RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXPLORING COMPETENCIES AND STUDENT MENTORING: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS IN MOROCCO

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Manuscript Info	*Abstract*
……………………. *Manuscript History* Received: 25 August 2023 Final Accepted: 27 September 2023 Published: October 2023 *Key words:-* Guidance, Educational Guidance, Counselors, Competencies, Monitoring	……………………………………………………………… This research aims to analyze the perception of guidance counselors regarding their competencies and skills and assess their level of mentoring of pupils. By applying a model of the following three dimensions: use of new technology, competencies, and mentoring level. The analysis model is developed based on theory and literature review. This quantitative study uses a questionnaire to collect the necessary data. Reliability tests, averages, and percentages were obtained using the SPSS software. Results showed a good level of competencies developed by guidance counselors in their practices—however, a low rate of monitoring and following-up with pupils throughout the school year.

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Introduction:-

Educational guidance, referred to in French as "l'orientation scolaire", is considered an integral part of the moroccan educational system. It is a continuous process of assisting individuals in making informed decisions about their education and career paths. It involves providing guidance, support, and information to help pupils navigate the complex world of education and career choices. And so educational guidance plays a crucial role in helping individuals achieve their academic and professional goals. "The aims of the guidance and counseling service are similar to the purposes of education in general—to assist the student in fulfilling their basic physiological needs, understanding these and acceptance of others, developing associations with peers, balancing between permissiveness and controls in the educational setting, realizing successful achievement, and providing opportunities to gain independence" (Heyden, 2011 in (Lunenburg, 2010, p. 1).

Educational guidance is offered in schools, colleges and universities, its ultimate goal is to assist individuals in making choices that are best suited to their interests, abilities, performances, personality traits, self-concepts as active beings in society and aspirations, leading to a successful and fulfilling educational and professional life. The national charter for education and training has mentioned in its article 99 that "Guidance is declared an integral part of the education and training process. It will accompany and facilitate the vocational maturation, the educational and vocational choices of the learners, as well as their reorientation, whenever necessary, from the second year of the college to higher education."

And so educational guidance is defined "as a conscious effort to assist in the intellectual growth of an individual… anything that has to do with instruction or with learning may come under the term educational guidance" (Brewer,1918 in (Gysbers, 2001, p. 98)). Since educational guidance is conceptualized as a continuous process rather than as an administrative operation that is only carried out at specific points in time. We mention some of its many aspects, such as :

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Educational Planning:
Guidance counselors work with pupils to develop personalized education plans, helping them choose appropriate courses, majors, and programs that align with their interests and goals. "Guidance is a service and is unique in the education system. The service that is provided is assisting teachers, students and parents to navigate the educational waters" (Rollin, 1990, p. 1). Guidance has a heavy impact on the academic path of pupils, starting in primary school up to high school, where pupils are faced with multiple options and choices leading to choosing a major to specialize in at university.

Personal and Academic Support:
"The major objectives of guidance are to assist individuals in developing the ability to understand themselves, to solve their problems, and to make appropriate adjustments to their environment as the situation dictates" (Gibson, 2008 in (Lunenburg, 2010, p. 6). Educational guidance includes providing support for students' personal and academic development. Counselors assist in developing study skills, time management, and coping with academic challenges. "The educational guidance and the school counseling Unit is a special unit established in schools to solve study-related and non-related problems of students" (Subasinghe, 2016, p. 12)

Continuous Support:
Guidance is seen as a long-term process based on personal autonomy. Consequently, guidance helps develop self-understanding of one's capabilities, interests, skills, goals, and aspirations. Thus, educational guidance is an ongoing process, providing support and guidance throughout an individual's educational and career journey. "Guidance enables each individual to understand his abilities and interests to develop them as well as possible and to relate them to life goals, and finally to reach a state of complete and mature self-guidance as a desirable member of the social order." (Traxler, 1957 in (Ulla, 2012, p. 5)).

Information and Resources:
It is up to the guidance counselors in each school (middle school and high school) to help pupils and their parents choose the appropriate route by providing all the necessary documents and technical advice. Counselors must offer information about educational institutions, scholarship opportunities, and financial aid to help individuals make informed choices about their educational paths.

Guidance counselors' missions
The main actors in the educational guidance process are guidance counselors, "although the mission of counselors has been extended to all aspects of monitoring, information and guidance, their action remains essentially focused on providing students with information on the various educational and training opportunities available within the system" (Chbani & Jaouane, 2017, p. 116). It is they who hold the responsibility in informing pupils about the various options available within the educational and professional system, they who listen to pupils' problems and the difficulties they may be facing whether in their homes or school, in hopes to find effective and permanent solutions, not to mention accompanying those who have personal projects, and help those who don't to find their objective and start building their projects.

According to the various implementations and especially the 2030 vision, which called for the renewal of the guidance department, and the rehabilitation of its structure, its know-how, and its overall concept, guidance counselors witnessed an upgrade so to speak in their missions and roles both on the administrative plan and on the work field. Therefore, guidance counselors hold a heavy load on their shoulders to provide and ensure orientation as well as reorientation and help build personal projects for each individual needing and wanting one, from primary school, middle and high school, to non-formal education, vocation training and higher education.

Thus, we cite the principle missions and tasks that guidance counselors are required to fulfill:
o Collecting information and data related to the available educational fields and vocational offers as well as the requirements of the labor market and its emerging needs, with what it requires in terms of openness, communication, and coordination at the local level with the institutions concerned with these studies and trainings.
o Providing educational and vocational information services, in addition to counseling and accompanying pupils on a regular basis to help them develop their academic, professional, and personal projects, paying necessary importance to the vocational component in all its paths and prospects, and that is in all educational levels at secondary institutions assigned to them.

o Coordinating with the educational administrations of the secondary institutions they are assigned to, to invest the data related to the educational, academical, psychological, social, and health conditions of the pupils in their interventions under the mission entrusted to them.

o Coordinating all educational and vocational guidance activities organized by the secondary institutions allocated to them, and to coordinate special orientation sessions, reorientation committees, first choice committees, and committees to bring back those who were laid off, all held in those institutions according to the procedures in force.

o Offering technical support to secondary institutions which are assigned to them, to aid them integrate educational and vocational guidance dimension in their work programs and educational projects, all within the management and educational board's framework, and also within the scheduled school programs and the educational club activities.

o Participating in the activation of all service components related to educational and vocational guidance.

o Providing educational, psychological, and social support for pupils under the institution's director' request, and to contribute to the educational, psychological, and social reinforcement activities that are programmed by the institutions.

The Analysis Model.
Educational guidance constitutes an ongoing process culminating in year-end decisions for students. This process demands a multitude of practices, skills, and competencies, such as consistent communication, monitoring, and effective guidance. In a conventional guidance framework, the success and contentment of students' choices and decisions hinge on the quality of this process, the alignment of objectives, the effectiveness of the mobilized procedures and practices, and the competence and interaction of the guidance counselors. Thus, the central concern is one of quality; evaluating the practices and competencies of guidance counselors equates to assessing the quality of the process. However, this assessment is no straightforward task. Its complexity arises from the multitude of criteria that contribute to its fulfillment.

The literature review reveals that these criteria pertain to three dimensions dictated by the nature of guidance carried out through various means: a technological dimension linked to the use of new technology and software, a competency dimension relating to the interactions, abilities, and skills of guidance counselors in ensuring the success of their implemented actions, and a dimension focused on monitoring (accompagnement), allowing for an assessment of the degree to which their roles and missions are realized. Consequently, the assessment of guidance counselors' practices and competencies lacks a single criterion on which to base judgment directly. Instead, it necessitates the construction of a model that takes into account all the criteria across the mentioned dimensions, contributing to the success of guidance counselors' practices and the overall process for the benefit of students.

Criteria represent general principles employed for the assessment or selection of something. They define what is essential to evaluate to address the evaluation question, often designating the ideal for a specific situation. These criteria serve as reference elements that facilitate judgment and estimation, necessitating a comprehensive set of criteria to assess all crucial aspects of the subject in question. Furthermore, a well-defined assessment criterion requires corresponding indicators, which serve as measurement instruments providing precise information and variables that qualify or quantify the extent to which the criteria are met.

The use of new technology dimension.
The technical dimension significantly pervades the field of guidance and counseling, leveraging the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This involves the development of software, web services, programs, and platforms. The concept of delivering educational guidance services and information through new technologies has become essential. This transformation has been accompanied by the establishment of ethical standards to guide counselors in technology usage and a growing recognition of technology as a viable tool in career planning for both students and adults (Harris-Bowlsbey & Sampson, 2005, p. 49).

Guidance counselors have a range of tools at their disposal to enhance knowledge and information sharing with students. Consequently, guidance is an activity that demands the use of diverse means of communication and information dissemination. These include written and oral communication tools, such as videos, data presentations, videoconferencing, and online platforms that facilitate interaction in the realm of orientation and guidance (Sampson & Makela, 2014). To effectively create multimedia content, share it with others, and interact confidently, users are encouraged to master various communication software and platforms (Ozenne et al., 2018). Thus, the utilization of technologies, particularly digital technologies, is of paramount importance.

Furthermore, in the current context of E-Guidance, which employs an online platform (Massar), guidance counselors can access each student's file, containing information like grades, preferences, and teacher observations. A substantial portion of interactions between students and their guidance counselors occurs via this platform. Drawing from Raby (2004) and UNESCO (2011) models regarding the necessary competencies in new technology (ICT), it's evident that three distinct stages of managing its usage are imperative.

Personal or professional usage stage:
o Ability to use digital and online applications,
o Use of the most appropriate tools to communicate with stakeholders and users of the education system,

Development of knowledge stage:
o Adapting, modifying, and transmitting information in the workplace,
o Exchange and communicate remotely.

Creation of knowledge stage :
o Solve technical problems of the platform.
o Create interactive online written and audio-visual documents, digital resources, clarifications...

Competencies dimension.
As the primary activities of guidance counselors involve continuous interaction with students, teachers, parents, and other administrative stakeholders, certain abilities, social attributes, and knowledge should define their profiles. Possessing excellent interpersonal communication and active listening skills is undeniably advantageous for fulfilling their missions. The profile descriptions of guidance counselors, as considered by the "Federal Office of Professional Training and Technology" (L'OFFT) in Switzerland, underscore the significance of the counselors' social and personal attributes. Research by Masdonati, Massoudi, and Rossier (2009) has demonstrated that the quality of the working alliance during a guidance intervention and interactions with others significantly impact effectiveness, underscoring the importance of relational aspects in the guidance field. Establishing long-term connections with students and nurturing confidential relationships can have a positive influence.

Furthermore, the literature review underlines the fundamental skill of effective communication. Guidance counselors must demonstrate a range of individual and group counseling and communication skills, including active listening, clarifying, focusing, paraphrasing, questioning, probing, reflecting feelings, and goal setting. Paying attention to the significance of non-verbal communication and responding appropriately is essential. Active listening is crucial for making guidance meaningful for all involved, as it requires the listener to understand both the words and the associated emotions.

The main actors in the educational guidance process are guidance counselors, "although the mission of counselors has been extended to all aspects of monitoring, information and guidance, their action remains essentially focused on providing students with information on the various educational and training opportunities available within the system" (Chbani & Jaouane, 2017, p. 116). Interacting with students also necessitates responding to a multitude of questions across various domains. The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG, 2018) has outlined explicit competencies essential for educational and vocational guidance practitioners to provide quality services, including a thorough understanding of updated information on educational, training, employment trends, labor market dynamics, and social issues. Guidance staff should be well-versed in labor market dynamics as advising often involves providing general, non-personalized information about specific topics or areas of focus.

