example reported that more than two thirds of the pupils in their study (n=359) perceived the counsellors as unapproachable. Wells and Ritter (1979) found that 48 percent of the pupils in their study (n=550) "disagreed" with the statement that the counsellor was someone with whom they could freely discuss personal problems. Pupils' qualified their negative responses with several reasons. Firstly, there was a perceived lack of interest and understanding on the part of counsellors. Secondly, counsellors were perceived to be unavailable, and thirdly, counsellors were regarded as not listening to or hearing pupils' concerns. Porteus and Fisher (1980) and Van Schoor (1981) identified counsellor confidentiality as a further area of concern to pupils. They maintained that counsellors needed to ensure that pupils were informed that their concerns would be handled professionally.

Hutchinson and Reagan (1989) have cautioned that counsellors not leave the perceptions of what they do and what they are to chance, and that if counsellors desire that pupils perceive them as fulfilling certain specific roles and functions, they then take an active part in establishing these roles.

### 2.3 Pupils' perceptions of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent

A review of the literature concerning pupils' perceptions of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent reveals two important findings. Firstly, pupils preferred the school counsellor as the major source of help for educational and vocational planning but not in the area of personal emotional problems (Darfo 1986, Elford and Feistritz 1982, Gray 1980, Hannon et al in Hutchinson and Reagan 1989, Murgatroyd 1977, Praytino 1981, Shartzter and Stone in Belkin 1977, Van Riper 1971, Van Schoor 1981, Wells and Ritter 1989). Secondly, parents and friends are regarded consistently to be the major sources of help for pupils in the area of personal and emotional problems. (Bolarin 1989, Haughey and Bowman in Hutchinson and Reagan 1989, Juggath 1984, Leviton 1977, O'Leary 1990, Omar Mahomed 1983, Skuy et al 1985, Wells and Ritter 1979) Some of the findings of these studies will now be discussed.

Leviton (1977), in an American study of school pupils (n=550), requested pupils to state in four specifically delineated areas of concern, namely personal problems, poor work, truancy and indecision, whom they would approach if they were experiencing

difficulties. Pupils indicated their preferences from a list of five possible helping agents, including school counsellor, parent, friend or relative and teacher. In analyzing his data, Leviton (1977) reported that in the area of personal problems 54 percent of the pupils chose a friend or relative, 29 percent indicated they would approach their parents, and only 4 percent chose the school counsellor. In the area of poor work the counsellor again fared badly, 42 percent of the pupils chose the subject teacher as opposed to the 27 percent who chose the school counsellor. The counsellor was chosen significantly only in the area of truancy (54 percent). With regard to career indecision 45 percent of the pupils preferred to approach their parents, while 26 percent chose the school counsellor. Leviton's (1977) findings led him to conclude that the counsellor was perceived as most helpful only in the areas directly related to school and least helpful in areas of personal concerns.

Wells and Ritter (1979) provided support for Leviton's (1977) findings. Their comparative study of school pupils (n=550) revealed that an overwhelming 80 percent of the pupils sampled approached the counsellor with school related problems of the nature of changing classes. The number of pupils who chose the school counsellor with a concern thereafter declined from 51 percent for pupils needing assistance with curriculum planning to 40 percent when pupils experienced conflict with a friend or teacher. Only 4 percent indicated that they preferred to approach the school counsellor. These findings are in concert with the findings of Gray 1980; Harrison, Breem, Murray, Watson,

Hardiman and O Higgins in O'Leary (1990); Haughey and Bowman in Hutchinson and Reagan (1989); and Murgatroyd (1977).

Murgatroyd (1977) requested 424 British pupils to indicate whom they would approach for three categories of problems, namely, personal, career and school-related. His results strongly indicated that pupils perceived the school counsellor as helpful primarily with problems related to career and school rather than with personal concerns. Pupils least preferred the school counsellor in this area and showed most preference for parents and friends. Hannon et al in O'Leary (1990) provided overwhelming support for Murgatroyd's (1977) findings. They reported that the counsellor was the major person involved in helping pupils choose jobs or careers for 95 percent of final year pupils, 88 percent of third year pupils and 49 percent of second year high school pupils. Similar findings were reported by O'Leary (1990) and Rowe (1990). Although Murgatroyd's findings have been well substantiated in the literature Cherry and Gear (1987) have been critical of them on the basis of Murgatroyd's use of a limited sample that is both atypical and geographically restricted to permit generally applicable conclusions.

Russo and Kassera (1989) identified pupil's counselling needs to be firstly in the area of educational problems, secondly in personal-emotional problems and thirdly with vocational counselling. However Hutchinson and Bottorf (1986) reported that the biggest gaps between pupils expressed needs and their

reporting of services received lay in the areas of career and personal counselling. They maintain that of the 80 percent of pupils who expressed a need for career counselling in their study only 40 percent received it, while of the 60 percent of pupils who expressed personal problems only 21 percent received some assistance with these problems.

Ahia (1983) in a Nigerian study found that Nigerian pupils reported having more vocational problems than personal problems. Denga (1983) has attributed this to the fact that elders in the community are available to Nigerian pupils for help and advice on a wide range of problems including personal problems.

Hutchinson and Reagan (1989) in an extensive study of 1734 American school pupils, 885 males and 849 females, reported that pupils felt most comfortable discussing school related types of concerns with school counsellors and least comfortable discussing personal concerns. More than 80 percent of all boys and girls "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they thought it appropriate to discuss post-school plans with the school counsellor, while 89 percent perceived school related concerns as an appropriate area. However in the areas of more personal concerns the figures declined considerably for appropriateness of counsellor contact. Only 45.6 percent chose the counsellor in the area of awareness of feelings and values, 41.6 percent conflicts with peers, 36.6 percent general personal problems, 34.2 percent alcohol or drug problems, 33.3 percent sexual, physical or emotional abuse, 30.7 percent conflicts with parents, 26.5 percent relieving tension,



19.5 percent for boy-girl relationships and only 11.1 percent regarding a question about sex. These results are disturbing when viewed against the background that pupils certainly do have a wide range of personal problems with which they require assistance. (Darfo 1986, Ipaye in Skuy et al., 1985, Porteus and Fisher 1980, Praytino 1981). Despite these findings less than 33 percent of Hutchinson and Reagan's (1989) sample and only 4 percent of both Leviton's (1977) and Wells and Ritter's (1979) sample chose to seek help from the school counsellor who is specifically trained to render this assistance to them.

Similar findings were reported by Van Schoor (1981) in a survey of 565 South African matriculants in the Western Cape. Only 15.1 percent of his sample indicated that they would have liked to consult a school counsellor with a personal problem compared to the 82.9 percent who indicated that they would not. Siann et al (1982) however reported conflicting findings. They maintained that school counsellors with a commitment to providing a counselling service were perceived by pupils as helpful in the area of personal/familial problems. However the findings of Siann et al (1982) have not been substantiated by other researchers. Furthermore their sample size was limited to 72 pupils thus making it difficult to generalize their findings to the broader context.

Although the viewpoint that pupils perceive the school counsellor as helpful primarily in the areas of educational and vocational decision making has been supported by various researchers (for

example, Elford and Feistritzer 1982, Grant in Amod 1983, Haughey and Bowen in Hutchinson and Reagan 1989, Jampies 1980, Shertzer and Stone in Belkin 1977), Skuy et al (1985) have provided evidence to the contrary. They report that pupils did not see the school counsellor as a preferred helping agent in any of the areas of concern investigated by them. In their sample of 359 standard seven and standard nine pupils, parents were the most significant choices in most areas of concern. For example, regarding the future (further education and careers) 35 percent of the pupils chose the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent, while 70 percent chose their parents. In respect of friendships 56 percent of the pupils chose their friends while 39 percent chose their parents and only 3 percent indicated that they would prefer the school counsellor. In the area of family concerns, 51 percent of the pupils chose their parents while 3 percent indicated the counsellor as the preferred choice.

30x  
Bolarin (1989) in a Nigerian study attempted to determine whether the sex of the pupils influenced preferences for the school counsellor as a helping agent. He reported that although males (n=220) and females (n=185) consulted the various sources of help, namely teacher, friend, counsellor and relative, the findings were not in favour of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent. Of the 505 pupils only 45 contacted the school counsellor with academic problems while only 42 contacted the counsellor with social problems. Bolarin (1989) further reported that 83.3 percent of those who consulted the counsellor on social problems were female, while 84.4 percent of the pupils



who contacted the school counsellor with academic problems were also female. Only 16.6 percent and 15.6 percent of the males contacted the school counsellor with social and academic problems respectively. Friends and relatives were the most preferred sources of help by both males and females with regard to social problems. Bolarin's (1989) results suggest that more girls than boys perceived the school counsellor as a preferred source of help. However there is need for a cautious interpretation of the results as the number of females who chose the counsellor represented a small fraction of his entire sample. Furthermore his use of a unicultural black African sample questions the generalizability of his findings to other populations. Bolarin's (1989) findings have not been supported fully in the literature. Williams and Haynes (1984) however, have been supportive of the view that female pupils reported significantly more positive opinions of the school counsellor than do male pupils.

3.2

Rich, Brook and Yecheli (1989) in a study conducted in Israel, investigated the effects of counsellors sex on pupils' preferences for the school counsellor as a helping agent. The focus of the study was on social and educational problems. They reported that girls (n=66) demonstrated a distinct preference for the same sex counsellor, irrespective of the presenting problem while boys (n=58) indicated a same-sex preference for educational problems and an opposite-sex preference for social problems.

In a more elaborate cross-cultural study Pinchot et al (1975) investigated the influence of counsellor race, sex and cultural

background on help seeking behaviour. They utilized a Black and White (Appalachian and Northerners) American sample. An analysis of their results according to sex confirmed the findings of Rich et al (1989) that girls preferred same sex counsellors. However their finding that boys demonstrated no significant preference for counsellor sex is contrary to the findings of Rich et al (1989). When the results of Pinchot et al (1975) were interpreted according to race it was established that both Black and White pupils preferred a counsellor of the same race. For cultural background however, Black pupils preferred a female counsellor of their own background. White pupils of the Appalachian culture also preferred a counsellor from their own background, while Northern White pupils rejected their own background counsellor for a white counsellor from the Appalachian background. Pinchot et al (1975) therefore concluded from their results that the race and sex of the counsellor were more significant variables influencing pupils help seeking behaviour than cultural background.

Jugguth (1984) reported similar findings in one of the few cross-cultural studies conducted in South Africa. He utilized a sample of 221 pupils (Jewish, English, Coloured and Indian) from three private schools in Johannesburg. His findings revealed that there were more similarities than differences between the pupils from the various cultural backgrounds, regarding their preferences for the school counsellor. Pupils reported their main concern as being relationships with the opposite sex, future careers, performance at school, family relations and "concerns

relating to the acceptance of self". the majority of pupils surveyed preferred not to discuss their problems with others. Among those who were willing to discuss their concerns, parents and friends were the major sources of help while school counsellors and teachers fared badly as third and fourth choices. Jugguth (1984) interpreted this latter finding positively in the sense that he sees the counsellor as a specialist resource person rather than an immediate helper. Pupils would therefore first approach others (friends/relatives) and if they still could not resolve their problems they would then approach the school counsellor. However, there is once again need for cautious interpretation of the findings of Jugguth (1984) due to the fact that he utilized a restricted upper middle class sample.

Darfo (1986) in a survey conducted in the United States (n=684) provided evidence that an overwhelming majority of pupils demanded that the school counselling service handle adolescent concerns, personal, educational and vocations. Amod (1983) reported similar results when she found that most pupils in her study indicated that they would be keen to spend time with the school counsellor to resolve their problems. These are more positive and encouraging developments when contrasted against previous research findings reporting pupils' reluctance to approach counsellors with personal concerns. (Murgatroyd 1977, Wells and Ritter 1979, Van Schoor 1981).

