

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE INCORPORATION OF
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES
(ICT) IN SCHOOL COUNSELING**

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to determine the different perspectives of Sri Lankan teachers on the use and application of ICT in guidance counseling and the school counselor's advocacy role.

Participants of the study were the teachers of public and private schools in Gampaha District who are handling the counseling role. The participants have experience as elementary grade teachers, as guidance counselors, and as teacher in-charge/principals. The study employed a snowball sampling technique that requires others to recommend teachers who they believe can have experience about the amalgamation of information technology in teaching and counseling. The open-ended formats or interviews were used to investigate the (a) different uses of ICT [e.g. internet, e-mail], (b) problems/issues/gaps on the use and application of ICT or computer technology, and (c) innovative ways in using ICT in counseling.

The views of the teacher-participants on ICT use generated the themes on (1) storing, encoding and preparing materials/documents, (2) retrieving, distributing and utilizing data/information related to school counseling, and (3) other uses for entertainment, leisure and recreational activities. As to the potential uses of ICT, the subjects generated various uses as what they practice and what they have learned from their undergraduate courses on technology in education and knowledge management in education. The issues and problems were mostly related to the economic aspects, costs, administrators' attitudes towards the use of ICT, quality of information and on the issue of commercialism. Innovative programs presented dealt on the individual needs of the pupils and on the career services, but not on the ways to improve the professional capabilities of the guidance counselors. Continuous re-training and establishment of a well-defined capacity building program for guidance counselors focusing on individual skills of the counselors as to the other uses and application of ICT are needed. School counselors should be guided through schoolbased in-service training and education ministry or government - sponsored programs on capacity building by putting emphases on the benefits of ICT use as well as case presentations of the various experiences of counselors in Sri Lanka about ICT integration in the implementation of the school guidance programs.

Keywords: ICT, guidance and counseling, ICT and education, teachers, Sri Lanka