The study by Ibrahim, Helms, and Thompson (1983) shows the multifaceted roles of guidance counselors, particularly in educational and occupational planning. These counselors are responsible for equipping students with valuable information about career options and educational pathways. Consequently, counselors are expected to have a strong foundation in general knowledge and culture. In their daily responsibilities, guidance counselors directly engage with students, parents, and teachers. They play a pivotal role in identifying students' needs and aiding them in overcoming challenges. Effective interactions among students, teachers, and parents are essential to their support. Interviews serve as a fundamental tool for guidance counselors, and their ability to conduct interviews, facilitate meetings, and mediate using clear and context-appropriate language is of paramount importance.

Given that guidance counselors interact with students during the crucial phase of adolescence, where self-concept is evolving and complex situations arise, their role demands a blend of educational expertise and psychological insight. They must be well-versed in adolescent psychology and employ communication techniques tailored to this age group.

Another vital competency is their ability to diagnose issues and analyze situations. This skill is integral to their performance assessment, particularly under the criterion of "the ability to organize." Additionally, guidance counselors must excel in managing information, encompassing tasks like collecting, organizing, maintaining, and disseminating information related to education, training, careers, and employment opportunities. This competence is considered a specialized skill that all guidance counselors must acquire.

Monitoring dimension.
This dimension consists strictly of the level of follow-up and monitoring of guidance counselors to pupils. It is based on the ministerial Note 022*17, where it is specified the primary interventions of guidance counselors. Scheduling and facilitating sessions and meetings involving various stakeholders within the educational sector is a mandatory requirement. This ensures the provision of high-quality support to students, maintaining a continuous monitoring of their adaptation, integration, and decision-making processes. Accompanying students involves the organization of educational and informational activities aimed at a broader audience to actively involve them in their orientation. It also entails conducting personality assessments for all students and arranging sessions for those seeking to explore reorientation opportunities.

The model.
Thus, according to the theoretical framework presented above, we present the factors permitting the analysis of guidance counselors competencies and the evaluation of their level of accompaniment to pupils as follows:

Dimensions	Indicators
	The use of information and communication technology in their guiding practices.
	Ability to create presentations on PowerPoint.
	Ability to create animated videos .
	Ability to create digital publications.
	Ability to manage the basics of the guidance platform (signing in…)
	Ability to effectively manage the guidance platform (exchange and respond to pupils' questions)
	Ability to post written, audio, video, digital resources, and clarifications on the guidance platform.
	Ability to solve the technical issues of the guidance platform.
Use of new technology	
	Active listening to pupils
	Clarifying, paraphrasing, and simplifying speech for pupils
	Understanding body language and non-verbal communication

Competencies	Conducting individual or group interviews (with pupils, teachers, and parents)
	Employing their knowledge about adolescents' psychology
	Employing their analytical and diagnostic skills
	Mediating and resolving issues between pupils, parents, and teachers
	Information dissemination
	Knowledgeable about all updated educational and vocational information
Monitoring	Coordinating meetings with pupils' parents
	Coordinating meetings with the secondary school's director
	Coordinating meetings with pupils' teachers
	Coordinating meetings with the secondary school's director
	Organizing sessions with pupils who are facing learning and integration difficulties
	Taking pupils' inserters, expectations, and goals into consideration
	Organizing informative activities
	Administering personality type tests to pupils
	Organizing sessions with pupils who filled for a reorientation

Methodology:-
In our research, we began by conducting a thorough literature review to gather information. This involved exploring related articles, publications, and definitions of key concepts. We also analyzed relevant theories to gain a deeper understanding of the guidance concept. We then focused on the Moroccan context, reviewing documents and ministerial decrees related to educational guidance and its stakeholders and roles.

For the analysis model, we conducted a literature review to identify three key dimensions and their associated indicators, which enables to analyze competencies in using new technology and practices.

Population and Sample.
The target population is the totality of people who are likely to be concerned about the research and obtain similar characteristics. The current quantitative study targeted all practicing guidance counselors, and so the total number of guidance counselors for the academic year 2020/2021 was 850. The instrument was developed using Google Forms and so was shared via an internet Link with 110 guidance counselors, only 51 guidance counselors have responded to our questionnaire. As shown in Table 1, our sample comprises 10 females representing 19.6% of the total size of the sample, and 41 males represent 80.4% of the collected data. Thus, the questionnaire was answered by 51 guidance counselors out of 110

Gender.

		Fréquence	Pourcentage	Pourcentage valide	Pourcentage cumulé
Valide	**Female**	10	19.6	19.6	19.6
	Male	41	80.4	80.4	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Table 1:- Participant's Gender.

Instrumentation.
The research utilizes a questionnaire as its primary data collection instrument. The choice of a questionnaire was driven by its efficiency in obtaining a large number of responses quickly, making it well-suited for gathering quantitative data (Harland, 2021). Questionnaires are effective in measuring various aspects such as behavior, attitudes, preferences, opinions, and intentions among a wide range of subjects (McLeod, 2018). The questionnaire format, which includes a Likert-type scale alongside close-ended questions, ensures precise and comprehensive data collection. Moreover, questionnaires often encourage respondents to provide more private or profound responses, as they may feel more comfortable compared to other data collection methods like phone or face-to-face interviews (Abdullahi, 2019). This approach provides valuable insights into the competencies and self-perceived effectiveness of guidance counselors in their roles.

The questionnaire is structured into four sections, each of which assesses a specific attribute. The first section examines the use of new technologies, with respondents rating their level of agreement on a Likert-type scale. The second section focuses on evaluating guidance counselors' competencies in areas related to social, communication, and expression, all of which are considered crucial for effective guidance counseling. The third section assesses the level of guidance and support offered by counselors to students. This dimension is measured using a Likert scale with four frequency options:
- 1 implies "never"
- 2 implies "rarely"
- 3 implies "often"
- 4 implies "always"

It's important to note that the questionnaire used in this research is presented in the Arabic language and will be included in the appendix section.
a) Reliability of the instrument.
"Reliability pertains to the extent to which the results obtained through a measurement and procedure can be consistently reproduced" (Bolarinwa, 2015, p. 195). Put simply, the reliability of an instrument signifies its precision when re-evaluating its components. "Reliability encompasses the degree to which test scores remain unaffected by chance factors — by the luck of the draw.

It encompasses the idea that a test-taker's score should not hinge on:
1. The specific day and time of the test in comparison to other potential test times.
2. The specific questions or problems featured in the test edition taken by the test-taker in contrast to other editions.
3. The specific assessors who evaluate the responses of the test-taker, particularly when judgment is involved in the scoring process" (Livingston, 2018, p. 6).

Therefore, a high level of reliability reflects the consistency and effectiveness of the items and indicators used to measure their intended attributes. Table 2 below presents the three dimensions of our model designed to assess the competencies and practices of our sample, along with sample items from each dimension of our questionnaire. Additionally, it includes Cronbach's alpha, which is utilized to calculate the instrument's reliability.

Dimensions	Examples of items	Cronbach's alpha
Use of new technology (8 items)	What is your ability to effectively manage the guidance platform (answering pupils' questions…)?	0.844
Competencies (9 items)	What is your ability to conduct individual or group interviews (with pupils and parents)?	0.828
Monitoring (8 items)	How Often do you administer personality type tests to pupils?	0.733

Table 2:- The three dimensions of our model, an example of the items and Cronbach's alpha.

As indicated in the table above, the coefficient alpha measuring the reliability of the three dimensions is satisfactory: 0.844 for the use of the new technology dimension, 0.828 for the competencies dimension, and 0.733 for the monitoring dimension.

It's important to mention that in social science, the acceptable value of Cronbach's alpha should be at least equal to 0.7. and so, the overall value of the coefficient alpha of the entire instrument is 0.876, which is considered good.

Alpha de Cronbach	Number of items
.876	25

Table 3:- Cronbach's alpha

Validity of the instrument
As per Creswell (2012), instrument validity signifies the degree of precision in measuring its intended target. In terms of the instrument's validity in the current research, a specialist in the subject matter was enlisted to meticulously assess all dimensions and items. This expert, a Senior Guidance Inspector with over 25 years of experience in the field, was engaged to validate the precision and judgment accuracy of the measures.

Data collection
The questionnaire was shared via a link with guidance counselors inviting them to fill in the questionnaire to collect the data. We mention that it takes approximately 15 minutes to complete all questions. The results were first downloaded in an Excel file and then were treated and analyzed using SPSS for descriptive analysis.

Data analysis
SPSS facilitated our data analysis, which involved descriptive analysis, including calculations of means and standard deviations, as well as the execution of reliability tests for the instrument, specifically Cronbach's coefficient alpha. It also allowed to gather demographic information about the sample and obtain result percentages. It's important to note that there are no fixed guidelines for evaluating Likert-type scale questionnaires. However, considering that the questionnaire comprises a relatively large number of items, we have chosen to compute the mean scores for items within each dimension. These mean scores serve as the basis for assessing the level of achievement within each dimension.

Table 4, presented below, provides an overview of the interpretation of each score. A mean score falling between 1 and 2 indicates that the dimension is unfulfilled, implying a poor performance. A mean score ranging from 2 to 3 is considered good, while a mean score between 3 and 4 is deemed excellent.

Mean score for a dimension	Appreciation
Mean score between 1 and 2	**Poor**

Mean score between 2 and 3	**Good**
Mean score between 3 and 4	**excellent**

Table 4 mean score

Results of the "Use of new technology" dimension.
This dimension is designed to analyze the proficiency of guidance counselors in utilizing new technology, with a specific focus on their capability to operate various devices, create informative digital materials including slide shows, and share these resources with students. In the current context, marked by the prevalence of remote work, guidance counselors are also expected to effectively navigate the guidance platform. This involves tasks such as logging in, accessing students' files, examining grades, addressing inquiries, and making observations. Furthermore, they should be adept at troubleshooting technical issues that may arise during their online interactions.

Drawing from theoretical insights, we have identified three progressive levels of managing the utilization of new technology. The first level entails using technology for personal or professional purposes. Subsequently, the second level involves developing knowledge about technology, while the third and final level encompasses the ability to generate new knowledge through technology.

Therefore, to collect the needed data for this dimension, we retained the participants' responses to the eight items below.

How Often do you use ICT in your guidance tasks?
An analysis of the results depicted unveils that 7.84% of the participants infrequently employ ICT in their guidance duties. In contrast, a majority, comprising 52.94%, frequently incorporate information and communication technology in their practices. Additionally, those who consistently utilize ICT make up 39.22% of the total participants.
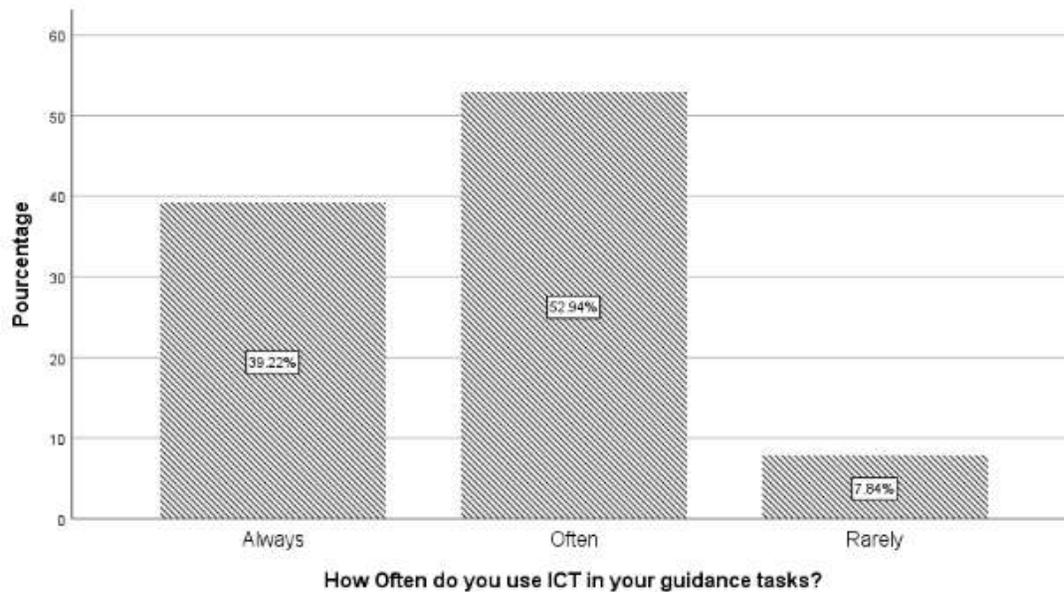
Figure 1:- Participants' percentages of how often they use ICT.