In sum it appears that various conclusions may be drawn from the results of the different studies. However interpretations need

to be made cautiously as many of the results of the studies reviewed have been generalized from specific populations particularly from white middle class participants. More over studies have varied according to sample size and few cross-cultural studies have been reported. Another major criticism of all the studies mentioned so far is that they have all been conducted on a cross-sectional basis. Considering that pupils spend at least 5 years in the secondary schools, longitudinal studies would perhaps yield more reliable results as perceptions are subject to change. Nevertheless, the findings of those researching pupils' perceptions of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent have been consistent. Pupils reported that they did not perceive the counsellor as the preferred helping agent for personal-emotional problems. Furthermore parents, friends and relatives were the sources most preferred by pupils in this area of concern. There also appears to be some support in the literature that race and sex influence pupils help seeking behaviour while cultural background may not be a particularly important factor.

Hutchinson and Reagan (1989) have examined why pupils prefer other individuals besides the counsellor as their preferred helping agents in the area of personal concerns. They have pointed out firstly, that reasons for this are strongly related to pupils' perceptions of the counsellor's role. This is confirmed by Remley and Albright (1988) who stated that the impression expressed by pupils is that while some of them are developing positive relationships with their counsellors the

majority express confusion about the counsellors role and have negative expectations of them. Williams and Haynes (1984) reported that although more pupils from their study held positive views of the counsellor's role than those who held negative views, the difference was not statistically significant. This implies that if counsellors were effectively meeting the needs of pupils then significantly more of them would express positive perceptions of the counsellor's role.

Harris (1987) referred to the disparity between pupils' perceptions of the counselling received, and counsellor perceptions of counselling provided. She reported that pupils perceived several of their counselling needs as not being met, and that this resulted in their having to make important decisions without the help of the school counsellor. This led her to conclude that pupils expected more from counselling than they were receiving and that counsellors needed to adjust their understanding of pupil needs accordingly. Reagan (1984) and Remley and Albright (1988) reported that pupils tended to perceive counsellors in the role of disciplinarians and confused visits to them with discipline procedures. Shertzer and Stone (1981) have strongly opposed the view that the counsellor be responsible for discipline and at the same time be perceived by pupils as someone with whom they could discuss personal problems. However Atkinson and Schwartz (1984) have reported that pupil's perceptions of the counsellor's credibility have not been affected by the counsellor being assigned responsibility for discipline.

Secondly, Van Riper (1971) and Wells and Ritter (1979) have reported that pupils' seem to perceive whatever functions the counsellor emphasizes, as those that are important. This implies that if the counsellor rates personal counselling as the most important counselling priority this must be communicated to the pupils. Bolarin (1989) confirms this as he reports that if pupils are reluctant to approach the school counsellor with their concerns then counsellors need to more actively publicize their services to them.

Thirdly, counsellors are uncertain about their own identities as professionals and are unable to convey to their superiors what they themselves perceive their role to be (Hutchinson and Reagan, 1979). According to Murgatroyd (1977) this has resulted in the counsellor being assigned increasing amounts of administrative tasks which in turn have led to pupils perceiving him/her as unavailable and uninterested.

In conclusion it becomes evident that counsellors need to prove to pupils and teachers that they have the ability to manage personal concerns, or to do away with personal counselling in the schools altogether (Cox in Bradley 1978). However in the light of research that has been conducted that shows that counsellors are perceived as approachable, caring and helpful with personal concerns it is seen by the present researcher to be of more value to train counsellors to promote role clarification.

#### 2.4 Teachers' Perceptions of the School Counsellor

A review of the literature on teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor has revealed that although some teachers report negative perceptions of the school counsellor (Burleson, Nelson and Tollefson, 1980; Denga, 1983; Mc Phee, 1985; Olson, 1986; and Wittmer and Loesch, 1975), teachers in general have been more positive in their perceptions (Belkin in Skuy et al, 1981; Best et al, 1981; Cole et al, 1980; Gibson, 1990; Lytton et al, 1970; Remley and Albright, 1988; Sherman in Belkin 1977, Siann et al, 1982; Territo, 1985; Wilgus and Shelley, 1988). The findings of the various studies will now be discussed.

Wilgus and Shelley (1988) conducted a survey among teachers in seven elementary schools in the United States. The purpose of the study was to investigate firstly, how teachers perceived the school counsellors to be spending their time, secondly, how teachers expected counsellors to spend their time and thirdly, the actual time spent by counsellors in different counsellor functions. They reported that teachers' perceptions and expectations with regard to individual counselling was congruent to the counsellors' actual time spent on this function. However there were some discrepancies with regard to "group counselling", the "development of classroom programmes" and "parent contact". Teachers perceived all three functions as important and expected counsellors to spend more time than they actually did on them. Similar findings were reported by Miller in Belkin (1977).



Wilgus and Shelley (1988) also reported that the teachers in their sample perceived counsellors to be overinvolved with "testing" and that they expected counsellors to restrict the time spent on performing this function. In related research Amod (1983) in a survey of 103 teachers from four Indian schools in the Transvaal, reported that the counsellors test administration and interpretation function was not perceived as important by teachers.

Cole et al (1980) conducted similar research utilizing a sample of 569 American teachers. They reported that 94.4 percent of the teachers perceived the school counsellor to be involved in some kind of individual or personal work with pupils, 61.2 percent of the teachers reported that vocational counselling was being done, while 41.7 percent indicated that the counsellors handled many disciplinary problems. In this latter respect regarding the counsellor as disciplinarian teachers' perceptions are in concert with pupils' perceptions of the school counsellor.

Another finding of Cole et al (1980) refers to the fact that teachers in their sample, suggested that counsellors involve themselves more in the areas of personal, family and group counselling. The results of Remley and Albright (1988) are in agreement with this as they reported from their American study that teachers reflected a strong need for their pupils to be helped with personal issues. However there is need for cautious interpretation of the results of Remley and Albright (1988) as



they used an extremely restricted sample consisting of only 11 teachers.

Mc Phee (1985), in a more extensive study in Nassau in the Bahamas, surveyed the perceptions of 207 teachers and 68 administrators from 18 public and private, junior and senior high schools. He reported that the most important functions of the school counsellor as perceived by teachers, were firstly, personal-social counselling, secondly educational counselling and thirdly vocational counselling. These findings contrast strongly with pupils' perceptions of their needs for counselling which are reported to be in the areas of vocational and educational decision making rather than with personal concerns. (Gray, 1980; Leviton, 1977; Wells and Ritter, 1979).

The research of Burleson et al (1980) has not supported the positive results of the above researchers (Cole et al, 1980; Mc Phee, 1985; Remley and Albright, 1988 and Wilgus and Shelley, 1988), concerning teachers' perceptions of counsellor involvement with pupils' personal concerns. They reported from their investigations that neither teachers nor parents endorsed affective education aimed at helping pupils to understand themselves and their relationships with others better.

These findings may be related to teachers' perceptions of the competence, training and professionalism of the counsellor, as well as the confusion surrounding counsellor role. Shermin in Belkin (1977) for example, utilized a sample of 422 teachers to

investigate the perceptions they held regarding counsellor competence. He reported that only 29 percent of the teachers interviewed perceived the counsellors as well trained, and only 28 percent reported that they found the counsellor efficient and effective. The fact that only 17 percent of the teachers perceived the school counsellor as a "highly professional person" has led the researcher to conclude that although counsellors are generally perceived in a positive light, they may not be respected as professionals who are competent to handle serious and difficult problems.

In related research Lytton et al (1970) investigated the perceptions of 1757 British teachers, to guidance and counselling services. One of their findings revealed that 75 percent of the teachers in the sample considered specialist training to be essential to the counsellor, while 56 percent preferred a trained professional to a non specialist. Similar findings were reported by Mc Phee (1985) who maintained that the teachers (n=207) in his study expressed serious concern regarding counsellor competency in schools, the need for clarification of counsellor role in the guidance and counselling process and the establishment of minimum acceptable standards for school counselling positions. Valine, Higgins and Hatcher (1980) in related research investigated teacher perceptions of counsellor effectiveness. They reported that 32 percent of the teachers in their study stated that they were undecided concerning counsellor effectiveness, while 26 percent stated that the counsellor was ineffective.

Stinzi and Hutcheon (1972) have provided more positive reports of teacher perceptions of the school counsellor. According to them teachers perceived the counsellors' role as one of being the teachers advocate, handling case conferences, "consultant on disciplinary issues" and "administrator of discipline", consulting with teachers before making decisions, having a position that is not always autonomous, participating in school supervision, counselling of pupils, scheduling and the special placement of pupils. Belkin (1977) has criticized Stinzi and Hutcheon's (1972) perspective. He pointed out that while they reported a perception of the counsellor as someone who was a respected professional deeply committed to his work, other research findings have not supported this. This leads Belkin (1977) to conclude that Stinzi and Hutcheon (1972) elicited a more ideal rather than actual view of the counsellor.

Various researchers have focused on teacher perceptions of their own role in guidance and counselling. In a study by Gibson (1990) utilizing a sample of 180 secondary school teachers, he reported that 81.4 percent of the teachers stated that the counsellor should be identified with the teaching faculty. A further 88.8 percent stated that teachers should share pupil information with counsellors while 85.1 percent were of the opinion that teachers themselves should provide career information and assist pupils in educational planning (88.8 percent).

The findings of Cole et al (1980) have been in agreement with those of Gibson (1990). They reported that in their study 85.2 percent of the 569 teachers stated that they were involved in teacher-parent conferences, 44.1 percent with counselling pupils during homeroom periods, 81.0 percent with referrals to the counsellors and 78.3 percent with teacher-pupil conferences. Teachers perceived themselves as having much influence over the counselling process during these times. Further teachers made specific recommendations for improving guidance services. These included the need for more counsellors, family contacts, group counselling and followup services. In related research O'Brien et al (1982) reported that 95 percent of the teachers in their study felt that the counsellor should participate in teacher discussions of classroom activities while 85 percent believed that the counsellor should use teachers as a career information resource.

While the findings of some researchers support the view that teachers perceive themselves to be an important resource to the counsellors and perceive school counsellors positively, others report conflicting findings. Denga (1983) for example has reported that Nigerian teachers regarded the counsellor as a threat. This was attributed to the popularity enjoyed by the school counsellor with pupils thus placing him in an enviable position with the staff. Quinn, Rankine and Angus in Mc Phee (1985) have also reported that teachers were of the opinion that counsellors served no special functions that they themselves could not manage. However Best et al (1981) in a survey of 267

teachers in eight comprehensive schools including those "with" and "without" counsellors, reported that few teachers perceived the counsellors as a threat. This was especially so in the area of discipline and authority. Two thirds of the teachers disagreed that they perceived the counsellor as a threat to their authority and less than one third perceived the counsellor as lacking in the understanding of teachers' problems. However in schools without school counsellors 40 percent of the teachers experienced some apprehension concerning the counsellor's role.

Teachers' reports regarding confusion over the school counsellor's role are in concert with pupils' perceptions of the role of the school counsellor. Researchers believe that counsellors must accept responsibility for this. Ibrahim et al (1983) for example maintained that while others appreciate their role, counsellors could either attempt to meet the role expectations of the groups they serve or try to educate those who have inappropriate expectations. Darfo (1986) has pointed out that if counselling services are to be functional it is imperative that counsellors actively set out to clarify their roles. This has been confirmed by Bradley (1983) and O'Leary (1990).

In sum the findings of the various investigations have supported the view that teachers' perceive the school counsellor positively and that they believe the counsellor to be serving a valuable need in the schools. this has been confirmed by Belkin and Skuy et al (1985). Belkin reported from his American review of

research that school counsellors are largely perceived by teachers as helpful, responsible professionals who are a resource to the teaching staff. Best et al (1981) in a British study referring to teacher support for the school counsellor maintained that,

such is their support that most teachers are willing to free him from any substantial teaching commitment, allow him to have a critical say in policy formulation, and use his expertise to sensitize them to the welfare needs of their pupils (p. 169).

This viewpoint has been supported by Cole et al (1980), Gibson (1990) and Territo (1985). However Aubrey (1982) has cautioned against the vast, overrating of the potential of school counsellors by their publics and the disappointment that follows when counsellors do not meet their overrated expectations.