What is your ability to create presentations on PowerPoint?
Among the guidance counselors who responded to our questionnaire, a significant majority (50.96%) evaluate their proficiency as excellent in creating PowerPoint presentations. An additional 29.41% express confidence in their ability, rating themselves as good, while 19.61% of the participants view their proficiency as average when it comes to using PowerPoint for presentation creation.
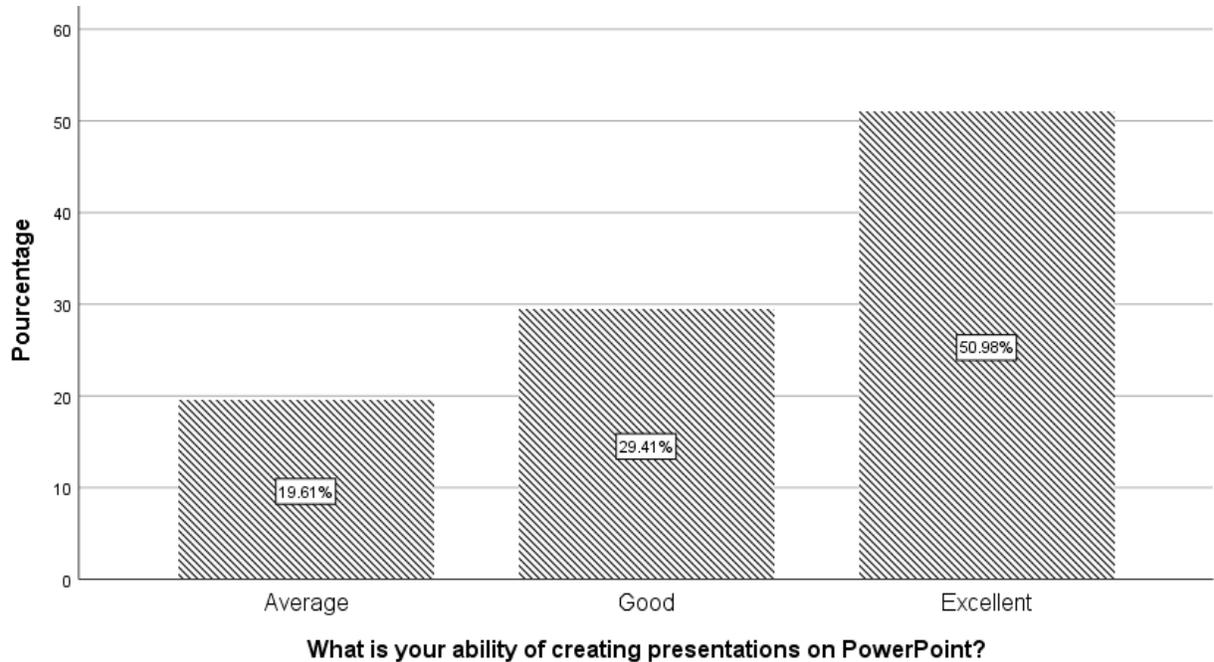
Figure 2:- Participants' ability to create presentations on PowerPoint.

**What is your ability to create animated videos?**
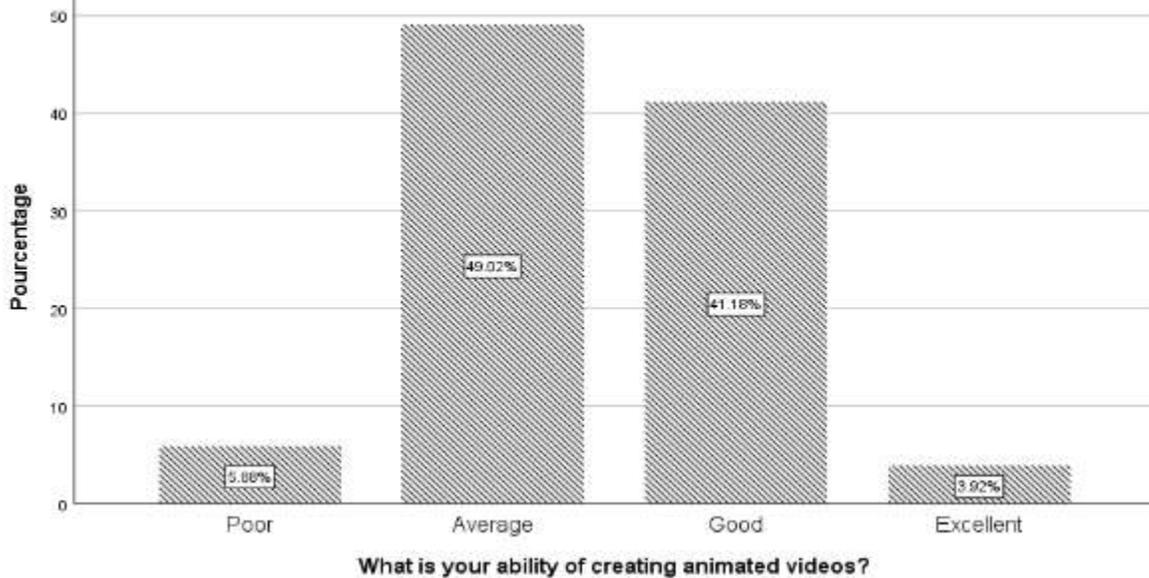
Figure 3:- Participants' ability to create animated videos.

Figure 3:- Reveals that 49% of the participants fall within the category of average proficiency, while 41.18% demonstrate a good level of competence at the initial stage of using ICT for personal and professional purposes. Notably, only a small percentage, specifically 3.92% of the participants, are deemed excellent in the creation of animated videos.

What is your ability to create digital publications?
Analysis of the data presented in Figure 4 indicates that a significant portion, accounting for 74.51% of the participants, possesses commendable skills in creating digital publications to share and elucidate essential information for students. This group constitutes the largest segment of our sample. In contrast, a mere 3.92% rate

themselves as having poor capabilities in this area, while 13.73% consider their proficiency as average, and 7.84% view themselves as excellent in creating digital content.
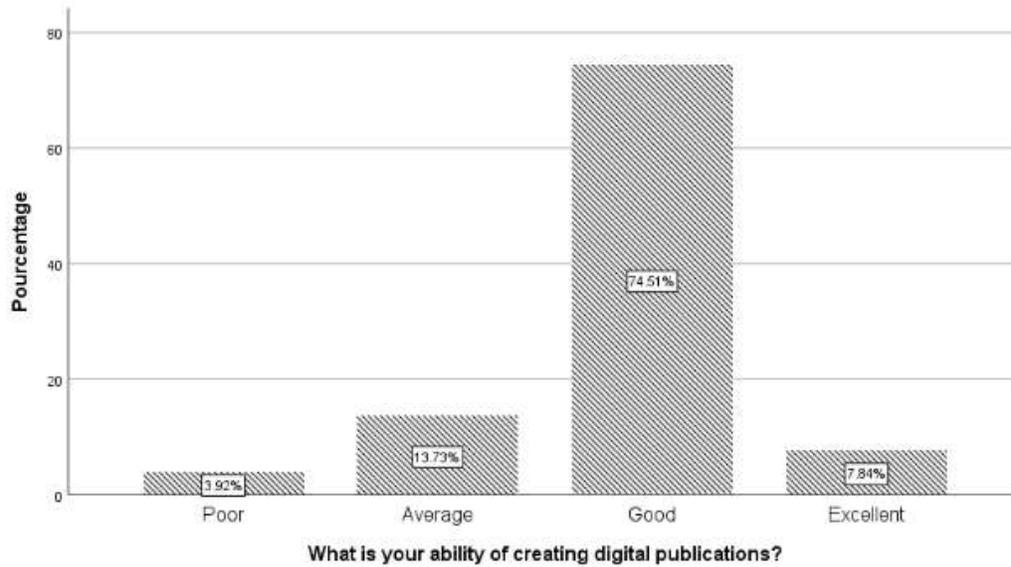
Figure 4:- Participants' ability to create digital publications.

What is your ability to manage the basics of the guidance platform (singing in…)?
Regarding the proficiency in managing the guidance platform, as depicted in Figure 5, it is observed that 49.02% of the participants rate themselves as excellent, while 33.33% consider themselves good. Furthermore, 15.69% perceive their capabilities as average, and a minimal 1.96% deem themselves to have a poor understanding of the basics of the guidance platform.
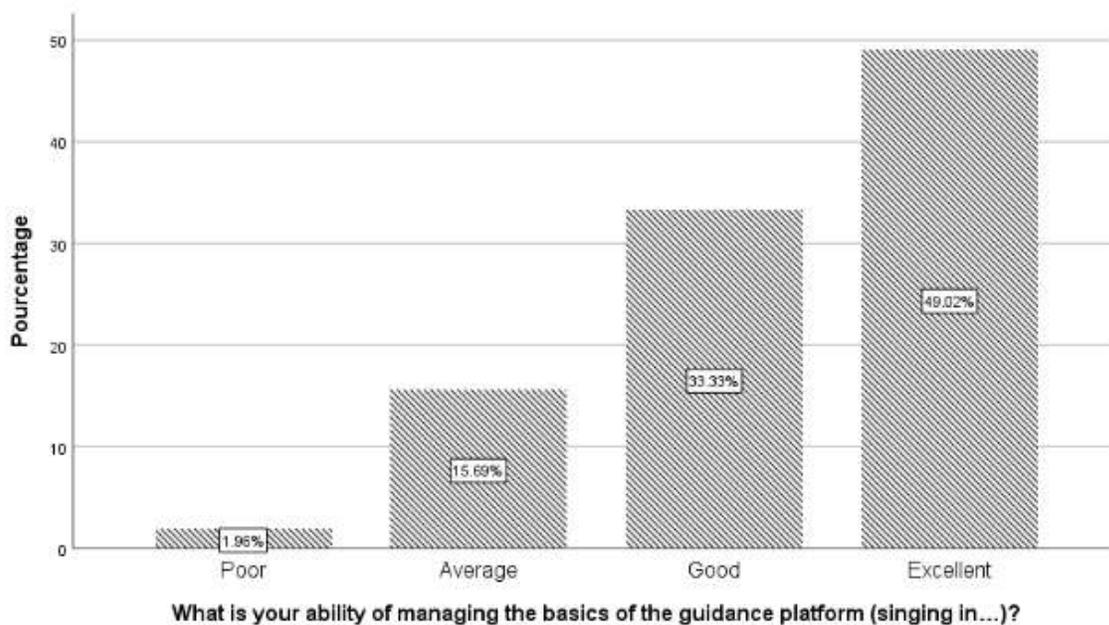
Figure 5:- Participants' ability to manage the basics of the platform.

What is your ability to effectively manage the guidance platform (answering pupils' questions…)?
Approximately 37.25% of the participants indicate that they excel in efficiently managing the platform, encompassing tasks such as checking pupils' files and reviewing teachers' observations shared on the platform.

Meanwhile, 31.37% consider themselves to be good at this, 29.41% rate their abilities as average, and a mere 1.96% of the participants acknowledge having poor proficiency in managing the platform effectively.
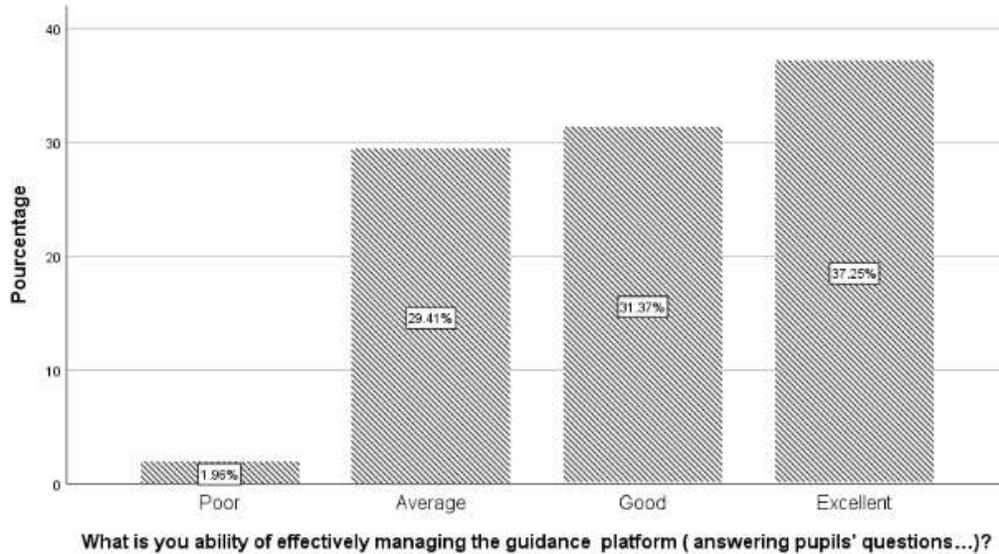
Figure 6:- Participants' ability to manage the guidance platform.

What is your ability posting written, audio, digital resources, and clarifications on the guidance platform?
In the context of the second level of utilizing new technology, as depicted in Figure 7, it becomes apparent that a substantial number of participants excel in posting written audio digital resources along with explanations to address any pupil inquiries, comprising 33.33% of the total sample size. Furthermore, an equal 29.41% of the participants consider themselves to be excellent and average in their proficiency at posting content on the platform. In contrast, a smaller portion, specifically 7.84%, express that they lack this capability.
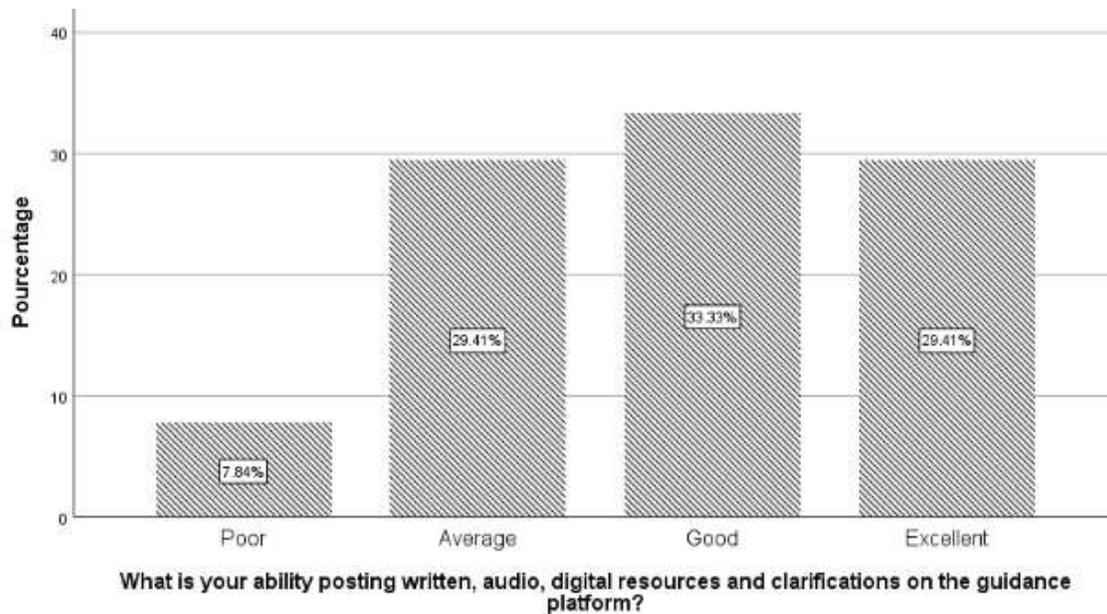
Figure 7:- Ability posting written, audio, digital resources, and clarifications on the guidance platform.

What is your ability to solve the technical issues of the guidance platform?
The final component within this dimension pertains to the preceding level of managing new technology usage, specifically focusing on the aptitude to address technical challenges that guidance counselors may encounter while utilizing the platform. The data collected reveals that 29.41% of the participants possess limited proficiency in

resolving technical issues, while 33.33% rate themselves as average in this regard. Additionally, 21.57% consider their abilities to be good. Conversely, only 15.69% of the participants feel confident in their capacity to effectively address technical issues.
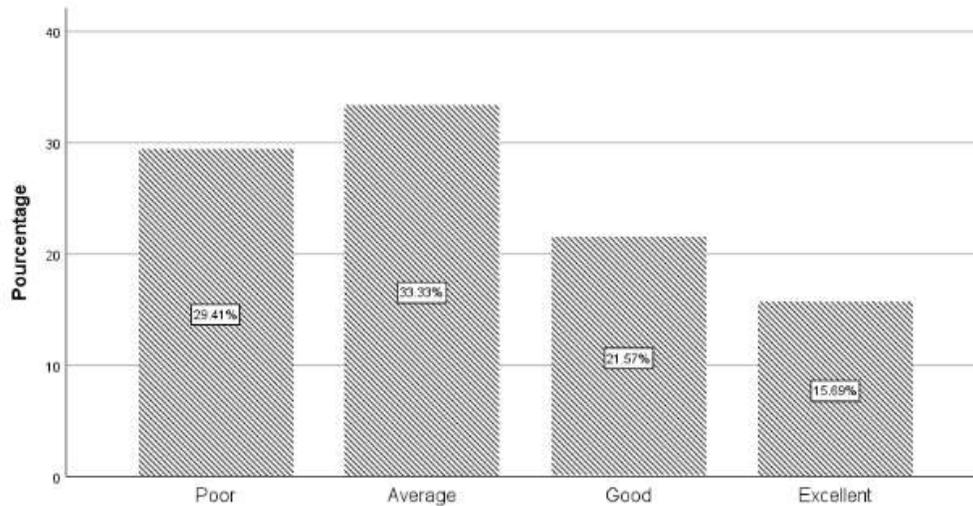

Figure 8:- Ability to solve the technical issues of the guidance platform

Discussion:-

This dimension assessed various aspects, including the three stages of managing the guidance platform. To evaluate the overall satisfaction with this dimension, the mean score of the eight items was calculated, with each item rated on a scale from 1 to 4, denoting "poor," "average," "good," and "excellent" abilities in using new technology.

Among the evaluated items was the counselors' competence in creating slideshows using PowerPoint, garnering a mean score of 3.31 out of 4, with a standard deviation of less than 1 (SD=0.787), signifying an excellent level. However, their ability to resolve technical issues on the guidance platform received a mean score of 2.24 out of 4, revealing a noticeable deficiency in effective platform management. This skill is crucial as many pupil-related tasks are conducted through the platform, and the incapacity to address technical issues may lead to delays, frustrations, and a decline in counselors' motivation. The comprehensive assessment of guidance counselors' capabilities in using new technology and managing the platform yielded an overall mean score of 2.91 out of 4, indicating a good level of proficiency in this dimension.

Results of the "Competencies" dimension.
This section presents the outcomes pertaining to the "Competencies" dimension. It is indisputable that, in order to positively influence students, guidance counselors must cultivate specific competencies. These encompass social competencies, effective communication skills encompassing both verbal and non-verbal aspects, adeptness in conducting interviews (whether individually or in group settings), and a profound understanding of adolescent psychology, given that this is the primary age group they will be counseling. The following results encapsulate the findings across nine items that explore the competencies previously enumerated, as well as their ability to mediate and resolve issues among students, parents, and teachers, and their proficiency in disseminating information to the target audience.

**How would you describe your ability to listen effectively to pupils?**
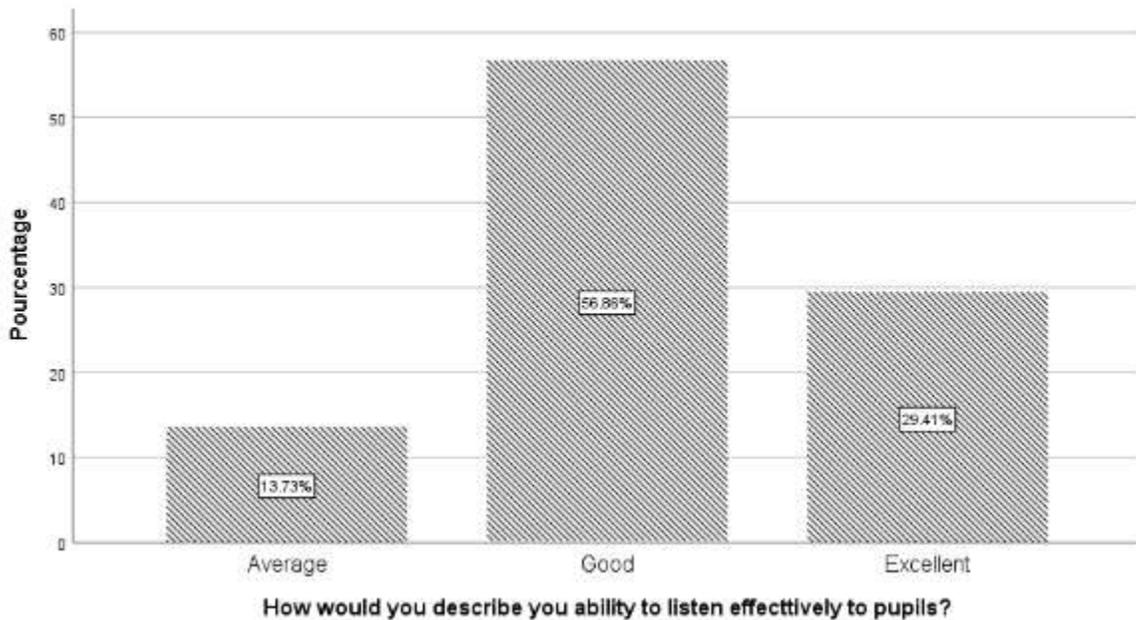
Figure 9:- Ability to listen effectively to pupils.

As indicated in Figure 9 above, over half of the participants rate themselves as proficient in listening effectively to students, with 29.41% considering themselves excellent and 13.73% regarding their skills as merely average in attentive listening to students' input.