## 2.5 Teachers' Perceptions of the counsellor as the Preferred Helping Agent

In keeping with the little research specifically conducted in this area, only one study simultaneously investigating both teachers' and pupils' perceptions of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent was located by the researcher. The study of Skuy et al (1985) utilized a sample of 31 teachers and 359 pupils. Their findings revealed firstly that 90 percent of the teachers indicated that pupils preferred the school counsellor as the helping agent in the area of future (career) and further education. Secondly, 71 percent of the teachers indicated that the counsellor was the preferred choice in the area of family

concerns and thirdly, 68 percent of the teachers indicated that pupils preferred the school counsellors as the helping agent of choice when they experienced problems concerning teachers.

The findings of Skuy et al (1985) also revealed that 68 percent of the teachers considered themselves to be the preferred source of help in the area of schoolwork, while friends were considered as the preferred source by a further 68 percent of the teachers, for pupils experiencing problems with friendships.

In a comparison of these findings to pupils' perceptions of the counsellor as the preferred helping agent, Skuy et al (1985) discovered that teachers did not identify the helping agents most selected by pupils. They elaborated that while teachers identified the school counsellor as the most preferred helping agent in three of the six areas (namely, future, teachers, family) pupils did not see the counsellor as a significant source of help in any of the areas. Parents were chosen "most" by pupils in five of the six areas (namely, future, teacher, schoolwork, family, appearance) and the school counsellor least in four of the six areas. This led Skuy et al (1985) to conclude that teachers overrated school counsellors as preferred helping agents and underrated parents as the preferred helping agents of pupils. No other research was located in this area.

There is however once again, need for a cautious interpretation of these results as Skuy et al have utilized a limited sample (n=31) that is both atypical and geographically restricted.



## CHAPTER THREE


### EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

In this chapter the methodology utilized by the study is described. The description includes the sampling procedure, the instruments used and the procedure whereby the research was conducted.

#### 3.1 Introduction

It has been shown that pupils are faced with problems of an educational vocational and personal nature while at school and, that the type of problems experienced influences their selection of the preferred helping agent. Most researchers have suggested in general terms that pupils preferred to select parents and friends as the major source of help in the area of personal concerns while the school counsellor was seen as a source of help more in the areas of educational and vocational concerns. Skuy et al (1985) in conflicting findings reported however, that the school counsellor was not a significant choice of pupils in any major area of concern.

The present study which is a partial replication of Skuy et al (1985) attempts to establish more specifically the extent to which secondary school pupils:



a) would choose in various areas of concern (schoolwork, friends, family, appearance, teachers, career, other) the school counsellor as a preferred helping agent in comparison



to other potential helping agents (teacher, parent, school counsellor, friend and other);

- b) would consider their school counsellors to be approachable, and
- c) would consider their schools to provide adequate assistance with their personal concerns.

This study also has as its objective the investigation of the perceptions of the teachers' of the pupils with regard to the above three areas.

### 3.2 Methodology

#### 3.2.1 Samples

The samples comprised 202 standard nine pupils and 20 of their subject teachers from two government secondary schools in Pietermaritzburg. (Refer to Table 1) The schools selected were convenient as they were representative of Indian schools in Natal in terms of their sizes, socio-economic backgrounds of pupils, the language groups they catered for and the range of staff they employed. For the purpose of this study the schools will be referred to as school 1 and school 2. A sample of 100 pupils from school number 1 and 102 pupils from school 2 was selected according to their availability. In this respect the researcher liaised with a teacher at the schools who was briefed about the study and who had to inform pupils regarding the study, as well as compile a list of participants who were willing to take part. Each teacher was asked for approximately 100 names. In order to avoid undue administration difficulties and because it was not

possible to utilize teaching time to conduct research it was decided not to include all the standard nine pupils from the two schools in the sample. Participation in the research was on a voluntary basis and pupils were informed that they were free to decline. No pupil declined. This may be related to peer pressure where pupils felt they had to participate because everybody else was participating or to the ethos of the two schools which may have made pupils reluctant to decline participation. Standard nine pupils were selected because they would have been in their respective schools for a duration of at least three years, during which time they would have been exposed to the services of a school counsellor.

Table 1 Distribution of the sample for the two schools

Schools	Pupils	Teachers
1	100	10
2	102	10
Total	202	20

Although no effort was made to ensure an equal representation of boys and girls in the sample the data reveals that of the 202 pupils males constituted 49.5 percent ( $n=100$ ) of the sample while female constituted 48.5 percent ( $n=98$ ) of the sample. Four pupils failed to indicate their sex. These were included in the data wherever sex was not a variable influencing measurement and excluded wherever it was. Table 2 indicates the distribution of pupils according to sex for these two schools.

Table 2    Distribution of pupil sample according to sex for the two schools

	School 1	School 2	Total
Males	43	57	100
Females	54	44	98
Total	97	101	198

Of the 202 pupils who completed the questionnaire 159 indicated their fathers' occupations. These were described as 27.7 percent (n=44) professionals or semi professionals, 21.4 percent (n=34) salesmen, foremen and managers, 17.6 percent (n=28) skilled workers, 16.3 percent (n=26) businessmen and 10.7 percent (n=17) unskilled workers. A further 5 percent (n=8) were unemployed while 1.3 percent (n=2) had retired. The distribution of fathers' occupations for the two sets of pupils were similar (Refer Table 3). However there was some variation on the occupations of businessmen, and salesmen, foremen, and managers. More fathers 10.1 percent (n=6) of pupils in school 2 were businessmen than were the fathers, 3.8 percent (n=6) of pupils in school 1. On the other hand more pupils in school 1 (n=20) had fathers who were salesmen, foremen and managers than did pupils (n=14) in school 2.

Table 3 Distribution of fathers' occupations of the pupils for the two schools

Type of Occupation	School 1	School 2	Total	%
1 Professional/semi-professional	20	24	44	27.7
2 Salesmen/Foremen/Managers	20	14	34	21.4
3 Skilled workers	13	15	28	17.6
4 Businessmen	10	16	26	16.3
5 Unskilled Workers	9	8	17	10.7
6 Retired	-	2	2	1.3
7 Unemployed	3	5	8	5
Total	75	84	159	

Fifteen pupils indicated that their fathers were deceased while a further twenty eight failed to indicate their fathers' occupation.

Of the 182 pupils who indicated their mothers' occupations 12.1 percent (n=22) were described as unskilled workers, 9.9 percent (n=18) as professionals or semi professionals, 9.9 percent (n=18) as salesladies and secretaries, 5.5 percent (n=10) as businesswomen and 2.2 percent (n=4) as skilled workers (refer table 4). Of the mothers, 60.4 percent (n=110) were housewives. Nineteen pupils did not indicate their mothers occupation and 1 pupil indicated that her mother was deceased.

Table 4 Distribution of Mother's occupations for the pupils from the two schools

Type of Occupation	School 1	School 2	Total	%
Unskilled Workers	12	10	22	12.1
Professional/semi-professional	6	12	18	9.9
Salesladies, Secretaries	12	6	18	9.9
Businesswomen	4	6	10	5.5
Skilled Workers	2	2	4	2.2
Housewives	47	63	110	60.4
Total	83	99	182	

The two schools were again similar on mother's occupations. However in school 2 twice as many mothers, 6.6 percent (n=12) were described as professionals or semi-professionals compared to school 1 were only 3.3 percent (n=6) fell into this category. On the other hand, twice as many mothers (n=12) of pupils in school 1 were described as salesladies and secretaries than was the case for mothers (n=6) of pupils in school 2.

The reasons for giving details related to the occupations of the mothers' and fathers' of the pupils was to show that the schools were comparable in terms of socio-economic factors. The schools seem to be representative of co-educational government schools catering for Indian English speaking working class and middle class children. One of the major factors influencing the choice of the schools was the parity in socio-economic background of the

pupils who attended them and the fact that both schools employed qualified guidance counsellors in full time positions.

A convenient sample of 10 teachers from each of the 2 schools was selected. This was done according to the first available teachers involved in the teaching of standard nine pupils. The teachers selected covered the range of subjects offered at the two schools with the subjects they taught. With respect to teaching experience, 15 percent (n=3) of the teachers had between 2 and 5 years of experience, 60 percent (n=12) had between 6 and 10 years of experience and 25 percent (n=5) had 11 years and over of teaching experience. Male teachers constituted 65 percent (n=13) of the sample while female teachers constituted 35 percent (n=7) of the sample. Table 5 refers to the distribution of teachers according to sex for the two schools.

Table 5     Distribution of the teacher sample according to sex for the two schools

	School 1	School 2	Total
Males	7	6	13
Females	3	4	7
Total	10	10	20

Males represented 70 percent of the sample at school 1 and 60 percent of the sample at school 2 while females made up the remaining 30 percent and 40 percent respectively.

### 3.2.2 Instruments

Two self-administered questionnaires were used to conduct the research (refer to Appendix 2). These were devised by Skuy et al (1985) and will be referred to as:

- 1) Pupil Questionnaire, and
- 2) Teacher Questionnaire

The pupil questionnaire consisted of 5 parts while the teacher questionnaire consisted of 4 parts.

Part One of the pupil questionnaire comprised of thirteen statements reflecting how adolescents may feel about certain areas of concern namely schoolwork, appearance, teachers, friends and family relationships. The statements were phrased generally, for example statement 1: I feel bored when I'm at school, and each was accompanied by a Liekert scale ranging from 1 to 5. Pupils had to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The pupils could respond between the parameters of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Question 14 was an open ended question and pupils had to list any other concern not already listed that bothered them. They were also instructed to rank these concerns in order of importance to them.

In Part One of the teacher questionnaire teachers were requested to supply demographic data pertaining to their sex, age, number of years in teaching, subjects taught and name of school.



Parts Two, Three and Four of both pupil and teacher questionnaires were the same except for changes in the wording to suit each group.

In Part Two of the questionnaires Skuy et al (1985) identified 6 major areas of adolescent concerns. These were Schoolwork, Making and Keeping Friends, Family Relationships, Physical Appearance, Relating to some Teachers and Your Future Career. Pupils had to indicate in each area of concern whom they would approach for help from a choice of five helping agents. These were Teacher, Parent, Guidance Counsellor, Friend and "other". Teachers on the other hand had to indicate whom they thought pupils would approach from the list provided with their concerns. Both teachers and pupils were required to indicate the person/s they had chosen by placing a cross on the relevant name. The following provisions were added:

1. The words guidance counsellor were substituted for guidance teacher as this study focuses on the counsellor as the preferred helping agent as opposed to the guidance teacher as noted in Chapter 1.
2. The instruction "You may cross more than one person".

Part Three of the questionnaire consisted of 2 questions. Firstly pupils and teachers were requested to indicate by means of a cross in either the yes block or the no block, whether they felt the school offered them/their pupils enough help with their



personal concerns. Secondly pupils and teachers were asked to indicate whether they/their pupils would feel comfortable approaching the guidance counsellor with any of their concerns. Pupils and teachers were also requested to qualify their answers wherever possible.

Part Four of the questionnaire consisted of a table. Pupils and teachers were provided with a list of six situations in which a guidance counsellor might be useful at a school. These included giving help to pupils who have difficulty in schoolwork, at home and in choosing subjects to study, having discussions on matters that concern teenagers, helping pupils to decide what to do when they leave school and discussing pupil's concerns with others (teachers, principals, social workers) where this might help to solve the problem but only with the pupils consent. They were requested to identify by means of a tick on the left side of the table the situations in which the guidance counsellor does offer help. If they felt that there were certain situations in which the guidance counsellor should offer help but was not doing so, there were asked to identify these by placing a tick next to the situation on the right side of the table. In question 7 of part four pupils and teachers were required to list other ways in which they thought a guidance counsellor may be useful to the school.

Part Five of the pupil questionnaire related to pupil's demographic data of the nature of age, sex, standard, home language, fathers occupation, mothers occupation.

### 3.2.3 Procedure

Permission to conduct the research in the two schools had to be obtained from the House of Delegates under whose supervision all Indian government schools fall. The following conditions as set out by their letter had to be observed:

1. The completion of questionnaires was to be done outside of teaching time.
2. prior arrangements were to be made with the principals of the two schools.
3. Participation in the research was to be on a voluntary basis.