How would you describe your ability to explain, paraphrase, and simplify speech for pupils?
The collected data reveals that, with respect to the important communicative competence of explaining, paraphrasing, and simplifying speech for students, 41.18% of the surveyed guidance counselors consider themselves excellent, 49.02% deem themselves good, and 9.8% assess their abilities as only average.
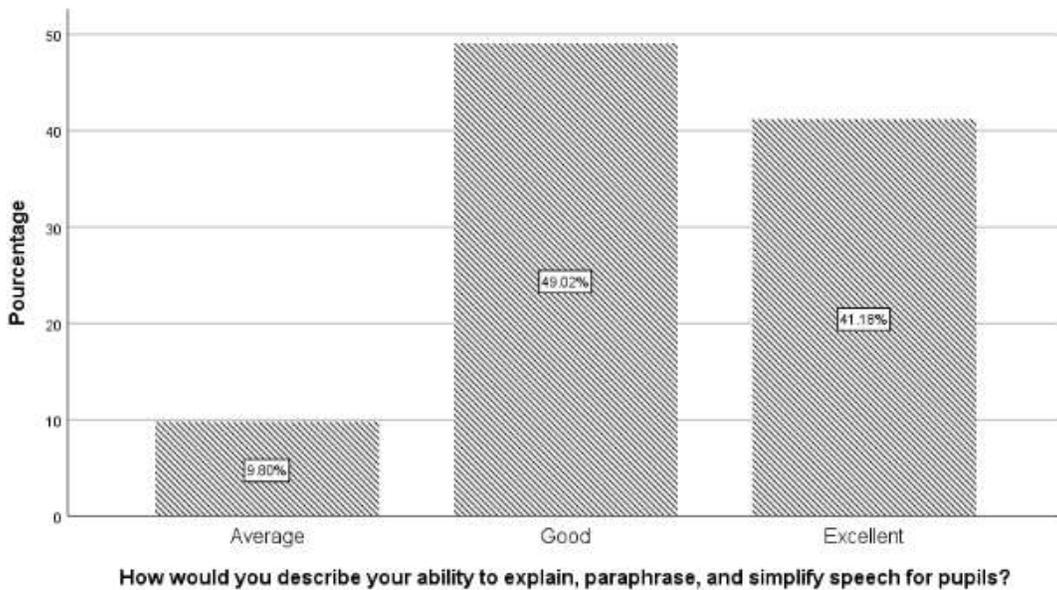
Figure 10:- Ability to explain, paraphrase, and simplify speech for pupils

How would you describe your ability to understand body language and non-verbal signals of pupils?
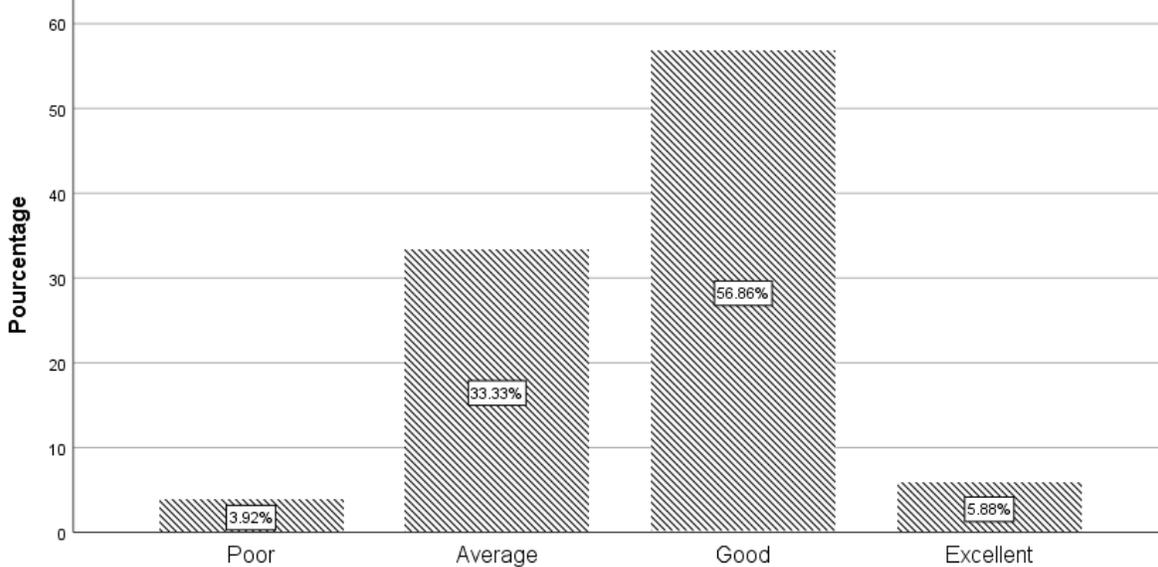
How would you describe you ability to understand body language and non-verbal signals of pupils?

Figure 11:- Participants' ability to understand body language and non-verbal signals.

Regarding the third element within this dimension, which pertains to the capacity to comprehend body language and non-verbal cues that students may occasionally display, the data indicates that the majority of participants, constituting 56.86%, possess proficiency in handling such situations. An additional 33.33% rate themselves as having an average level of competence. Remarkably, a mere 3 participants in the total sample claim to have mastered this skill.

What is your ability to conduct individual or group interviews (with pupils and parents)?
In the context of social competencies, the ability to engage in one-on-one or group interactions is crucial. This includes conducting interviews with students, their parents, or teachers. Figure 11 below reveals that half of our participants excel in facilitating meaningful conversations, with 31.37% demonstrating excellent interviewing skills. However, 17.65% have room for improvement in this regard.
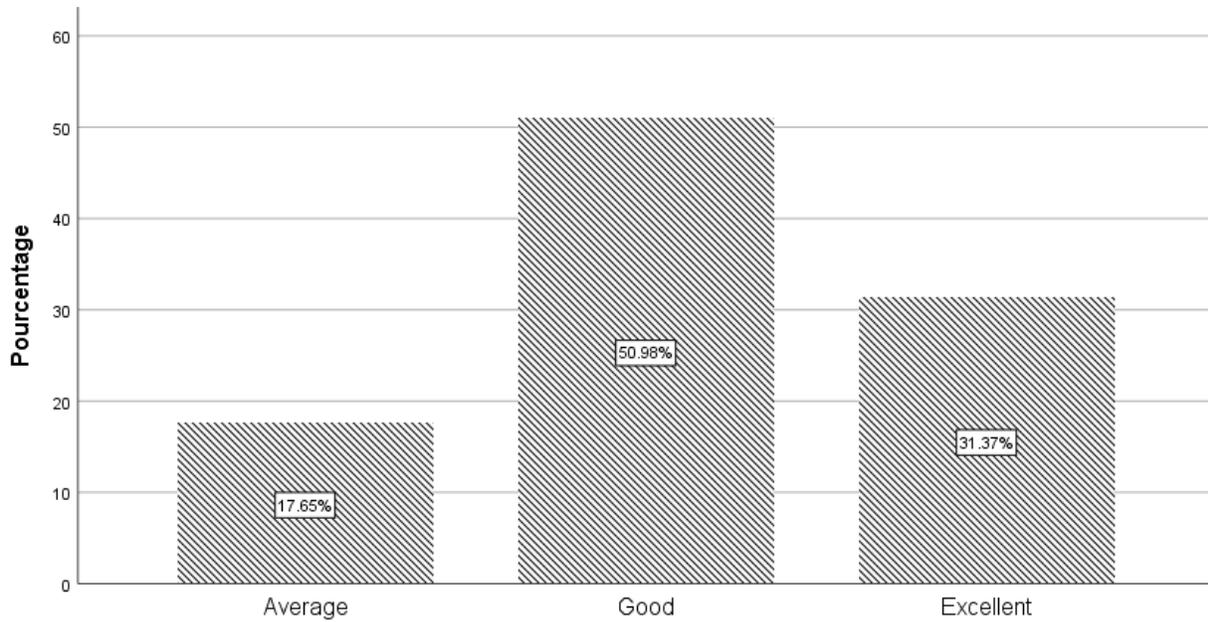
Figure 12:- Participants' ability to to conduct individual or group interviews (with pupils and parents)

How well do you employ your knowledge associated with adolescents' psychology?

Figure 13:- Participants' ability to employ your knowledge associated with adolescents' psychology.

Considering that guidance counselors predominantly work with adolescents, it's imperative for them to possess the skills to connect with this age group, engage in meaningful interactions, and comprehend certain aspects of their psychology, as well as their mental and emotional experiences.

Figure 13 provides a clear depiction of the participants' self-perceived competence in this area. A mere 1.96% demonstrate extensive knowledge of adolescent psychology, while the majority, at 68.63%, rate themselves as proficient. The remaining 29.41% consider themselves as having average capabilities when it comes to applying their knowledge of adolescent psychology.

How well do you employ your analytical and diagnostic skills?
Figure 14, displayed below, provides statistical insights into the utilization of analytical and diagnostic skills by our participants in their professional practices. Approximately 41.18% exhibit average skills in this regard. In contrast, 47.06% showcase good skills when it comes to analyzing and diagnosing situations while working with students, and a further 7.84% demonstrate excellent competencies.
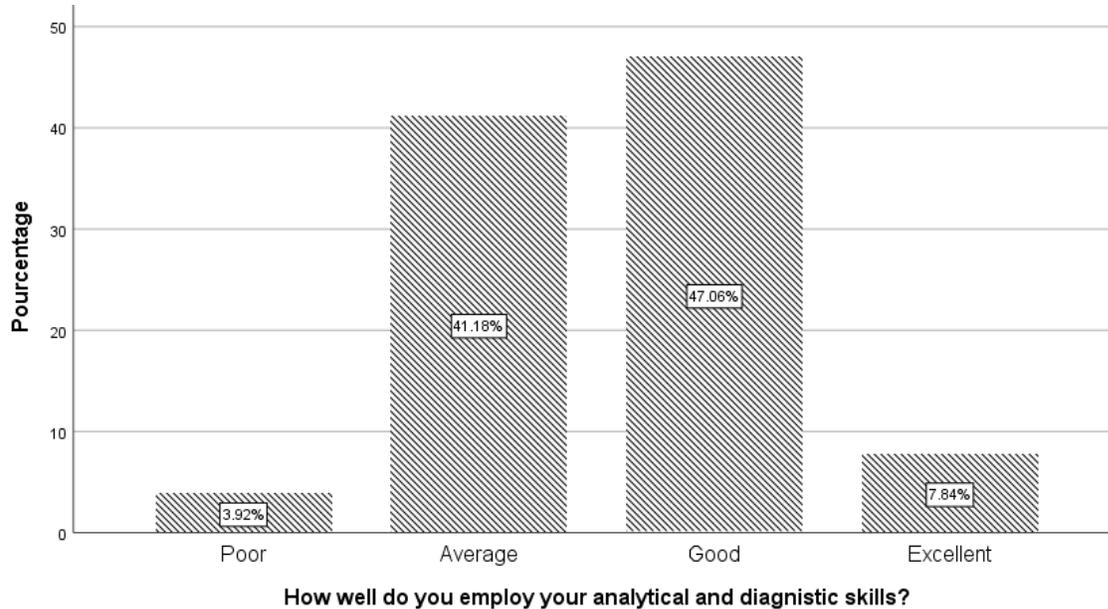

Figure 14:- Participants' analytic and diagnostic skills.