A copy of the letter is provided as Appendix 3. Contact was then established with the principals of the two schools. They were provided with a copy of the above letter and the aims of the research were outlined to them. Both principals were willing to accommodate the researcher at their schools.

A pilot study with 10 standard nine pupils and 4 of their teachers was conducted at a third school. The pupil sample consisted of 5 males and 5 females while the teacher sample consisted of 2 males and 2 females. They were provided with questionnaires identical to those described in 3.2.2. Both pupils and teachers expressed confusion regarding part two of their questionnaires which required that they mark with a cross those helping agents that they/their pupils would approach. there was a lack of clarity regarding the number of options they could cross. This was modified by the inclusion of instruction

2 described in 3.2.2. The revamped questionnaire was completed by 4 standard nine pupils (2 males and 2 females) and 2 of their teachers (1 male and 1 female) and no problems were reported.

A week before the research was conducted the principals were again contacted and arrangements were made for the questionnaire to be handed out to standard nine pupils and their teachers. The questionnaires were handed out to the pupils by teachers who volunteered to assist the researcher. Since these were self administered questionnaires they posed no problems to the teachers involved in the administration. The researcher was available throughout, however no problems that the teachers could not handle were reported. It is noted that all pupils completed the questionnaires within 25-30 minutes. Teachers completed the questionnaires in their own time and returned them to the office. All questionnaires were completed anonymously. Completed pupil questionnaires were collected immediately while teacher questionnaires were collected from the office at a later date.

No checks were carried out for test-retest reliability as the instruments had already been refined by its developers. The presence of the researcher during the administration at the two schools provided a measure of procedural reliability.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

This chapter presents the data obtained from the pupil and teacher questionnaires and presents the statistical procedures by which the data was analyzed. The interpretation includes a discussion of the statistical differences between pupils' and teachers' responses considering both schools together, as well as the statistical differences between pupils' responses for the two schools and teachers' responses for the two schools, on each measuring instrument. The statistical analysis was carried out by means of the following techniques:

1. Cluster Analysis.
2. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations.
3. Chi-Squared Tests.
4. Two way Analysis of Variance.

Tables of the computations are included in the integration of the findings.

#### 4.1 Results of Part One of the pupil questionnaire

Part One of the pupil questionnaire consisted of 13 statements followed by a Liekert scale on which pupils had to indicate from a scale of 1 to 5 as to how they felt about the statement.

Skuy, et al., (1985) did not indicate how they interpreted the results of Part One of the pupil questionnaire . An examination of the pupils' responses to the 13 Part One statements reveals that they appear to be related to the same areas of concerns

identified by Skuy, et al., (1985) in Part Two of the questionnaires. The specific statements and the related areas of concern are tabulated below.

**Table 6:** Relationship between the 13 statements in Part One of the pupil questionnaire and the areas of concern listed in Part Two of the pupil questionnaire.

Statement No.	Area of Concern
1 2 3 4 5 7 12	Schoolwork
6 8 10	Making and keeping friends
11	Family Relationships
13	Physical Appearance
9	Relating to some Teachers

Cluster analysis was carried out on the 13 Part One statements of the pupil questionnaire. According to Norusis (1983) cluster analysis is a technique used to classify objects and cases into categories with its goal being the identification of homogeneous groups and clusters. In cluster analysis cases are grouped together according to their "nearness" or "similarity" which is a measure of the closeness of the two cases. "Distance" refers to how far apart two cases are. The squared Euclidean distance index, which is the sum of the squared differences over all of the variables, is utilized to compute simple distance measures. The disadvantage of this technique according to Norusis (1983) is that:

1. it depends on units of measurement for the variables,

2. when variables are measured on different scales, variables that are measured in larger numbers will contribute more to the distance than variables that are recorded in smaller numbers.

However Norusis states that this may be overcome by expressing all variables in standardized forms, as Z scores, where each variable has a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one.

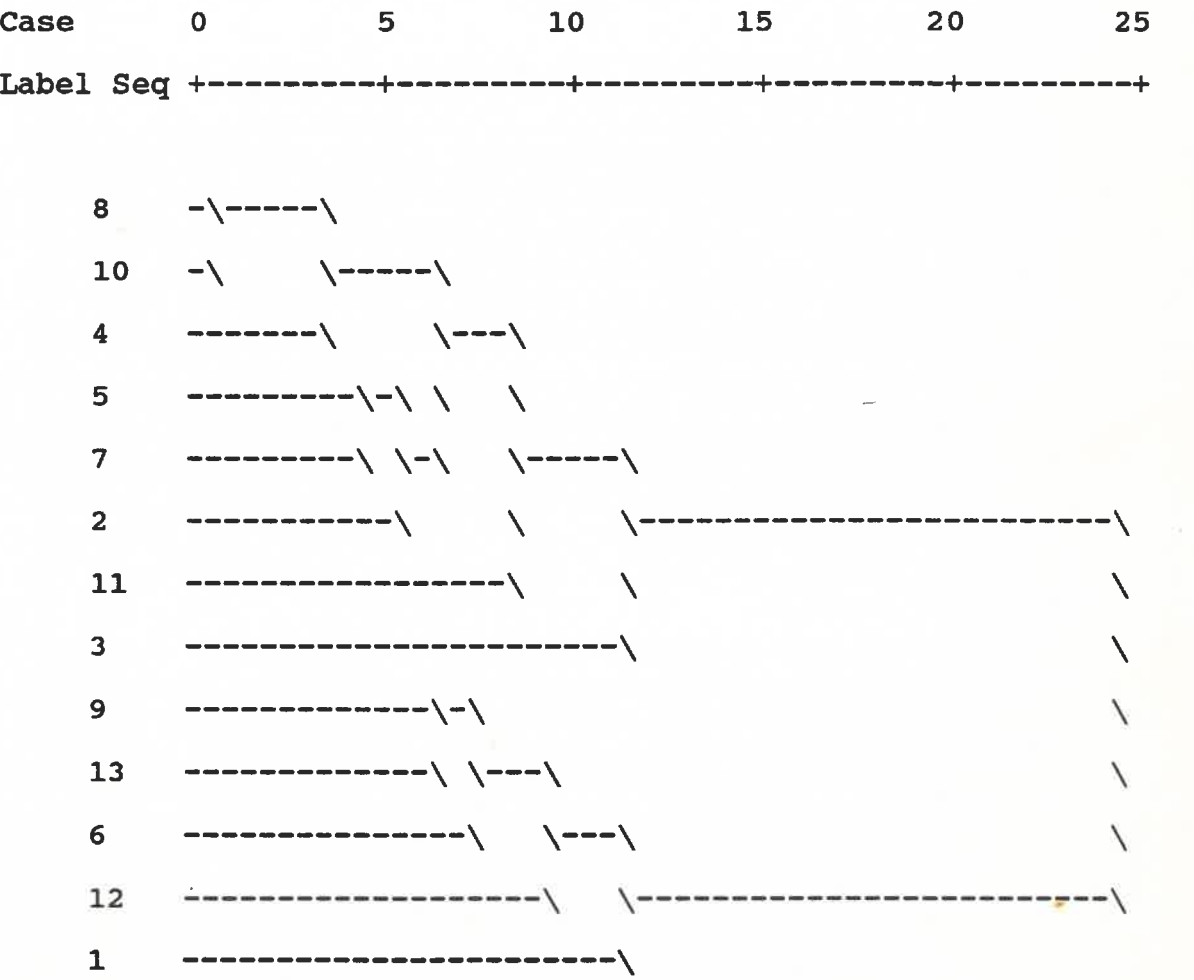
Hierarchical cluster analysis is the most commonly used technique for the formation of clusters. Agglomerative hierarchical clustering forms the basis of the clustering in this section of the present study. This entails the grouping of cases until bigger and bigger clusters are formed and eventually all cases are members of a single cluster. The average linkage method was used for combining clusters. It defines the distances between all pairs of cases in which one member of the pair is from each of the other cases. A dendogram visually represents the steps in hierarchical clustering, showing the clusters being combined and the values of the coefficients at each step.

According to the cluster analysis arithmetic, the 13 Part One statement first form 13 separate clusters. Next, two of the cases are combined into a single cluster. These happen to be statements 8 and 10. Then, a third case is added to the existing cluster namely statement 4 joins statements 8 and 10, and so on until all statements merge to form the cluster level appropriate for interpretation. Judging from the dendogram (refer Table 7)

the only serious cluster analysis that needs to be interpreted is the two cluster level.

**Table 7:** Dendogram representing the members of the two clusters for Part One of the pupil questionnaire.

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis  
Rescaled Distance Cluster Combine.



The members of the two clusters and the statements are listed below.

## Cluster 1

1. At the end of the holidays I look forward to going back to school.
6. I am not the kind of pupil that others find annoying.
9. I get along with most teachers.
12. I never stay away from school unless I'm really sick.
13. I am happy the way I look.

## Cluster 2

2. I can't make much sense of what happens at school.
4. In general I find my school work too easy.
5. I feel bored when I'm at school.
7. I tend to spend a lot of my time daydreaming.
8. I often feel awkward in company.
10. I find difficulty in making friends.
11. I don't think my parents understand me very well.
3. School worries me.

Content inspection of each item in the two clusters reveals a certain face validity to this procedure. Two psychological dimensions appear to be operating, namely attitude to schoolwork and social perception. Cluster 1 statements indicate that pupils who rate themselves positively on social acceptance are also more likely to express positive attitudes to schoolwork and vice versa. Cluster 2 statements on the other hand reflect the opposite, namely that pupils who rate themselves negatively on



social acceptance are more likely to express negative attitudes to schoolwork and vice versa.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations were calculated for the 13 statements. Correlations can be significant either positively or negatively. The members of the two clusters discussed above broadly confirm the correlation matrices' positive and negative entries (refer to Table 8), since, one cluster reflects a broadly positive attitude while the other reflects a broadly negative attitude.

**Table 8:** Correlation coefficients and significance values for the 13 statements of Part One of the Pupil questionnaire.

**PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS**

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
P1	1.000	-.0806	-.2508**	.0163	-.3160**	.0303	-.3082**
P2	-.0806	1.0000	.2157*	-.1680*	.2176**	-.1051	.1890*
P3	-.2508**	.2157*	1.0000	-.1777*	.2868**	.1100	.2875**
P4	.0163	-.1680*	-.1777*	1.0000	-.0237	.1185	-.0437
P5	-.3160**	.2176**	.2868**	-.0237	1.0000	-.1138	.3292**
P6	.0303	-.1051	.1100	.1185	-.1138	1.0000	-.0229
P7	-.3082**	.1890*	.2875**	-.0437	.3292**	-.0229	1.0000
P8	-.0608	.0499	.0212	.0443	.1419	-.0248	.1188
P9	.1795*	-.0596	-.0788	-.1752*	-.1526	-.0055	-.1453
P10	-.0165	.0926	.1347	.0423	.1391	-.0287	.1505
P11	-.0730	.1000	.1104	-.0409	.0828	-.0205	.2133*
P12	.2444**	-.1533	-.2391**	.0472	-.2255**	.2065*	-.3352**
P13	.1883*	-.0141	-.1126	.0225	-.1111	.1085	-.2356**

	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
P1	-.0608	.1795*	-.0165	-.0730	.2444**	.1883*
P2	.0499	-.0596	.0926	.1000	-.1533	-.0141
P3	.0212	-.0788	.1347	.1104	-.2391**	-.1126
P4	.0443	-.1752*	.0423	-.0409	.0472	.0225
P5	.1419	-.1526	.1391	.0828	-.2255**	-.1111
P6	-.0248	-.0055	-.0287	-.0205	.2065*	.1085
P7	.1188	-.1453	.1505	.2133*	-.3352**	-.2356**
P8	1.0000	-.2443**	.4836**	.2774**	-.0413	-.0875
P9	-.2443**	1.0000	-.2062	.0110	.1614	.1036
P10	.4836**	-.2062*	1.0000	.2657**	-.0526	-.1414
P11	.2774**	.0110	.2657**	1.0000	-.0109	-.1134
P12	-.0413	.1614	-.0526	-.0109	1.0000	.1354
P13	-.0875	.1036	-.1414	-.1134	.1354	1.0000

\* - SIGNIF. LE .01    \*\* - SIGNIF. LE .001

Statements 8 and 10 are significantly positively correlated (0.4836) implying that pupils who feel awkward in company also report difficulty making friends. Statements 7 and 12 are significantly negatively correlated (-0.3352) implying that pupils who daydream at school do stay away from school. These relationships are significant at the  $P < 0.001$  level. Of the correlation matrices that were computed, 18 were significant at the  $p < 0.001$  level (refer to Table 8).

Chi-square was calculated for the results of each of the 13 statements to determine whether significant differences occurred between the responses of pupils from School 1 and those of pupils

from School 2. Chi-square reached significance only on statement 2: "I can't make sense of my schoolwork" ( $X^2=10.17$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). A breakdown of pupils' responses follows:

	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Row Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
School	1	7	15	25	32	21	100 49.5
	2	3	5	24	49	21	102 50.5
	Column Total	10 5.0	20 9.9	49 24.3	81 40.1	42 20.8	202 100.0

Chi-square	D.F.	Significance	Min E.F.	Cells with E.F. < 5
10.16950	4	.0377	4.950	1 of 10 (10.0%)

More of the pupils ( $n=22$ ) from School 1 agreed that they could not make sense of their schoolwork, while more pupils ( $n=70$ ) from school 2 disagreed with the statement.

The researcher examined each pupil's response to the open ended question (question 14) and tried to classify these according to the recurrent themes emerging. The following 10 areas of concern were identified by the researcher from a qualitative analysis of the responses:

1. Future Career
2. Schoolwork
3. Family Relationships
4. Relationships with member of the opposite sex

5. Friends
6. Politics in South Africa
7. Relationships with Teachers
8. Sport
9. No reason provided
10. Social Problems for example, drug and alcohol abuse

The data were then transformed according to pupils' responses for each of the above to determine whether significant differences occurred between the two schools. Chi-square was then calculated on the data. Significant differences only appeared in respect of future Careers ( $X^2 = 5.889$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

Pupils from school 2 ( $n=27$ ) listed future career as one of their concerns more often than pupils ( $n=12$ ) from School 1.

No other statistically significant differences relevant to the present study emerged from this section of the questionnaire.

#### **4.2 Results of Part Two of pupil questionnaire**

Skuy et al (1985) do not provide details as to how they calculated chi-square (7 tables) on part 2 of the pupil questionnaire.

As the independence assumptions underlying the use of chi-square do not appear to be met in this case, the present researcher offers a qualitative description of the data collected in this section.

The percentage of pupils who chose each of the various potential helping agents in relation to each of their concerns is presented in Table 9.

**Table 9 : Helping Agents selected by pupils in various areas of concern.**

**Pupils' Choices (%)**

Area of Concern	Teacher	Parent	School Counsellor	Friend	Other
Future (Career)	46	77	74	41	4
Teachers	21	54	49	59	1
Friendships	15	42	19	76	6
Family	13	35	37	60	4
Appearance	2	46	6	70	6
Schoolwork	57	38	16	74	8
Other	11	36	14	61	3
Mean Percentage	23.6	46.9	31	63	4.6

n = 202

The table indicates that overall the school counsellor (mean percentage 31) was the third most preferred helping agent chosen by pupils. Friends (mean percentage 63) constituted the first most preferred group followed by parents (mean percentage 46.9) who were second. Teachers (mean percentage 23.6) were the fourth most preferred group followed by others (mean percentage 4.6) who were fifth.

The school counsellor was not perceived by pupils to be a major source of help in any area of concern. In the area of Future careers, which may be regarded as the domain of the school counsellor, 74 percent (n=150) of pupils indicated that they would approach him/her. This compared favourably to the 77 percent (n=156) of pupils who indicated that they would approach their parents, thus making parents the major sources of help in the area of future careers. With regard to problems concerning their teachers, pupils preferred to approach their friends (59 percent, n=119) and parents (54 percent, n = 109) while the school counsellor was chosen by 49 percent, (n=100\_ of the pupils. In relation to problems experienced around friendships, friends were selected by 76 percent (n=153) of the pupils as the preferred helping agent, parents were selected by 42 percent (n=84) of the pupils while the school counsellor was chosen by only 19 percent (n=39) of the pupils.

When it came to problems pupils may experience regarding their families, friends were most often perceived as helping agents by 60 percent, (n=122) of the pupils. The school counsellor was chosen by 37 percent (n=75) of the pupils, while parents were chosen by 35 percent (n=71) of the pupils. In the areas of appearance, schoolwork and other, the tendency was for pupils to select their friends as helping agents of choice most often (appearance 70 percent, schoolwork 74 percent and other 61 percent) than the school counsellor.

In the area of schoolwork more pupils chose the teacher (57 percent,  $n = 116$ ) the helping agent, rather than parents (38 percent,  $n = 78$ ). The school counsellor was the least preferred helping agent selected by pupils (16 percent,  $n = 32$ ) in this area. Likewise the school counsellor was only selected as the preferred helping agent by 6 percent ( $n=13$ ) and 14 percent ( $n=28$ ) of pupils in the area of appearance and other problems respectively. Parents were the second most frequent choice of pupils (appearance 46 percent, other 36 percent) in the above areas.

Chi-squared tests were used to investigate the significance of differences in responses among the pupils from the two different schools. Cross tabulation of the seven areas of concern (schoolwork, friendships, family, appearance, teachers, future career, other) with the five potential helping agents (teacher, parent, counsellor, friend, other) yielded 35 tables that met the assumptions underlying the use of the chi-square statistic. The pupils from the two schools generally responded similarly to this part of the questionnaire. A ranking of the mean percentages reveals that in both schools pupils chose friends as the most preferred helping agent followed by parent, school counsellor, teacher and lastly other (refer to tables 10 and 11).



**Table 10:** Helping Agents selected by pupils at school 1 in various areas of concern.

**Pupils Choices (%)**

Area of Concern	Teacher	Parent	School Counsellor	Friend	Other
Future (Career)	58	74	79	43	1
Teachers	30	60	45	64	0
Friendships	20	43	23	74	2
Family	16	34	43	68	0
Appearance	3	42	10	64	3
Schoolwork	59	41	19	76	1
Other	14	40	18	62	2
Mean %	28.5	47.7	33.8	64.4	1.2
Rank	4	2	3	1	5

N = 100

**Table 11:** Agents selected by pupils at school 2 in various areas of concern.

Area of Concern	Teacher	Parent	School Counsellor	Friend	Other
Future (Career)	34	80	70	40	7
Teachers	13	48	43	54	2
Friendships	10	40	16	77	11
Family	10	35	31	53	8
Appearance	1	49	3	76	9
Schoolwork	56	35	13	73	15
Other	8	32	10	60	3
Mean %	18.8	45.5	26.5	61.8	7.8
Rank	4	2	3	1	5

N = 102

Significant differences existed between the responses of the pupils of the two schools in the following areas:

1. When the concern schoolwork was cross tabulated with the helping agent other a significant difference ( $\chi^2 = 11.194$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) was found between the responses of pupils from School 1 and those from School 2.

15 pupils from School 2 indicated that they would approach other helping agents rather than the alternatives provided, with problems concerning schoolwork whereas only 1 pupil from School 1 indicated that he/she would do so.

2. When the concern friendships was cross tabulated with the helping agent other it was found that the results were

significant ( $X^2 = 5.094$   $P < 0.05$ ). 11 pupils from School 2 indicated that they would approach other helping agents (besides teachers, parents, school counsellors and friends) if they experienced problems in the area of friendships, while only 2 pupils from School 1 responded in this way.

3. When the concern friendships was cross tabulated with the helping agent teacher, the chi-square statistics reached significance ( $X^2 = 10.469$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). More pupils ( $n=58$ ) from School 1 chose to discuss problems concerning friendships with their teachers than did pupils ( $n=35$ ) from School 2.
4. When the concern problems experienced with teachers was cross tabulated with the helping agent teacher, chi-square reached significance ( $X^2 = 7.972$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). More pupils ( $n=30$ ) from School 1 chose their teachers as helping agents in this area of concern than did pupils ( $n=13$ ) from School 2.
5. When the concern family problem was cross tabulated with the helping agent friend the chi square statistic reached significance ( $X^2 = 4.148$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Significantly more pupils from school 1 ( $n=68\%$ ) indicated that they would approach their friends if they were experiencing family problems as compared to pupils (53%) from school 2.

A qualitative assessment of the other category for helping agents revealed that it was used rarely by pupils. The helping agents named were: brother, sister, religious leader or social worker.

The other category for concerns has been discussed in 4.1 of this chapter.

#### **4.3 Results of Part Two of the Teacher Questionnaire**

Skuy et al (1985) used chi square to analyze the data obtained from this section of the questionnaire. The independence conditions of the present study do not meet the assumptions for just seven chi-square tables. Thirty-five tables would be acceptable under these independence conditions. However, the limited sample size ( $n=20$ ) renders chi-square meaningless as the expected frequencies for each cell would be smaller than five. Siegel (1956) advises the use of the Fisher exact probability test under these circumstances. As the response from teachers at School 1 were very similar to the responses of teachers at School 2, it was not deemed necessary to test the significance of the few differences that emerged (refer tables 12 and 13). The present researcher offers a qualitative description of Part 2 of the teacher questionnaire.

**Table 12:** Teachers' perceptions of pupils' choices of helping agents in various areas of concern for school 1.

**Teachers' Response % (n=10)**

Area of Concern	Teacher	Parent	School Counsellor	Friend	Other
Future (Career)	60	30	100	10	0
Teachers	20	50	60	60	0
Friendships	40	30	20	80	0
Family	40	20	70	20	0
Appearance	0	40	20	80	0
Schoolwork	80	10	40	40	10
Other	20	10	20	10	0
Mean %	37.1	27.1	47.1	42.8	1.4
Rank	3	4	1	2	5

N = 10

**Table 13: Teachers' perceptions of pupils' choices of helping agent in various areas of concern for school 2.**

**Teachers' Responses %**

Area of Concern	Teacher	Parent	School Counsellor	Friend	Other
Future (Career)	80	50	90	20	10
Teachers	40	60	90	30	0
Friendships	60	10	60	70	10
Family	40	20	90	70	10
Appearance	20	40	20	80	10
Schoolwork	90	60	40	50	10
Other	40	10	30	60	0
Mean %	52.9	35.7	60	54.2	2.9
Rank	3	4	1	2	5

N = 10

Teachers' perceptions of the helping agents likely to be chosen by pupils in the various areas of concern are tabulated below (Table 14).

**Table 14:** Teachers' perceptions of pupils' choices of helping agents in various areas of concern (both Schools)

Teachers' Responses %

Area of Concern	Teacher	Parent	School Counsellor	Friend	Other
Future (Career)	75	40	95	15	5
Teachers	30	55	75	45	0
Friendships	50	20	40	75	5
Family	40	20	75	45	5
Appearance	10	40	20	80	0
Schoolwork	85	35	40	45	10
Other	30	10	25	35	0
Mean %	45.7	31.4	52.8	48.5	3.6

N = 20

The table indicates that, overall, teachers perceived the school counsellor as the most preferred helping agent chosen by pupils. Friends were ranked second, with teachers third and parents fourth. In the area of future careers the school counsellor was identified as the helping agent of choice by 95 percent (n=19) of the teachers. Seventy-five percent (n=15) of the teachers indicated that they would be the next most preferred helping agent in this area while parents were seen as the preferred helping agents by only 40 percent (n=8) of teachers.

With regard to problems pupils may experience with their teachers, 75 percent (n=15) of the teachers indicated that pupils

would approach the school counsellor. Parents were the next most frequent choice of 55 percent (n=11) of the teachers while friends were selected third by 45 percent (n=9) of them. For concerns revolving around friendships, friends were selected as the helping agents chosen most often by 75 percent (n=15) of the teachers. Teachers chose themselves as the next most preferred agent. The school counsellor was indicated as the third choice in this area by 40 percent (n=8) of the teachers.