How involved are you in mediating and solving problems between pupils, parents, and teachers?
One of the responsibilities of guidance counselors is to act as mediators between students, teachers, and sometimes even parents. This role involves addressing misunderstandings and resolving issues that may arise among these parties. Such involvement is vital. Among the respondents in our sample, 49.02% exhibit proficiency in mediation, with only 3.92% achieving an excellent rating
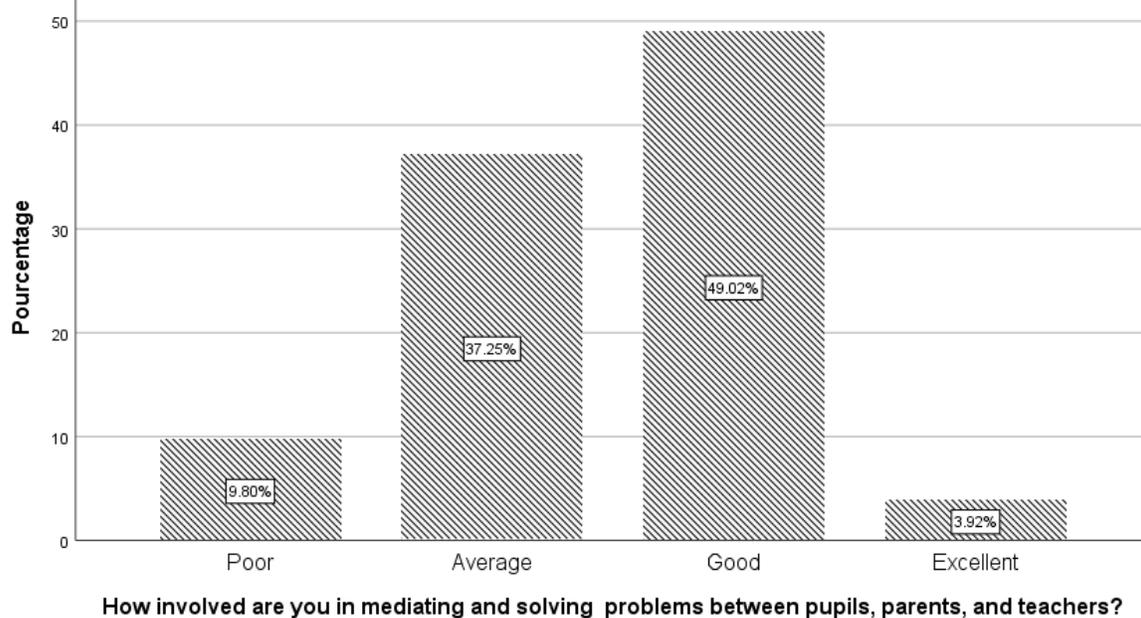

Figure 15:- Participants frequency of mediating and solving problems between pupils, parents, and teachers

How would you describe your ability to disseminate information?
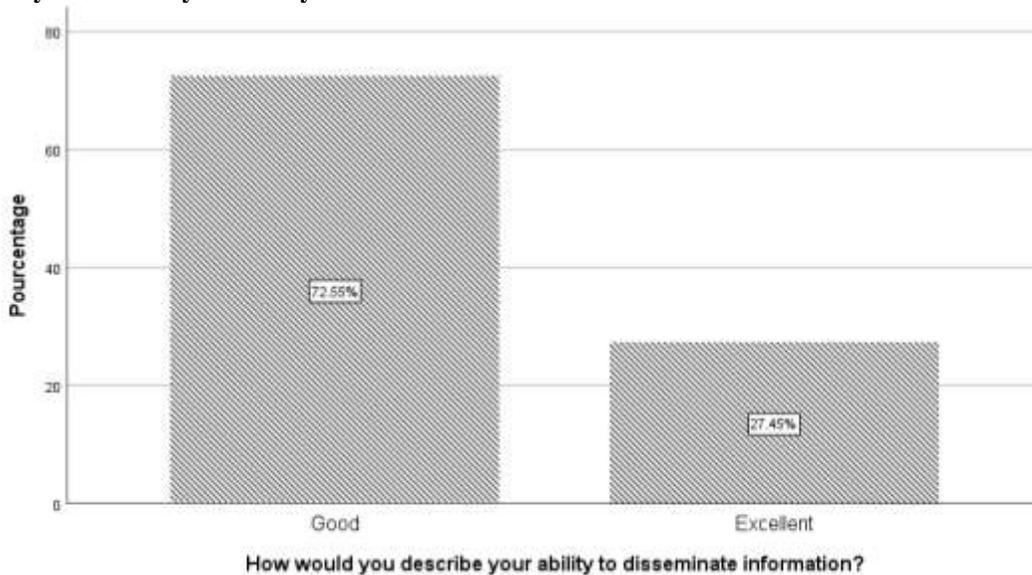
Figure 16:- Participants ability to disseminate information

Among the various competencies that guidance counselors need to develop, one crucial skill is the ability to effectively disseminate and share information, which can involve various techniques, including group activities or printed materials. The figure below indicates that 72.55% of our participants excel in this skill, while 27.45% rate themselves as excellent at disseminating valuable information

How well are you knowledgeable about the updates in the educational field?
As is well-established, students in general, and adolescents, in particular, tend to be quite inquisitive, driven by their curiosity about an uncertain future. Therefore, it's imperative for guidance counselors to possess extensive knowledge, especially in the field of education. Staying current with all the latest developments, changes, and updates is essential to provide accurate and trustworthy answers. The data obtained from our participants reveals that 52.94% exhibit a strong grasp of educational matters, with 13.73% falling within the average range. Impressively, 33.33% demonstrate a keen awareness of all
recent adjustments and modifications.
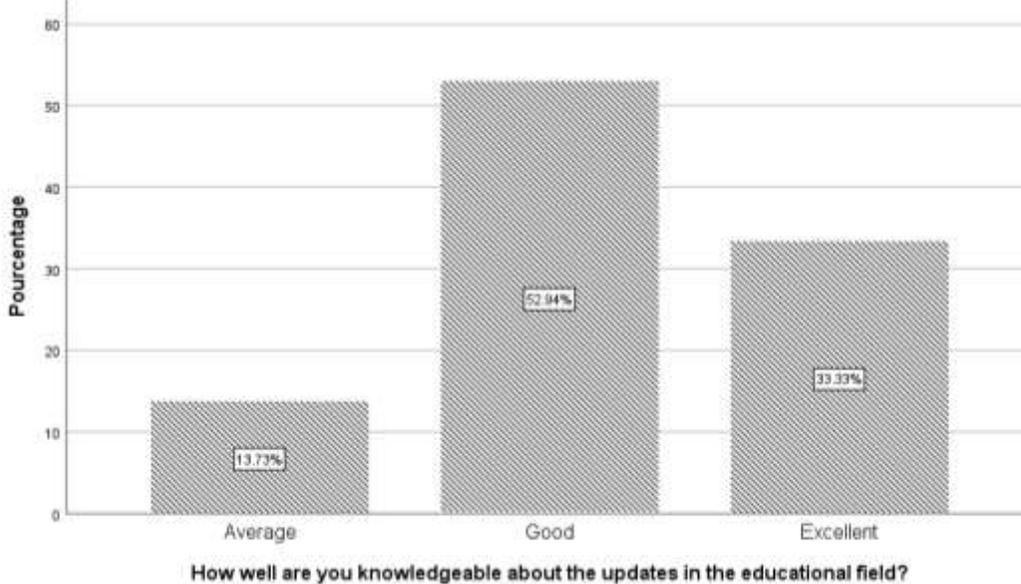
Figure 17:- Participant's knowledge about the updates in the educational field.

Discussion:-

2)   This section aims to address whether guidance counselors acquire and cultivate the essential competencies and skills vital for their roles. Effective communication, including the aptitude to communicate at an appropriate level, is integral to fostering positive relationships with pupils (McCarthy, 2001). Moreover, the dimension under consideration emphasizes communicative elements such as active listening, paraphrasing, simplifying speech, understanding body language, and nonverbal communication. Additionally, group animation skills and analytical and diagnostic proficiency are crucial aspects.

3)   Participants achieved an impressive mean score of 3.04 out of 4, indicating excellent communicative competencies. Analytical and diagnostic skills received a mean score of 2.59 out of 4, suggesting an area for improvement. In contrast, leading group interviews and disseminating information garnered mean scores of 3.14 and 3.27 out of 4, respectively, signifying excellent proficiency. This dimension further analyzes counselors' utilization of knowledge about adolescents' psychology, awareness of updates in the educational field, and their involvement in conflict resolution among pupils, parents, and teachers. The mean score for these criteria is 2.8 out of 4, denoting a good level but leaving room for enhancement.

4)   With an overall average of 2.94 out of 4, it can be conclusively stated that guidance counselors exhibit "good" to "excellent" competencies and skills aligned with their requisite roles and responsibilities.

Results of the "Monitoring" dimension.

The next dimension addresses the tasks that guidance counselors are mandated to fulfill. These responsibilities include conducting meetings with secondary school directors, principals, and teachers. Moreover, they should coordinate and arrange sessions for students and, in certain situations, for their parents. The subsequent section provides the percentages reflecting the frequency with which guidance counselors (51 participants) carry out the mentioned tasks.

**How often do you coordinate meetings with pupils' parents?**
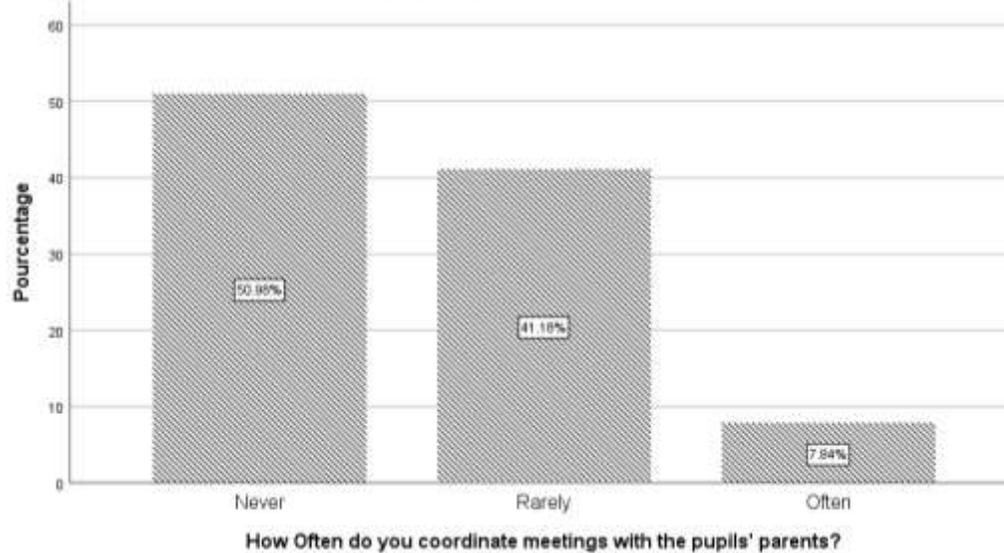
Figure 18:- Participant's frequency of coordinating meetings with pupils' parents.

Half of our participants, precisely 50.98%, never meet with students' parents. The majority, constituting 41.18% of the sample, rarely engage in such meetings. In contrast, only 7.84% frequently coordinate meetings with students' parents to discuss matters concerning their children's education.

How often do you coordinate meetings with the teachers?
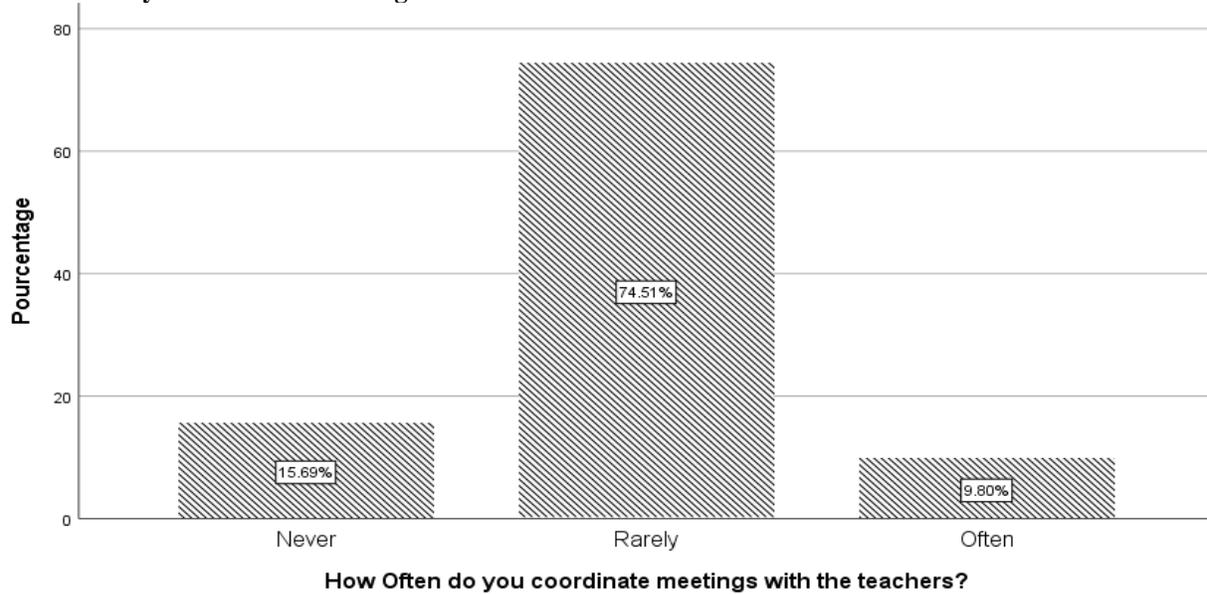
Figure 19:- How often guidance counselors coordinate meetings with the teachers.

Figure 19 above illustrates that the majority of the total sample size, 74.51%, rarely coordinate meetings with teachers. Furthermore, 15.69% never do so, while a smaller percentage of 9.80% often schedule meetings with teachers to review students' progress, adaptation to the social environment, and address any problems or issues in their learning process.

How often do you coordinate meetings with the secondary school's director?
One of the numerous missions that guidance counselors must undertake is arranging meetings with the school's directors for various purposes, including obtaining information about the institution's policies and objectives. The data analysis reveals that 3.92% of the participants never engage in meetings with the secondary school directors assigned to them, 39.22% seldom do so, while the majority of our participants, accounting for 56.86%, often schedule meetings with the directors.
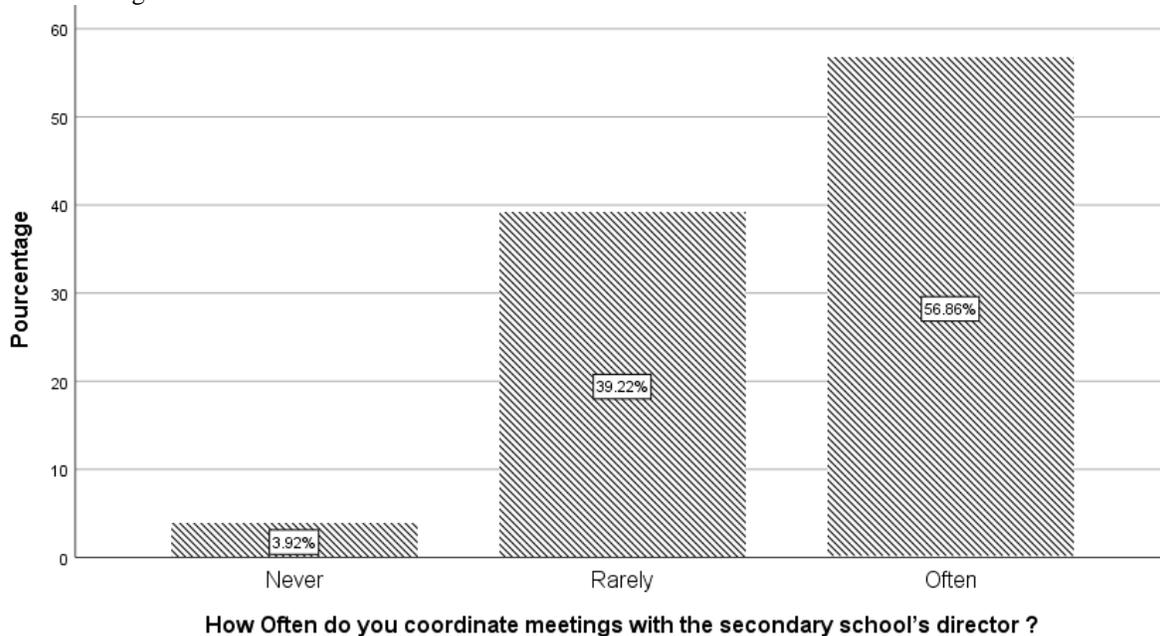
Figure 20:- How often guidance counselors coordinate meetings with the directors.

How often do you organize sessions with pupils who are facing learning and integration difficulties?
Apart from offering guidance and educational advice, guidance counselors are also responsible for providing social and psychological support to students, particularly during their integration period. They must allocate additional time and attention to students facing difficulties. The graph illustrates that 29.41% of the counselors never organize sessions to accompany students, while the majority rarely arrange such meetings, and only 11.76% frequently do so.
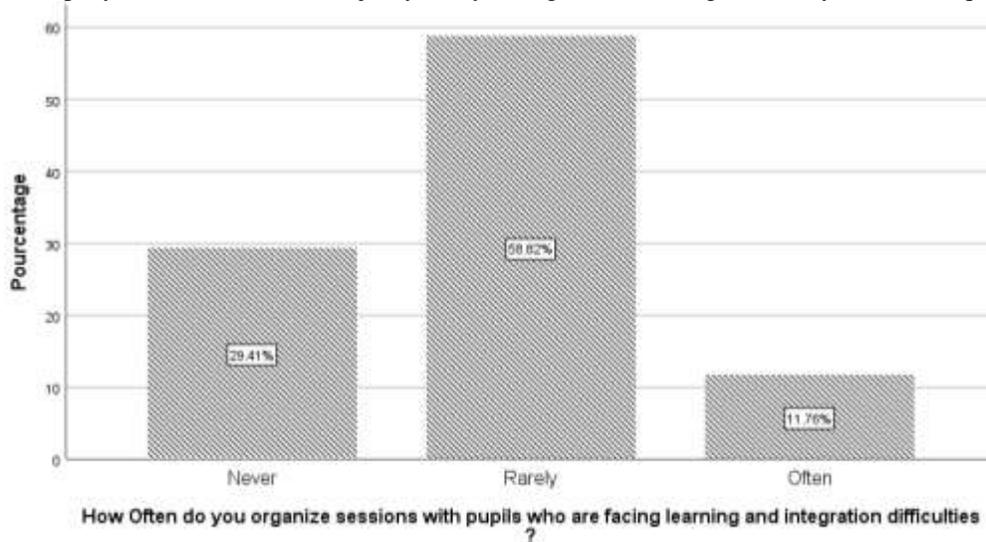

Figure 21:- How often do guidance counselors organize sessions with pupils who are facing learning and integration difficulties.

How often do guidance counselors take pupils' interests, expectations, and goals into consideration?
According to the "Self-Creation, Circumscription, and Compromise" theory, choosing a specific vocation or occupation depends on various factors, including personal interests, future expectations, and goals. This contradicts the statement made by Boulahcen (2005) in his article about the educational guidance process, suggesting that guidance counselors often base their guidance on students' grades alone. Figure indicates that nearly half of our participants (41.18%) frequently consider these factors, while 21.57% rarely do, and 37.25% always ensure that students' goals and long-term expectations are part of their decision-making process.
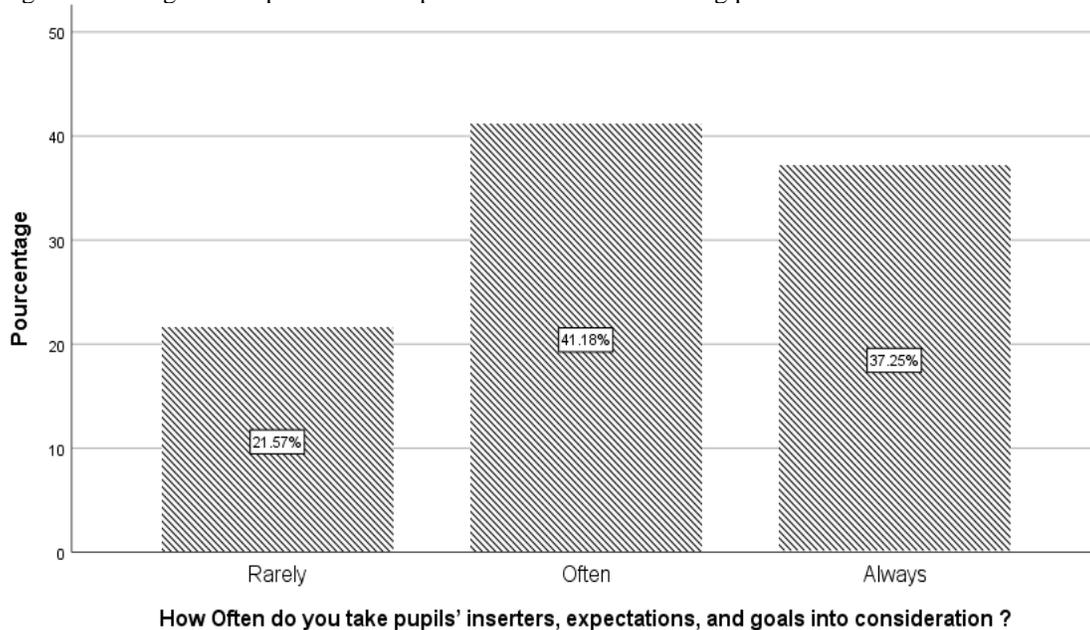

Figure 22:- How often do guidance counselors take pupils' interests and expectations into consideration.

How often do you organize informative activities for pupils to involve them in their orientation?
Apart from coordinating group sessions with students, guidance counselors are responsible for organizing informative activities, conducting surveys, and other instructive tasks to help students become active participants in their lifelong career choices and personal projects. The analyzed results reveal that our participants fall into two groups: those who rarely organize informative activities for students, constituting 33.33% of the total sample, and those who frequently involve students in their guidance activities, making up the remaining portion.
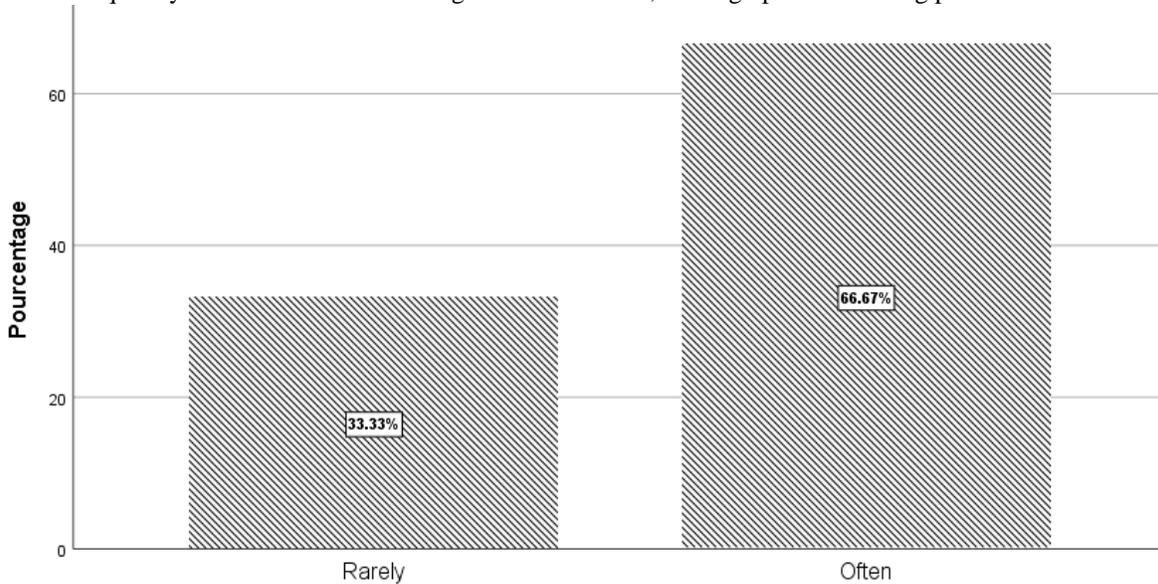
Figure 23:- How often do guidance counselors organize informative activities for pupils.
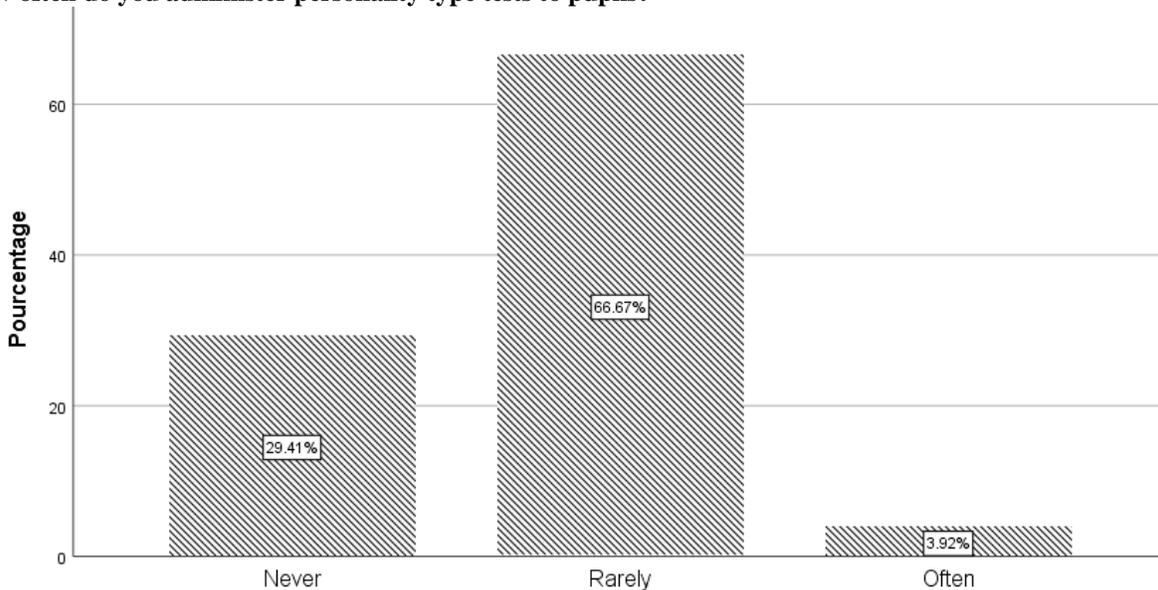
**How often do you administer personality type tests to pupils?**

Figure 24:- How often do guidance counselors administer personality type tests to pupils.

Guidance counselors may encounter students who are completely lost and confused, unsure of their desires, expectations, or goals. In such cases, they may resort to various tests and quizzes to provide assistance, including the personality type test, which is rooted in Holland's theory, emphasizing that each individual possesses specific traits.

Figure above indicates that 29.41% of the participants never administer personality type tests to the students under their care, 66.67% rarely do, while only 3.92% frequently use these tests.

How often do you organize sessions with pupils who filed for a reorientation?
Choosing the right career path doesn't always happen immediately. As depicted in the "work adjustment theory," there is always room for change to improve one's choice or situation. Students have the option to request a change in their career orientation if they feel that their initial choice no longer aligns with their goals and
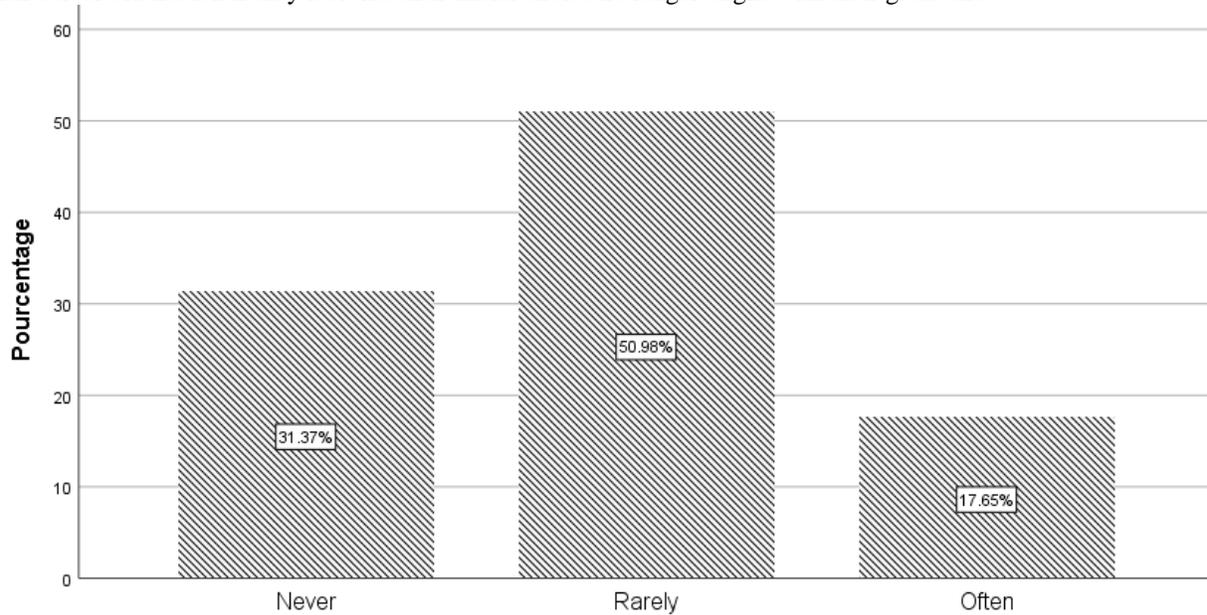
Figure 25:- How often do guidance counselors organize sessions with pupils who filed for a reorientation.

Expectations or if they simply change their minds. Typically, guidance counselors need to schedule sessions with students who have requested a change in their career orientation to understand the reasons behind that decision and evaluate its appropriateness. The figure 25 reveals that 31.37% of the participants have never organized any sessions with students who have requested a reorientation, while 50.98% of them rarely organized such sessions, and 17.65% often did.

Discussion:-
This final dimension analyzes the level of support provided to pupils and the regularity of fulfilling assigned tasks. Guidance counselors are mandated to organize sessions with pupils, teachers, the school director, and occasionally parents to ensure ongoing monitoring of pupils and support them in their decision-making processes. This involves sharing knowledge and experience, addressing queries, and intervening when necessary to aid in social integration and resolve any learning difficulties.

Regrettably, this critical dimension, which encapsulates essential tasks and primary missions of guidance counselors, received the lowest score of 2.21 out of 4. The table below presents the mean scores of each item along with the standard deviation and the equivalent appreciation for each score.

	Mean	**Standard deviation**	**Appreciation**
How often do you coordinate meetings with the pupils' parents?	**1.57**	.640	**Poor**
How often do you coordinate meetings with the teachers?	**1.94**	.506	**Poor**

How often do you coordinate meetings with the secondary school's director ?	**2.53**	.578	Good
How often do you organize sessions with pupils who are facing learning and integration difficulties ?	**1.82**	.623	**Poor**
How often do you take pupils' inserters, expectations, and goals into consideration ?	**3.16**	.758	Excellent
How often do you organize informative activities for pupils to involve them in their orientation?	**2.67**	.476	Good
How often do you administer personality type tests to pupils?	**1.75**	.523	**Poor**
How often do you organize sessions with pupils who filed for a reorientation?	**2.31**	.510	Good

Table 8:- Mean scores of the accompaniment dimension.

The presented data underscores a concerning trend among guidance counselors, who exhibit infrequent coordination, ranging from "never" to "rarely," with students facing learning and integration difficulties. Additionally, there is a lack of proactive measures, such as arranging meetings with parents and teachers, to understand students' learning status and address potential issues. This gap extends to evaluating whether students' aspirations, personalities, and academic performances align with their future goals, hindering the development of personalized projects or the selection of a specific major.

The assessment of meetings for pupils seeking reorientation reveals a suboptimal frequency, despite the obligation outlined in the counselors' missions to coordinate such sessions. This deficiency is highlighted in a directive (مذكرة 15*062 dated May 20, 2015), emphasizing the need for special orientation and reorientation sessions.

The limited support provided to students is attributed to the high workload assigned to each guidance counselor, averaging three middle schools per counselor during the 2020-2021 school year. Notably, this contrasts with the charter's explicit statement (Article 101), which stipulates that each educational institution should have a minimum of one guidance counselor.

Furthermore, the results expose a notable weakness in the administration of personality type tests by guidance counselors. These tests play a crucial role in placing each student in a compatible academic path, aligning with Allen's assertion (2005) that individuals are more content and effective in environments corresponding to their personality types.
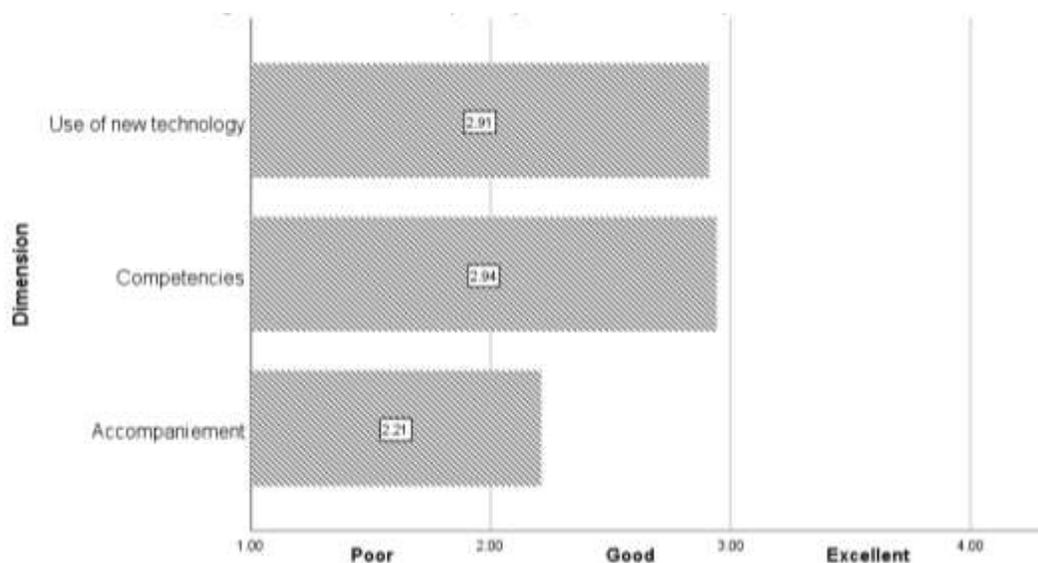
Figure 26:- Mean scores of the three dimensions.

Conclusion:-

In summary, the findings of this research reveal that guidance counselors demonstrate proficiency in utilizing new technology. However, their proficiency in effectively using the guidance platform is somewhat limited. In terms of acquiring the competencies and skills necessary for their roles, guidance counselors achieved a satisfactory score of 2.94 out of 4, which can be rounded up to 3, signifying that they possess excellent competencies.

The results provide a positive assessment of guidance counselors in relation to the first two dimensions. Nevertheless, when it comes to the final research question regarding the fulfillment of their missions and tasks, the results indicate a level of satisfaction that falls short of expectations, with a score of 2.21 out of 4.

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