In the area of family concerns, the school counsellor was seen as the most preferred agent of choice by 75 percent (n=15) of the teachers. Only 45 percent (n=9) of teachers indicated that pupils would resort to friends for help in the area of family concerns. Parents were least selected in this area.

For problems concerning appearance, teachers indicated that friends would be selected most often (80 percent, n=16). Parents were the next most preferred group, while counsellors were perceived as the third group of choice in this area.

With regard to problems with schoolwork, teachers saw themselves as the most preferred agent (85 percent, n=17) with friends next and school counsellors third. Parents were placed fourth.

Teachers saw any other problems as being broached firstly to friends, secondly to teachers, thirdly to school counsellors and lastly to parents.



The teachers from the two schools were similar in their responses to this part of the questionnaire as can be seen from tables 12 and 13. When teachers' response patterns were ranked, teachers from both schools indicated the school counsellor as the most preferred helping agent followed by friend, teacher, parent and other.

#### 4.4 Comparison of Pupils' and Teachers' Responses to Part Two of the Questionnaire

Table 15 contains a breakdown of pupils' and teachers' most preferred helping agents in each of the areas of concern. The results indicate that in most instances the helping agents preferred by pupils are not the helping agents teachers identified as most selected by pupils. However in three areas of concern namely Friendships, Appearance and Other, teachers and pupils were congruent in their perceptions of the preferred helping agent. While the school counsellor was selected as the preferred helping agent in three areas of concern (Future, Teachers, Family) by the teachers, pupils did not perceive the school counsellor as most helpful in any area of concern. Pupils tended rather to perceive their friends as the most preferred helping agents in six areas of concern, namely Teachers, Friendships, Family, Appearance, Schoolwork and Other. While pupils chose their parents as preferred sources of help in one area of concern (Future Careers), teachers did not identify parents as having a role to play in any area of concern.

**Table 15:** Comparison of pupils' preferences for helping agents and teachers' perceptions of that preference.

Area of Concern	Pupils' Preferences %	Teachers' Perceptions %
Future Careers	Parents(77) School counsellor (74)	School Counsellor (95)
Teachers	Friend (59)	School Counsellor (75)
Friendships	Friend (76)	Friend (75)
Family	Friend (60)	School Counsellor (75)
Appearance	Friend (70)	Friend (80)
Schoolwork	Friend (74)	Teacher (85)
Other	Friend (61)	Friend (35)

#### **4.5 Pupils' and Teachers' responses to Part Three of the Questionnaires.**

In Part Three of the pupil and teacher questionnaires, pupils and teachers had to respond with either a yes or no to the following two questions:

Question 1: Do you feel your school offers you enough help with your personal concerns?

Question 2: Would you feel comfortable to approach your guidance counsellor with any of these concerns?

An analysis of pupils' and teachers' responses to question 1 and 2 of Part Three of the questionnaire is provided in Tables 16 and

17 respectively. Five pupils failed to answer question 1, while one pupil and two teachers did not answer question 2. These were excluded from the data.

**Question 1**

**Table 16 :**      Distribution of pupils' and teachers' responses to question one of Part Three of the questionnaire.

	School	Responses		Omits	Total
		Yes	No		
Pupils	1	44	54	2	100
	2	46	53	3	102
Total Percentage		90	107	5	202
		46	54	2.5	
Teachers	1	4	6	0	10
	2	5	5	0	10
Total Percentage		9	11	0	20
		45	55	0	

**Question 1**

Of the 197 pupils, 46 percent (n=90) felt that their schools provided adequate assistance with their personal problems while 54 percent (n=107) felt that his was not so. Chi square calculated on the pupils responses (leaving out the omissions) revealed no significant differences between the responses of the

pupils of the two schools. Of the total teacher sample 45 percent (n=9) were of the opinion that the schools provided enough help with pupils' personal concerns while 55 percent (n=11) felt that this was not so. Chi square was not calculated for the teacher sample as the numbers were small and the teachers from the two schools responded very similarly. Also the teachers' echoed the pupils in their responses. We see then that the two sets of pupils and the two sets of teachers responded very similarly with a slight preponderance for "no" in question 1 of Part 3.

A qualitative analysis of the reasons pupils and teachers forwarded for this reveals the following: Pupils reasons revolved around four categories namely:

1. Schools were far too academically oriented,
2. Teachers were not always available to pupils,
3. One counsellor per school was not adequate to serve the entire student population, and
4. No answer provided.

Chi square was calculated by transforming the data into 2 X 2 tables. This was done by determining the number of pupils who provided reasons for their answers compared to those pupils who did not provide a reason for their answers for each of the categories. There were no significant differences between the two schools on any category.

Teachers' reasons in support of their responses to Question 1 revolved around six areas. Three reasons were forwarded by teachers who answered "Yes" to the question (1-3) and four by teachers who responded with a "No" (5-7). These were:

1. Counsellor was available to pupils,
2. Teachers were available to pupils, and
3. Both the teacher and the counsellor was available to pupils.
4. No reason provided,
5. One counsellor per school was not enough to serve the needs of the pupils,
6. Teachers did not have enough time to teach as well as help pupils with their concerns,
7. Schools were too academically orientated and as a result pupils' personal concerns were not addressed.

The data were then transformed in a similar way to the pupils' data. Chi squared tests revealed no significant differences between the responses of the teachers from the two schools.

Question 2

Table 17: Distribution of pupils' and teachers' responses to question 2 of Part Three of the questionnaire.

	School	Responses		Omits	Total
		Yes	No		
Pupils	1	72	27	1	100
	2	60	42	0	102
Total Percentage		132	69	1	202
		66	34	0.5	
Teachers	1	8	2	0	10
	2	5	3	2	10
Total Percentage		13	5	2	20
		65	25	10	

Of the total pupil sample, 66 percent (n=132) indicated that they would feel comfortable approaching the school counsellor with their personal concerns, while 34 percent (n=69) stated that they would not feel comfortable doing so.

Chi squared was calculated on the pupils' data (leaving out the omissions and the teachers' data). More of the pupils from school 2 indicated that they would not feel comfortable approaching the school counsellor with their personal concerns than did pupils from school 1. The chi square statistic did not reach significance.

Teachers indicated positively that their pupils would feel comfortable approaching the school counsellor. Of the teachers, 65 percent (n=13) agreed that pupils would feel comfortable approaching their school counsellors while only 25 percent (n=5) felt that pupils would not feel comfortable approaching the school counsellor. The teachers' positive sentiments regarding counsellors echo their responses in part 2 of the questionnaire.

Pupils' and teachers' reasons for either a "yes" or a "No" response were again analyzed qualitatively and transformed according to the procedure described in respect of question 1. Pupils' responses revolved around the following themes:

1. Pupils did not feel close enough to the counsellor.
2. Pupils wished to solve problems on their own.
3. Pupils lacked self confidence to approach the school counsellor.
4. Counsellor would not treat their concerns confidentially.
5. No reason given.

Chi square calculated on the above concerns to determine whether differences occurred between the pupils from the two schools, reached significance only on the first theme namely "pupils did not feel close enough to the counsellor".

Chi square reached significance ( $\chi^2 = 6.918$ ;  $P < 0.01$ ). Of the 22 percent (n=45) of the pupils who gave not being close to the counsellor as a reason for their "No" response, 15 percent (n=31)

were from school 2 compared to only 7 percent (n=14) who were from school 1.

The teachers provided the following reasons for their "Yes" response:

1. Counsellors were approachable.
2. Confidentiality would be guaranteed.

For their "No" response teachers stated the following reasons:

1. Counsellors did not maintain the confidentiality of pupils,
2. Counsellors were unapproachable,
3. No reason given.

Chi square calculated on the above information did not reach significance for any of these themes.

There were no significant differences according to sex in the responses of either the pupils or the teachers.

#### 4.6 Pupils' and Teachers' responses to Part Four of the Questionnaire

Six situations are presented in Part 4 of the questionnaires. These are:

1. Giving help to pupils who have difficulty with schoolwork,
2. Giving help to pupils who have difficulty at home,
3. Having discussions with pupils on matters that concern teenagers,



4. Giving help to pupils in choosing subjects to study,
5. Helping pupils to decide what to do when they leave school,  
and
6. Discussing pupils concerns with others.

An examination of the data (refer tables 18.1 to 18.6) revealed that both pupils (n=183) and teachers (n=18) perceived the school counsellor as someone who helps pupils choose subjects to study. Other questions, like discussing pupils' concerns with others were not really seen as part of the counsellors' role, especially in school 2. Only 44 pupils (out of a total of 102) in school 2 indicated that the counsellor "should" offer help in this area, while seven of the 20 teachers indicated a similar opinion.

Chi square calculated only on the pupils' responses (leaving out the omissions) revealed a statistically significant difference ( $P < 0.01$ ) between the two schools on the first situation, namely: "giving help to pupils who have difficulty with their schoolwork". More than twice the number of pupils (n=36) from school 2 indicated that the school counsellor "does" offer help in this area than did the pupils (n=14) from school 1. There were no other significant differences across the table for situations two to six. However an examination of the "does" responses for the pupils of the two schools reveals that pupils from school 1 indicated that the counsellor "does" offer help more often than do pupils from school 2. Chi square was not calculated for the teacher sample as they responded similarly and

the limited sample rendered chi square meaningless in terms of expected frequencies for each cell.

For each pupil and teacher, the number of situations in which it was felt that the counsellor "does" offer help was treated as a score of 1 out of a possible maximum score of 6. This procedure was also followed for the number of situations in which it was felt the counsellor "should" offer help.

Two-way analysis of variance was computed on the pupils' data to determine whether the pupils differed in their responses according to the main effects of sex and school. While there was no statistical difference for the main effect of sex, the main effect for school was significant at the  $P < 0.05$  level. The suggested interaction of the two main effects was not significant.

The procedure for analysis of variance was applied to the teacher data as was done for the pupil data. Two-way analysis of variance computed on the teacher data showed no significant main effect for either sex or school. However the suggested interaction was significant at the  $P < 0.05$  level. Male teachers from school 1 indicated more often than male teachers from school 2 that the school counsellor "does" offer help in the six situations. On the other hand, female teachers from school 2 indicated more often than female teachers from school 1 that the school counsellor "does" offer help.

**Table 18.1**      Distribution of pupils' and teachers' responses as to whether the school counsellor "does" or "should" offer help for the situation: Giving help to pupils who have difficulty with schoolwork.

	School	Should	Does	Omits
Pupils	1	83	14	3
	2	62	36	4
	Total	145	50	7
Teachers	1	7	2	1
	2	8	2	0
	Total	15	4	1

**Talbe 18.2**      Distribution of pupils' and teachers' responses as to whether the school counsellor "does" or "should" offer help for the situation: Giving help to pupils who have difficulties at home.

	School	Should	Does	Omits
Pupils	1	84	14	2
	2	77	21	4
	Total	161	35	6
Teachers	1	10	0	0
	2	10	0	0
	Total	20	0	0

**Table 18.3**      Distribution of pupils' and teachers' responses as to whether the school counsellor "does" or "should" offer help for the situation: Having discussions with pupils on matters that concern teenagers.

	School	Should	Does	Omits
Pupils	1	69	29	2
	2	59	39	4
	Total	128	68	6
Teachers	1	10	0	0
	2	10	0	0
	Total	20	0	0

**Table 18.4**      Distribution of pupils' and teachers' responses as to whether the school counsellor "does" or "should" offer help for the situation: Giving help to pupils in choosing subjects to study.

	School	Should	Does	Omits
Pupils	1	93	5	2
	2	90	9	3
	Total	183	14	5
Teachers	1	10	0	0
	2	8	2	0
	Total	18	2	0

**Table 18.5**      Distribution of pupils' and teachers' responses as to whether the school counsellor "does" or "should" offer help for the situation: Helping pupils to decide what to do when they leave school.

	School	Should	Does	Omits
Pupils	1	82	15	3
	2	77	20	5
	Total	159	35	8
Teachers	1	9	1	0
	2	8	2	0
	Total	17	3	0

**Table 18.6**      Distribution of pupils' and teachers' responses as to whether the school counsellor "does" or "should" offer help for the situation: Discussing pupils concerns with others (eg. teachers, principals, social workers, where this might help to solve problems) (with consent of pupils).

	School	Should	Does	Omits
Pupils	1	56	40	4
	2	44	52	6
	Total	100	92	10
Teachers	1	9	1	0
	2	7	3	0
	Total	16	4	0

This chapter examined the data obtained from the instruments and presented the statistical procedures by which the data were analyzed. A discussion of the results follows in chapter five.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which secondary school pupils:

- a) would choose the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent in comparison to other helping agents;
- b) would perceive their school counsellor to be approachable, and
- c) would consider their schools to provide adequate assistance with their personnel concerns.

The study also had as its objective the investigation of the teachers with regard to the above three areas. In this regard the study was a partial replication of the study of Skuy, et al., (1985).

This chapter will discuss the findings of this investigation and make comparisons with the findings of other researchers.

#### 5.2 Interpretation of Results

This investigation has revealed that pupil's perceive their friends to be their most preferred helping agents when they are experiencing difficulties revolving around friendships (76 percent), schoolwork (74 percent), appearance (70 percent) "other" problems (61 percent), family (60 percent) and teachers (59 percent). This finding is consistent with the findings of

other researchers (eg. Balarin, 1989; Hutchinson and Reagan, 1989; <sup>o</sup>Parteus and Fisher, 1980) who have highlighted the relative importance of friends as the major helping agents chosen by secondary school pupils. However the above finding is contrary to the findings of some researchers (Leviton, 1977; Praytino, 1981; Skuy, et al., 1985; Van Schoor, 1981) who have reported parents as the most preferred choice of pupils. Pupils (77 percent) in this study indicated parents as their most preferred choice in only one area of concern viz. in the area of future careers. The apparent disparity between the findings of other researchers and the present study may be due to certain factors which militate against direct comparisons. The present researcher used Indian pupils whereas Leviton, 1977; Praytino, 1981; Skuy, et al., 1985; and Van Schoor, used mainly white pupils. Van Zijl (1979) has attributed this to cultural differences. He reported that the nature of the relationship between parent and child within the Indian community is based on conformity, respect for authority, obedience and formality in interpersonal relations. These may all contribute towards the reluctance of Indian pupils to approach their parents with their problems, especially those of a more personal nature. White pupils on the other hand may experience less formal interpersonal relations with their parents and could feel more at ease about approaching them with their personal, educational and emotional problems.

This investigation also revealed that pupils did not choose the school counsellor as the most preferred helping agent in any of

the seven areas of concern investigated. This finding is consistent with the findings of both Jugguth (1984) and Skuy, et al., (1985) who reported that parents and friends rather than the school counsellor was the preferred source of help chosen by pupils for both educational and personal concerns. Various researchers (Gray, 1980; Shertzer and Stone, in Belkin, 1977; Wells and Ritter, 1979) have reported that the school counsellor was perceived more as a preferred source of help for educational and vocational problems rather than for personal problems. There appeared to be some support in the present study for the latter position (seventy percent of the pupils selected the school counsellor as the second most preferred helping agent (after parents) in the area of future careers). The school counsellor was not however viewed by pupils as having any contribution to make towards their educational problems. Pupils in the present study rejected both the school counsellor and their teacher in favour of assistance from their friends in the area of schoolwork. This finding supports those of Balarin (1989) and McPhee (1985).

The position that more than two-thirds (74 percent) of the pupils in the present study indicated that they would approach the school counsellor for help with career problems may be linked positively to another finding of the present study: namely that more than two-thirds of the pupils indicated that they would feel comfortable approaching the school counsellor with their concerns. This positive attitude of the pupils reflected towards the school counsellor is supportive of the findings of Siann, et

al., (1981) who maintained that school counsellors with a commitment to providing a counselling service were perceived positively by pupils.

The above finding of the present study differs from that of Skuy, et al., (1985) who reported that the majority of the pupils in their study did not feel comfortable approaching the school counsellor with their concerns.

Another finding of this study was that the majority of the pupils indicated that their schools did not provide adequate assistance in dealing with pupils personal concerns. This is consistent with the findings of both Amod (1984) and Skuy, et al., (1985).

The present study revealed no significant differences between boys and girls in respect of whether they felt that their schools provided adequate assistance with their personal concerns. This is an unexpected finding of the study and is inconsistent with the finding by Skuy, et al., (1985) that significantly more girls felt that the school did not provide adequate assistance with their personal concerns than did boys.

Teachers in the study generally overrated the school counsellors role as the preferred helping agent. Whereas pupils did not choose the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent in any of the seven areas of concern investigated, teachers indicated the school counsellor as the pupils preferred choice in three areas of concern, namely future careers, concerns revolving

around teachers and family concerns. Skuy, et al., (1985) also found incongruence between pupils' and teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent.

Teachers rated themselves highly as preferred helping agents only in the area of schoolwork. In all other areas teachers indicated the school counsellor and friends as the pupils preferred helping agent. The fact that teachers considered it likely that pupils would select the school counsellor more often as the preferred helping agent indicates that teachers appreciate and recognize the role functions that the school counsellor may be performing. The positive attitude of the teacher towards the school counsellor is consistent with the findings of Best, et al., (1981), Gibbson (1990), and Lytton, et al., (1970).

Most of the teachers also felt that the school counsellor was perceived by pupils to be approachable. This finding supports that reported by Skuy, et al., (1985).

The majority of the teachers in the present study felt that the school did not provide adequate assistance to pupils concerning their personal problems. Skuy, et al., (1985) reported the contrary. The majority of teachers in their study reported that the school offered adequate assistance with pupils personal concerns. The finding in the present study that teachers did not consider that the school offered adequate assistance with pupils personal concerns, may mean that teachers would like even more assistance to be provided to pupils. This would be consistent

with the findings of Cole, et al., (1980), McPhee (1985) and Remley and Albright, (1988).

In summary the findings of this study strongly suggest that pupils do not perceive the school counsellor as very helpful when they are experiencing educational, vocational or emotional problems. Despite the fact that the majority of the pupils report their counsellors to be approachable, pupils prefer not to make use of their services. Pupils also report that schools do not cater adequately for their personal concerns. Teachers generally overestimated pupils preferences for the school counsellor. They echoed the pupils in their positive sentiments regarding the approachability of the school counsellor and the view that schools do not cater adequately for pupils' personal concerns.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Implications

This chapter examines the implications of the study undertaken, examines some of its limitations and presents recommendations for future research.

#### 6.1 Implications of the study

This study has shown that the school counsellor is not the preferred helping agent chosen by pupils in any of the seven areas of concern (schoolwork, friendships, family, appearance, teachers, future career, other) investigated. Standard nine pupils both male and female preferred instead to approach their friends when they are experiencing difficulties revolving around friendships, family relationships, physical appearance, relating to teachers, schoolwork and for "other" problems. Parents were the preferred sources of help chosen by pupils in the area of future careers. Teachers were not viewed as preferred helping agents in any area of concern by the pupils. This finding was congruent with the finding that teachers themselves did not see themselves in the role of helping agent in any area of concern except for schoolwork. Teachers generally tended to overplay the role of the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent.

These results will be of value to both school counsellors and teachers in placing the school counselling service in perspective. The finding that pupils do not choose the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent in any area of concern



suggests that the mere presence of qualified personnel in schools does not necessarily mean that pupils will view the counselling service in a positive light or utilize the service readily. Both teachers and school counsellors need to realize that pupils need to be made aware of the appropriateness of seeking help from qualified help givers (Bolarin, 1989). This may only be done if counsellors actively and more deliberately advertise and disseminate their role functions and services within the schools in the hope of rendering a more effective service. Counsellors need also to examine the feasibility of engaging pupils in more participatory research, so that they can collect information on what pupils really desire of a counselling service, first hand.

A further implication of the study relates to the finding that pupils prefer to choose their friends as helping agents for a variety of concerns. The implications here may not revolve so much around how to decrease pupil dependency on their friends but rather on how to increase the efficiency of friends as helping agents (Skuy, 1985). The implications for school counsellors here may be that they should be aware of peer counselling models which they can use to train peers to become more effective helpers.

These findings also have implications for people involved in the training of school counsellors. Training should besides concentrating on producing good counsellors with the skills required to be proficient helpers, also incorporate aspects like: how to promote the counselling service within the school, how to



promote role clarification, how to facilitate helping skills in pupils so that peers can become more effective helpers. Perhaps counsellors need to be trained in a more investigatory role (counsellor as researcher) so that the gathering of informations on perceptions becomes part of their role. In this way they may be better able to monitor the services they provide.

The finding that pupils prefer to go to their parents if they are experiencing difficulty concerning their future careers implies that schools need to become more involved in equipping parents to fulfil this function. Schools may therefore build and develop career libraries or directories that may provide rapid and easy access to a wide range of careers. These may then be advertised and made accessible to parents. This would further serve to strengthen and reinforce the home school relationship and afford parents greater involvement in the education of their children.

## 6.2 Limitations of the Study

There are various factors that need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the results of this study as they place certain limitations on the findings. The first constraint pertains to the generalizability of the findings. Pupils in the study were attending Indian Government Schools and were from middle class and working class backgrounds. Teachers were similarly distributed. Their responses would therefore have been influenced by the attitudes of peers and significant other within their communities concerning the appropriateness of seeking help

from the school counsellor. The findings of this study must therefore be considered to be pertinent mainly to these participants and comparisons with pupils and teachers from different backgrounds must be made cautiously.

Secondly, the study failed to consider the diversity of the subgroups both ethnic and religious that prevail within the greater Indian community. The responses of members belonging to these groups, both pupils and teachers could have been influenced by factors like the degree of religious orthodoxy (observant versus nonobservant status), and the extent of westernization and family living arrangements. Chetty (1979) and Van Zyl (1979) have commented on these factors. According to Chetty (1979) dramatic changes have occurred within the Indian family concerning size, composition and structure. There has been a move away from the more traditional joint and extended family system into the nuclear pattern. The effects of these changes therefore need to be considered carefully upon the sample under consideration. Van Zyl (1979) has commented on the effects of the western academic environment and the constant backward and forward transition of the Indian pupil from one cultural milieu to the other.

By treating the sample as a homogenous group inter and intra group preferences for particular helping agents may have been overlooked. Similarly inter and intra group sex differences may also have been obscured in this way.

A third factor pertains to the instruments utilized in the study. The questionnaires of Skuy, et al., (1985) may not have adequately covered the diversity of concern with which adolescents need help. A more comprehensive list of vocational, educational and personal emotional concerns would have yielded more information regarding pupils' tendencies to seek help from the different helping agents. The findings of the study further underlined the need for a clearer relationship to be established between the different parts of the questionnaire. For example it is unclear as to why Skuy, et al., (1985) have chosen to include Part One of the pupil questionnaire, which consists of thirteen statements to which pupils had to subjectively respond on a Liekert scale, and Part Four of both the teacher and pupil questionnaires, which required the respondents to check with a tick whether the school counsellor "does/should" offer help in each of six situations. There is uncertainty as to why they form part of the instrument as it is presently constituted.

A possible limitation of the study may be that the respondents did not answer the questions accurately, or treat the task of completing the questionnaires seriously. However, this is a common criticism of the questionnaire methodology and one that is applicable to other studies as well, due to the difficulty involved in establishing questionnaire reliability. The cross-sectional nature of the research design may have been a further limitation in this respect.

Further, variables like the pupils prior experiences of counselling, the ethos of the two schools, and counsellor personality were not controlled for. These may also have limited the findings as they may have influenced the extent to which pupils would have requested counselling, or valued the counselling service offered at their schools.

The sample of teachers utilized in the study was very small and the apparent differences between the male and female teachers according to sex are inconclusive due to insufficient data as the study did not control for certain demographic variables, like teacher age, level of experience, years of service and marital status.

Despite the limitations of the study, it is noted that the findings are generally consistent with those of other researchers. Notwithstanding the difficulties of generalization to other samples this data may have value to the population under investigation.

### 6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

This study has supported other findings that pupils do not perceive the school counsellor as the preferred helping agent compared to various potential helpers like friends. It has also supported the findings of researchers like Skuy, et al., (1985) who have maintained that teachers tended to overestimate the role of the school counsellor while they underplayed the role of friends and parents. The lack of generalizability of the

findings suggest that further investigations need to be carried out among the different cultural religious and socio-economic groups in South Africa.

It is also recommended that future researchers design their investigations such that they are sensitive to the diversity of sub-groups within cultures and are hence able to obtain measures of inter and intra-group preferences for particular helping agents. These are necessary in establishing whether certain trends emerge within particular subgroups for specific helping agents.

In establishing the generalizability of the findings one needs to examine the sub-groups more closely, hence a more complex design for collecting information on sub-groups may render the findings more generalizable.

It is further suggested that future investigation take into account certain developmental and personological variables. An examination of the different stages of development at which a pupils is, for example, middle childhood, puberty or adolescence may influence the issue of the preferred helping agent. Pupils at middle childhood may still rely on their parents for assistance with their problems while pupils at adolescence may be more prone to approach friends or school counsellors. Pupils temperamental style, for example, whether they are introverted or extroverted, self esteem factors, values and morals may also influence their choice of the preferred helping agent. it is

recommended that future researchers take these factors into consideration.

Regarding the instruments utilized for the present study future researchers may have to establish whether Part One of the pupil questionnaire and Part Four of the pupil and teacher questionnaire contribute to the question under investigation and whether to retain or exclude them.

Further there may be different ways in which data maybe collected as opposed to the questionnaire method. Future researchers may find the use of open ended interviews, tape recorders, and the maintenance of administrative records on who school pupils approach for help, with their problems during their stay at school useful in this respect.

The adoption of a more elaborate empirical procedure preferably a "nested design" would also better match counsellors with schools and control for certain personological variables relating to the counsellors. A longitudinal as apposed to a cross sectional research design may also constitute to the reliability of results.

It is also recommended that future researchers collect more demographic data on teacher samples of the nature of marital status, length of service, etc. so that comparisons can be made more conclusively.

Lastly future researchers may find it useful to investigate the actual as well as the preferred sources of help chosen by pupils so that more information regarding pupils selection of helping agents may be gleaned and comparisons made more meaningfully.

#### 6.4 Conclusion

This investigation has revealed that the pupils used in this study preferred to approach their friends and parents, rather than the school counsellor if they were experiencing difficulties with their personal, educational and vocational concerns. This trend does not necessarily have to be interpreted negatively. Rather, when one considers the uncertainty regarding counselling services within the schools, it may be an appropriate and healthy sign that pupils prefer to rely mainly on other resources (like friends and parents), as these may render a valuable and much needed service in the absence of school counsellors.

Children need therefore to be educated into accepting responsibility for their own emotional health. Jugguth (1984) suggests that pupils may view the school counsellor more as a specialist helper, rather than an immediate helper, to be approached only when other available resources (friends and parents) have been exhausted.

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## APPENDIX 1

### **Guidance and Counselling Services in Indian Schools in Natal.**

Guidance and Counselling services were first introduced into Indian schools in 1973. The Act on National Education Policy, Act 39 of 1967 dictated that education was to be provided according to the interests and abilities of each pupils. This led to the introduction of the system of differentiated education which was responsible for ushering in guidance and counselling services into Indian schools (School Counselling, 1982). These services are supervised by the Psychological Services of the House of Delegates under whose control Indian Education falls. School counsellors are employed only at the secondary school level.

According to Amod (1983) guidance and counselling services for Indian pupils are reputed to be better developed in Natal than in the Transvaal. This refers mainly to the qualification of personnel and the physical facilities such as offices, available to them. Most Indian secondary schools employ qualified school counsellors who may also be referred to as guidance counsellors. The counsellors are in possession of either a Bachelor of Education degree in School Counselling or a post-graduate Diploma in Guidance and Counselling. Of the 107 Indian secondary schools in Natal, 91 have qualified school counsellors, 33 of whom are Head of Department counsellors. Seven schools have the added advantage of having both a qualified school counsellor and a Head

of Department counsellor being employed at the school. In the Pietermaritzburg area where this research was conducted, six of the eight Indian secondary schools employed qualified school counsellors in full-time positions. Two of the six were Head of Department counsellors (Counsellor Information 1990).

The school counsellor is responsible for the handling of pupils' educational, vocational and personal problems and is allocated 30 counselling periods per week. In addition to this the school counsellor teaches 10 periods of group guidance. The Head of Department counsellor forms part of the management team of the school and is therefore allocated 10 periods for administrative duties in addition to 25 periods of counselling and 5 periods of group guidance per week. The secondary schools are serviced by a group of 23 school psychologists, eight of whom are registered with the South African Medical and Dental Council as Educational Psychologists (Psychologist Information 1990).

**APPENDIX 2****INSTRUMENTS**

**These questionnaires were compiled by Skuy et al (1985) and were used with their permission.**

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL ( P.M.B. )  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE  
PART ONE

Please put a circle around the number which describes how YOU feel about each statement.

Remember there are no right or wrong answers.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Uncertain
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree.

1. At the end of the holidays I look forward to going back to school.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. I can't make much sense out of what happens at this school.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. School worries me.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. In general I find my school work too easy.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. I feel bored when I'm at school.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

6. I'm not the kind of pupil that others find annoying.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7. I tend to spend a lot of my time at school day dreaming.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

8. I often feel awkward in company.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

9. I get along well with most teachers.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

10. I find difficulty in making friends.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

11. I don't think my parents understand me very well.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

12. I never stay away from school unless I'm really sick.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

13. I am happy the way I look.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

14. Are there any aspects of your life that bother you? List your concerns in order of importance to you.

## PART TWO

Teenagers sometimes have concerns about these aspects of their lives

- Skinner's*
- A School work
  - B Making and keeping friends
  - C Family relationships
  - D Physical appearance
  - E Relating to some teachers
  - F Your future career
  - G Other ( please explain )

If you are concerned about any of these areas in your life, to whom would you go for help? Place a cross on the person or persons you might approach. You may cross more than one person.

A ( School work )	Teacher	Parent	Guidance counselor	Friend	Other please explain	_____
						_____
						_____

B ( Friendships )	Teacher	Parent	Guidance counselor	Friend	Other please explain	_____
						_____
						_____

## IPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

Family)      Teacher    Parent    Guidance    Friend    Other  
   Counselor     please  
   explain    \_\_\_\_\_  
   \_\_\_\_\_

Appearance)    Teacher    Parent    Guidance    Friend    Other  
   Counselor     please  
   explain    \_\_\_\_\_  
   \_\_\_\_\_

Teachers)      Teacher    Parent    Guidance    Friend    Other  
   Counselor     please  
   explain    \_\_\_\_\_  
   \_\_\_\_\_

Your Future)    Teacher    Parent    Guidance    Friend    Other  
Career)     Counselor     please  
   explain    \_\_\_\_\_  
   \_\_\_\_\_

Other)          Teacher    Parent    Guidance    Friend    Other  
   Counselor     please  
   explain    \_\_\_\_\_  
   \_\_\_\_\_

## RT THREE

Do you feel that your school offers you enough help with your personal concerns ?

YES	NO

ase give reasons for your answer

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Would you feel comfortable to approach your Guidance counselor with any of these concerns ?

YES	NO

## JPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please give reasons for your answer

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### PART FOUR

*Stamps*

The following are some of the situations in which a Guidance counselor can be useful in a school. Check with a tick all the situations in which you feel the Guidance counselor at your school DOES offer help. Check too with a tick if you think help SHOULD be offered and is not

	Guidance counselor DOES offer help	Guidance counselor SHOULD offer help
1. Giving help to pupils who have difficulty with school work		
2. Giving help to pupils who have difficulties at home		
3. Having discussions with pupils on matters that concern teenagers		
4. Giving help to pupils in choosing subjects to study		
5. Helping pupils to decide what to do when they leave school		
6. Discussing pupil's concerns with others (e.g. teachers, principals, social workers) where this might help to solve the problem (only with pupil's consent)		



(last p. of  
questionnaire)

## PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

. Do you think there are any other ways in which a guidance counselor could be useful in your school ?

please explain

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## PART FIVE

SCHOOL :

DATE OF BIRTH :

SEX :

STANDARD :

HOME LANGUAGE :

FATHER'S OCCUPATION : please give details

MOTHER'S OCCUPATION : please give details

Thank you for your help

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL(P.M.BURG)  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

This study is being conducted for research purposes.

Your responses will remain strictly confidential

Please return completed questionnaire to the Principal .

Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

THIS SURVEY IS ANONYMOUS

Kindly note: where there is a choice , please tick appropriate answer.

e.g.

YES	NO

- 1 (i) Name of school  
(ii) Sex

MALE	FEMALE
1	2

(iii) Age (yrs)

21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
1	2	3	4	5

(iv) Number of years in teaching

1 or less	2-5	6-10	11+
1	2	3	4

2. Subjects taught 1.....  
2.....  
3.....

# TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

## PART TWO

Teenagers sometimes have concerns about certain aspects of their lives, eg.

- A School work
- B Making and keeping friends
- C Family relations
- D Physical appearance
- E Relating to certain teachers
- F Careers
- G Others-please specify

For each area, please check with a cross in each instance the person YOU think they would approach. You may cross more than one person.

(School Work)	Teacher	Parent	Guidance Counselor	Friend	Other _____ please _____ specify _____
(Friends)	Teacher	Parent	Guidance Counselor	Friend	Other _____ please _____ specify _____
(Family)	Teacher	Parent	Guidance Counselor	Friend	Other _____ please _____ specify _____
(Appearance)	Teacher	Parent	Guidance Counselor	Friend	Other _____ please _____ specify _____
(Teachers)	Teacher	Parent	Guidance Counselor	Friend	Other _____ please _____ specify _____
(Your Future Career)	Teacher	Parent	Guidance Counselor	Friend	Other _____ please _____ specify _____
(Other )	Teacher	Parent	Guidance Counselor	Friend	Other _____ please _____ specify _____

# TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

## PART THREE

1. Do you feel that your school offers the pupils enough help with their personal concerns?

YES	NO

Please give reasons for your answer.

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2. In your opinion would pupils feel comfortable to approach a guidance counselor with any of these concerns ?

YES	NO

Please give reasons for your answer.

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# TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

## PART FOUR

The following are some of the situations in which a Guidance Counselor might be useful in a school:

Check with a tick all the situations you think the Guidance Counselor at your school DOES offer help.

Check too if you think help SHOULD be offered by the Guidance Counselor and not.

Giving help to pupils who have difficulty in schoolwork.

Giving help to pupils who have difficulty at home

Giving help to pupils in choosing subjects to study.

Having discussions with pupils on matters that concern teenagers.

Helping pupils to decide what to do when they leave school.

Discussing pupils' concerns with others (teachers; Principal; social workers) where this might help to solve the problem (only with the pupils consent)

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR DOES OFFER          HELP	GUIDANCE COUNSELOR SHOULD OFFER          HELP

Do you think that there are many other ways in which a Guidance Counselor could be useful in your school? Explain

**APPENDIX 3**

Letter granting permission to conduct research in the 2 schools,  
courtesy of the House of Delegates.

ADMINISTRATION: HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ADMINISTRASIE: RAAD VAN AFGEVAARDIGDESDepartment of Education and Culture  
Departement van Onderwys en Kultuur

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Verw. No.Enquiries S. Pillay  
Navrae

1990-04-26

Miss F.E. Haffajee  
Heather Secondary School  
27 Heather Crescent  
Northdale  
PIETERMARITZBURG  
3201

Madam

## REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Yours letters dated 1990-02-20 and 1990-04-12 have reference.

1. Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct your research at the schools as indicated in your letter provided that :
  - 1.1 prior arrangements are made with the principals concerned;
  - 1.2 participation in the research is on a voluntary basis;
  - 1.3 completion of questionnaires is done outside normal teaching time;
  - 1.4 all information pertaining to pupils and teachers are treated confidentially and used for academic purposes only.
2. Kindly produce a copy of this letter when approaching schools.
3. The Department wishes you every success in your research and looks forward to receiving a copy of the findings.

Yours faithfully

CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR