

**PERCEPTION OF WORKPLACE COUNSELLING BY NON-ACADEMIC STAFF  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA**

**BY**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA  
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## DECLARATION

I, **Claire Kaoma** hereby declare that “**Perception of Workplace Counselling of Non-Academic Staff at the University of Zambia**” is my own work, and that all the work of other people has been duly acknowledged and that this study has not been presented before by anyone at this University and indeed any other University for similar purposes.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study sought to assess the necessity of workplace counselling among non academic workers at the University of Zambia. The study was guided by three objectives which were: to establish how non academic workers at UNZA perceive workplace counselling; the second one was to establish the counselling needs of non academic workers at the University of Zambia and the third being to find out how workplace counselling can help non academic workers at the UNZA.

The study used the descriptive research design. This involved the use of quantitative and qualitative data collection. The study used questionnaires to gather information from non academic staff at the institution and an interview guide to gather information from the Heads of Department. The population was 80 while the total number of questionnaires distributed was 70 and the interview guide was administered to 10 Heads of Department.

The study found that the workers at the institution were of the view that workplace counselling was a necessity to workers at a workplace and had an understating of what workplace counselling meant. They cited a lot of benefits of the workplace counselling when administered or offered to workers properly such improving their lives of the workers and creating a conducive work environment. Workers at the University of Zambia expressed concerns at the lack of publicity by Management, poor advertising coupled by poor marketing strategy by the Counselling Centre which leads to workers not accessing the services despite have several needs that needed help by the counsellors.

The University of Zambia Management should work at sensitizing the masses at the point of entry for all categories of staff not to non academic staff only because the study established that even the academic staff had no idea as to whether the counselling centre which was established at the institution catered for both the workers and the students. By so doing some of the work related problems could be dealt with by the centre in order to improve work performance other than what is prevailing at the moment where workers rely on peer counselling.

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to thank my Children Mwewa and Mucheka, my mother and father for the perseverance during the time I was carrying out this study. This achievement has been made possible because of your support. To you all I say may the Good Lord continue blessing you.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

COPY RIGHT.....	i
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL.....	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Overview .....	1
1.1 Background to the study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	4
1.3 Purpose of the study .....	4
1.4 Study objectives .....	5
1.5 Study or Research questions .....	5
1.6 Significance of the study .....	5
1.7 Definition of Key Concepts and Terms.....	5
1.8 Limitation of the Study .....	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7
2.0 Overview .....	7
2.1 How non academic staff perceive work place counselling world over.....	7
2.2 Counselling needs of workers in various workplaces .....	9
2.3 How workplace counselling can help non-academic workers at workplace.....	10
2.4 Summary of Literature Review .....	12
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY .....	13
3.0 Introduction .....	13
3.1 Research Design.....	13
3.2 Study Area and Population.....	13
3.3 Study Sample.....	13
3.4 Sampling Techniques .....	13
3.5 Research Instruments .....	14
3.5.1 Questionnaire.....	14

3.5.2 Interview Guide .....	14
3.6 Data Collection Procedure .....	14
3.7 Data Analysis .....	15
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA .....	16
4.0 Introduction .....	16
4.1 How non-academic workers at UNZA perceive workplace counselling .....	18
4.2 Counselling needs of non academic workers at workplaces .....	21
4.3 How workplace counselling can help non-academic workers at workplace.....	23
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....	27
5.0 Introduction .....	27
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	29
6.0 Introduction .....	29
6.1 Summary of Findings .....	29
6.2 Counselling needs of non-academic staff at the University of Zambia .....	29
6.3. How workplace counselling can help non-academic workers at UNZA .....	30
6.4 Conclusions .....	31
6.5 Recommendations .....	32
7.0 REFERENCES .....	33
8.0 APPENDICES .....	33

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Number of Respondents (source, field data 2018) .....	17
Figure 2: Percentage Gender Distribution of Respondents (source, field data 2018) .....	17
Figure 3: Knowledgeability bar chart (Source, field data 2018).....	18
Figure 4: Overall Knowledgeability bar chart (Source, field data 2018).....	19
Figure 5: Overall Knowledgeability Percentage (Source, field data 2018) .....	19
Figure 6: Needs of Workers chart (Source, Author, 2018) .....	21
Figure 7: Needs of Workers Percentage Distribution, (Source, field data 2018).....	22
Figure 8: Awareness of Benefits of workplace Counselling, (Source, field data 2018) .....	24
Figure 9: Benefits Awareness of Workplace Counselling, (Source, field 2018) .....	24

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Overview**

This section presented the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, study objectives and research question, significance, of the study, theoretical framework, delimitation and definitions of terms used in the study.

### **1.1 Background to the study**

Workplace counselling has been proved to be of importance to workers in workplaces (Makinde 1993). However, it is not known whether workers especially non-academic at the University of Zambia. UNZA has about 800 non academic staff who are potential seekers of work place counselling service. The non-academic workers or staff were chosen because they were vulnerable and lack the services that could help them find solutions to their day to day activities in order to help them perform better in their duties. It became imperative therefore, to assess the importance of work place counselling among non-academic workers at the University of Zambia.

As regard Guidance and Counselling in general, it was started in Zambia in 1967 and by 1990 it was reintroduced as guidance and counselling programme in school due to the need of guidance in subject combination and other related issues but as counselling service to the community this was as a reaction to the new disease that had emerged in the country the scourge of HIV and Aids mainly and the cases of gender based violence and issues to do with learners well being in schools. Counselling services were set up in the country. Globally, counselling services are essential elements in discipline management of people in all societies. It could be difficult for any society to function well without the counselling services which acts as an exercise of discipline. Taylor and Francis (1998) states that it was proven that, there is a great need for a clear rational and guidelines for guidance and counselling programmes. Counselling and Psychotherapy theories were being developed during the beginning of the 20th century; however it is thought that the roots of this subject originated a long time before this. The most renowned work is that of Sigmund Freud whose research into the human mind began in Vienna in 1881. Counselling has not had a long history in its current form, yet it has happened for centuries and longer.

To enable us understand the history of counselling, we refer back to the olden days and people's way of living, human beings in nature, have found comfort and solace in sharing their problems and difficulties or telling their stories to other. Like the old saying a problem shared is a problem solved tells us one thing which has been proven true that when things are difficult or when one fails to make a sound decision on his or her own in their lives, it is good to share that problem with someone or listen to what others have gone through and be able to make the right decision afterwards and also listen to their individual opinions on the matter. By so doing, issues of suicides and gender based violence and depression can be avoided as people will know and come to appreciate that it is not only themselves who have encountered such problems but others also and have gone through the same and have managed to pull through and live happily again.

There has been a long need for counselling in helping colleagues at workplaces and individuals in general with transitions and other difficulties in their lives. The long tradition of counselling is first of family members helping with advice. And this traditional was seen to be a practice largely during the marriage activities and anything related to marriage issues and initiations of children who have reached puberty. This was being practiced by parents who counselled their children, grandparents and other family elders who offered the wisdom of the years due to the experience as the adage goes experience is the best teacher so that the growing up children and couples to be should grow up to become good citizens and those in marriage should be living according to the teaching of the elders thus have happy marriages.

People come from different places, tribal backgrounds, ethnics, societies, cultures and homes and face different hardships, problems or situations. This is why counselling services are sought by many and this is why it is important to offer such services at places of work such as the higher institutions of learning such as the universities despite people or individuals there being highlighted and learned; presumed to be able to handle and solve their own problems, situations they find themselves in and problems they face in their lives. Counselling in its self is helping people to grow by learning to enable them make responsible decisions in order to lead positive live. Corey (1982) observes that counselling helps workers or people in general in behavioural and attitude change in the way they see, deal, handle and perceive issues. When a person is talked to, this helps the individual to have or build better relationships with colleagues and society at large.

According to Ndhlovu, (2015), counselling is a mutual helping relationship between a person in need of help (client) and trained counsellor. On the other hand, it is said that counselling is applied philosophy and counsellors should investigate and rigorously apply the laws of existence. This means that though philosophy may mean establishing a body of knowledge, it rarely does so to everyone's satisfaction. According to Mearns (2007), counselling is a type of talking therapy that allows a person to talk about their problems and feelings in a confidential and dependable environment. A counsellor is trained to listen with empathy (by putting themselves in your shoes). They can help you deal with any negative thoughts and feelings you have. Sometimes the term counselling is used to refer to talking therapies in general, but counselling is also a type of therapy in its own.

In our societies, there are elders who societies deem to have wisdom, counsellors dealing with psychosocial issues and management of conflicts or others with a concern for mental well-being of individual do help in talking to them. This role for many years and at present was and is taken on by elders, counsellors and management of workplaces. For the individual, the counsellor offers confidentiality that enables discussion of family matters or things that are secret from the family, work related issues such as relationships with supervisors and colleagues and advancement in careers and financial management. The counsellor meanwhile gets to steadily inculcate values, making it a valued relationship on between the employer and the employees. Those with problems or issues that cannot be solved by a counsellor at workplace are referred to other counsellors in other institutions who are able to assist in the problems they are faced with. Indeed, self interest and personality inventories enable workers to make self assessment about their career interests and upgrade, their performance at work, their relationship with colleagues and supervisors and personality at a very early stage. In many developing countries and Zambia in particular counselling of workers at higher institutions of learning is very important and perhaps is urgently needed due to its perceived implications for future life. These very counselling services should be well planed and should be equipped with qualified staff who will be able to assist and help in times of difficulties without worsening the situation by giving wrong advice. Rabnison (1987) states that guidance and counselling for individuals have always formed part of the strategy to handle people's issues and problems.

Counselling is said to have taken root after the second war in 1950s in America (Egan 1998). Most of the therapies that we hear about today trace their origins back to a handful of psychologists who developed techniques, theories and models which we refer to as "Schools

of Therapy” (Franken 1998). One such therapists is Sigmund Freud who developed a theory which later came to be called psychoanalysis which allow individuals to tell their problems to either a counsellor who is a trained person seeking professional help in problem solving and making right and sound decision for the betterment of life and health living. There has been many developments in counselling since then. A lot of research has taken place to help us have a better understanding of what makes human being think and act in the way they do, which is the behaviour of individuals, although in most organisation and communities little attention has been paid to this field which if given the support that it needs will be of great help both to workers, students and people in general, a very good example of neglect of this service is in Zambian schools where even the person in charge of the same is not regarded as one who helps the learning and teaching to be smooth.

The whole essence of offering counselling services to workers and individual is to instil a sense of discipline in them in order to uplift the way of looking and issues and enhance good performance for the well being of society and the world at large.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Workplace counselling has been proved to be of importance to workers in workplaces (Makinde, 1983). Despite counselling services being available at the University of Zambia through the UNZA Counselling Centre, issues of workers not satisfied with their careers, issues to do with personal and work related problems such as workers finding themselves in large financial constraints and low performance that continued to be experienced. However, it was not known whether the non-academic workers thought it necessary to seek the counselling services offered at UNZA. Hence there is need to assess the necessity of counselling services among UNZA non-academic workers.

## **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to assess necessity of workplace counselling among non-academic staff at University of Zambia (UNZA).

## **1.4 Study objectives**

The objective of the study was to explore and establish perceptions of non academic staff as regards the necessity of workplace counselling services at the University of Zambia to non academic staff. The objectives of the study were:

1. To establish how non-academic workers at UNZA perceive workplace counselling
2. To establish the counselling needs of non-academic staff at the University of Zambia
3. To establish how workplace counselling can help non-academic workers at UNZA

## **1.5 Study or Research questions**

The Study sought to answer the following questions

1. How do non-academic workers at UNZA perceive workplace counselling?
2. What are the counselling needs of non-academic workers at UNZA?
3. How can workplace counselling help non-academic workers at UNZA?

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

The study was vital or significant in many ways in that it will add to the already existing literature on counselling. Also the study will help to guide policy makers, counsellors and other stakeholders on issues concerning counselling of workers at institutions of higher learning such as the University of Zambia and additionally, assist the students in their study materials on guidance and counselling. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study will stimulate further research on guidance and counselling of staff at higher institutions of learning.

## **1.7 Definition of Key Concepts and Terms**

<b>Workplace</b>	-	this refers to the environment in which employees perform their duties and roles in an organisation
<b>Counselling</b>	-	is a mutual helping relationship between a person in need of help (client) and trained counsellor (Ndhlovu, 2015).

**Workplace Counselling** - is therapy offered to employees of a company, often through an employee assistance program, that provides employees with a safe place to discuss any issues that they are struggling with.

**Non Academic workers** - are professional employees who contribute very significantly to the success of any learning institution

### **1.8 Limitation of the Study**

Since this study was conducted at one institution (The University of Zambia) results may not be generalised.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Overview**

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature that is relevant to the present study. This section or chapter will present the literature review of the research starting from the global context and Zambia. Literature Review helps an individual to understand researches that have been conducted on the same topic by other people or researchers so as to have a broader understanding of the topic at hand. Literature review also identifies the gaps in the previous researches that were conducted and enlightens the researcher or a person carrying out a similar research with the methodologies that others employed in doing the same research.

### **2.1 How non academic staff perceive work place counselling world over**

In Kenya at the University of Nairobi, a study was carried out by Akoth (2014) on the understanding of workplace counselling among staff and he came up with the findings that there were several perceptions by staff on the concept of workplace counselling. Some of which were that it is a way of improving and solving the problems which affect the members of staff on a daily basis. His study results showed that staff perception of workplace counselling was not true to the concept of workplace counselling. However, there was a mix of accurate perceptions of workplace counselling and also misconceptions. The study found that the majority of staff in the organisation would utilise workplace counselling services if implemented at the University of Nairobi with the majority indicating they would prefer out-house counselling over in-house. Majority staff indicated that workplace counselling was an important service for the institution.

Much have been said on the subject or topic of employee well being and whilst we do not deny that this is a vital issue, we also see this as only one side of the coin where the usefulness of counselling is concerned. The provision of counselling services have represented a major institutional response to the psychological and emotional problems employees face at these workplaces that hinder their performance (Oher, 1999). Counselling according to Rosmala (2005), is a systematic process of helpful knowledge base on psychological counsellor towards helping employees or clients to understand themselves and their environment and thus be able to make right decisions and be able to solve their life problems and also accustom themselves well during their lifetime.

McLeod (2001) observed that this is a field in which research has been significantly constrained by commercial considerations and lack of political will from the authorities that be. There is also a great deal of sensitivity around confidentiality, the fear that management may learn that a person has been receiving counselling lessons concerning certain issues that have been affecting them and the reluctance by the people carrying out the researches to complete the same for others to be able to know the outcomes of the findings.

The introduction of a counselling service may begin to change the way that supervisors and other members of staff think and talk about emotional difficulties and personal problems. The acceptability of workplace counselling is certainly linked to shifts in the meaning of work and the movement away from collective to more individual modes of worker resistance. Workplace stress or problems are treatable and is highly responsive to treatment and this treatment is counselling that help individual cope with their problems and help them make decision that will better the work performance (Deale, 1997).

According to Joshi (2011) studies carried out in India indicated that human development models such as coaching mentoring and counselling are no longer restricted to non-corporate world. Nowadays these methods are a component of Human Resource Management of a corporate sector. Research studies show that few organisations are familiar with the importance of counselling in spite of counselling being an upcoming human resource approach like coaching and mentoring. Organisations are not aware that their employees will benefit from counselling even without employing a full time counsellor.

According to (Tony, 2005) managing the problem of poor work performance is a task that must be accomplished in an organisation. Although it can be challenging and confronting to employers, supervisors, there is need to address the problems and issues faced by the employees at workplaces, if the human organisation is to attain its set goals and objectives. Whenever performance problems arise in an organisation or institution, it is important to resolve such issues. The longer the problem is allowed to continue, the more difficult a satisfactory resolution becomes. Control and punishment are not the only ways to make people work or improve their work performance, workers work well if they are motivated in one way or another. A worker is a person or an individual whose attitude and effectiveness are conditioned by social attitudes of individual worker.

Where an employee's performance is suffering due to the employee's personal behaviour and work environment and un conducive conditions of service that de-motivates the employee, such kind of individuals need to be directed to qualified counsellors who can talk to them and see the way forward and if the problem persists, then stakeholders can come in an help. When an organisation or institution pays little or no attention to the welfare of its employees of staff, it is very likes that the organisation is bound to suffer reduced production and poor performance as people will be demoralised and demotivated because they think that their services are not appreciated and are not valued by the supervisors. This is because a lot of staff often face a lot of problems ranging from personal, family and work related. Work related problems are lack of promotion that is appreciation whenever a person is putting everything to help the organisation develop, poor salary that makes an individual not to meet the demands, also lack of good health facilities where these individual can run to in times of sickness, delayed salaries etc. That is why if personal problems become apparent and persistent, employers should refer the employee to experts for counselling and to identify and try to solve the causes or the root cause of such problems. To help with such matters confidential counselling services are designed to help employees deal with personal problems affecting their performance (Carroll, 1999).

In the past this topic counselling had been ignored because it was not seen as an important issue. Now that there has been a lot of issues and problems affecting employees especially in this era of HIV/AIDS high cost of living, it has become necessary to discuss and talk about the issues of workplace counselling and educate workers or individuals on the dangers of not opening up on issues affecting them. Recently, researchers have shown an increase interest in workplace counselling and have begun to search for what can be done to make this issue popular in these workplaces. Despite all these research being carried none had looked on how workplace counselling was perceived by non academic staff.

## **2.2 Counselling needs of workers in various workplaces**

A respectful workplace is one where you will find more engaged and productive employees. But there are times when workplaces also see a whole lot of conflicts such as strikes, protests, and employee turnovers, misunderstanding and a lot of abseentisms. All of such conflicts can be resolved with the issue of counselling and respect of each other at workplaces. Nyimbiri, 2016 did a research in Zambia and found that in assessing the role of employee support in enhancing staff wellbeing, managers provided employee support service related to employee

capacity growth, career development and to some extent disciplinary counselling. Satisfaction at work comes from having opportunities to receive appropriate respect from fellow workers and maintaining harmony with other staff at work (Cheh, 1993).

Lack of proper and effective workplace counselling procedures usually results into a number of problems for various institutions and organisations. These problems and challenges are mostly more costly and expensive to provide as compared to the cost that can be incurred if an organisation was to involve the services of counselling to its employees. An organisation or institution that does not involve or offer counselling services finds itself in problems where it will be transferring staff from department or school to another because this organisation or institution does not address the root cause of the problem that are faced by the department or unit where one individual is being transferred from and the issue at hand of counselling needs workers at the University of Zambia has not been researched on.

### **2.3 How workplace counselling can help non-academic workers at workplace**

Work place counselling is concerned with developing employee competence in order to achieve the goals that they intend to achieve in their lives. Generally supporting staff will not argue with management decisions as this will be seen as a loss of respect and termed as insubordination for their authorities or supervisors as such the juniors will pretend to understand all the instruction and regulations given to them by their superiors. This in itself has really made this category to be reluctant to ask to help whenever they feel that they do not understand what is meant by some rules and regulations and in turn they end up doing wrong things due to fear (Westwood, 1990).

In Malaysia, counselling was introduced after the employers came to recognise the importance of developing and preserving valuable human resources. Managers began to listen to the ideas of people, such as treat people as adults, treat them as partners with dignity and respect not as capital spending and automation as the primary source of productivity gains. The research also dealt with personal problems that focused on employees' mental and physical health and dealt with other personal problems that might even indirectly affect job performance. There were also other programmes that dealt with career developments which used assessment, counselling, planning, and training to help individuals make and act on career decisions within the content of the organisation's human resources plans, (Tham, 1998).

Several studies have examined the effects of workplace counselling on employee levels of stress and well being. It seems reasonable to assume that workplace counselling might have a positive impact on the meaning of work, in terms of variables such as job satisfaction, motivation, relationships with colleagues, perceptions of the organisation as a source of stress and organisation commitment (McLeod, 2001).

According to Joshi (2011) a primary research study was done in Mumbai a city in India at a manufacturing company which had fine manufacturing sites across the country and four sales divisions. The purpose of the research was to find out whether there was a need for employee counselling at the company.

Cheh (1993) observed that generally, in any organisation an average of about 10% of the employees are incapacitated by acute or chronic personal problems such as family and marital problems, financial difficulties, legal problems, drug and alcohol abuse, emotional upsets or career problems. All these affect work performance. Other studies also show that employees have three times as many accidents, four times the rate of absenteeism, make more health insurance claims and more likely to make mistakes at their work and take sick leave under such circumstances. These add on to the loss of work time and productivity for the organisation. It was therefore, evident that there was real need for employee counselling programmes to be implemented in the workplace to address the various social and psychological problems being faced by the Malaysian workforce. The report further went on to state that employee counselling was to be a major activity in the promotion of employee development and stressed that supervisors and managers should be engaged in formal counselling sessions for the purpose of handling grievances, dealing with discipline matters and improving performance and also helping employees in career development. Just like the Malaysian workforce also the University of Zambia non academic workforce need help for the various problems that they face at work which need addressing and research which was yet to be done.

In Zambia, although no standards in workplace counselling existed such as secure rooms, procedure for counselling and specialised staff, the study that was carried out at Chainama Hills Hospital concluded that workplace counselling existed in the institutions because employees indicated that they received services which could be described as workplace

counselling. This study, however, demonstrated that for workplace services to qualify as workplace counselling, there should be set standards that secure the confidentiality of information as defined in the field of counselling. It is argued that workplace counselling should focus on employee welfare and link employee support to improved job performance. In this regard, although this study deduced that workplace counselling existed in the institutions, the services did not meet standards of workplace counselling (Nyimbiri, 2016).

## **2.4 Summary of Literature Review**

From the literature review, it is viewed through the studies that workplace counselling had an influence on workers or employees at workplaces. It is through workplace counselling that it is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of workplace counselling in order to maintain high standards, good values and good practices at these places of work. The studies that have been done before, suggests that counselling is generally effective in alleviating psychological problems. It seems reasonable to assume that workplace counselling might have a positive impact on the meaning of work, in terms of variables such as job satisfaction, motivation, relationships with colleagues and supervisors (Akoth, 2014).

However, there are many questions that are asked to tried and found out whether the workplace counselling worked by addressing employees' needs. It was evident from the literature looked at that there was still no information on how non academic workers perceive workplace counselling, counselling needs of non academic workers and how workplace counselling could help non academic staff at the University of Zambia and this was what prompted the researcher to do a research on the said topic.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter covered the research design that was used by the researcher and the procedures in the collection of data. It also presented the study area, study population, study sample, data collection procedure, data collection instruments and data analysis procedure.

### **3.1 Research Design**

Gilham (2000) defines a research design as the method to be used in gathering relevant data that answers a researcher's questions. The research used descriptive research design. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to collect data in this study because it was primarily exploratory research.

### **3.2 Study Area and Population**

The target area was the University of Zambia and population for this research was the non academic staff at the same Institution and the Heads of Departments who the close supervisors for these non academic staff. The reason for selection of the population to the study was to help in establishing the necessity of workplace counselling.

### **3.3 Study Sample**

The research sample size was 80 of the non academic staff at the University of Zambia. The sample size selected were utilised as the basis views of the workplace counselling to non academic staff at the University of Zambia. It was hoped that the information that were collected from the selected group was to help to establish the necessity of workplace counselling.

### **3.4 Sampling Techniques**

In study Simple Random and Purposive Sampling Techniques were used.

### **Simple Random Sampling Procedure**

Simple Random sampling was used to allow equal chance to every element in the study to be part of the sample. For example, in this study 70 non academic staff had equal chances of getting selected into the sample.

### **Purposive Sampling Procedure**

Purposive Sampling was also used. The 10 Heads of Department were chosen purposively. This was because they were the only ones who could provide required data for the study.

## **3.5 Research Instruments**

According to Bowling (2009) for the research to be dependable, it must show that if the same research was to be conducted elsewhere it would obtain similar results. For this to be achieved correct research instruments should be used. The study used both the questionnaire and the interview guide to collect data from the non academic staff.

### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from the 70 non academic staff.

### **3.5.2 Interview Guide**

The interview guide is an instrument used to collect qualitative data. This instrument was used on 10 selected Heads of Department to collect data on how non academic staff perceived workplace counselling, their counselling needs and how workplace counselling can help them.

## **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

Questionnaires were distributed to the 70 non academic staff and later collected. Interviews were also conducted with the Heads of Department to collect qualitative data.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The study was both quantitative and qualitative study whose desire was to establish the necessity of workplace counselling to non academic staff at the University of Zambia. To attain this, the qualitative data was analysed by using thematic analysis which is the pinpointing and recording of themes from the data collected. Quantitative data was analysed by used of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS was chosen to help in providing descriptive statistics which were presented in pie charts and bar charts.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

### **4.0 Introduction**

The chapter presents the study findings with focus on the study questions of the study. The data collected was qualitative and quantitative in nature. The objectives of the study were:

1. To establish how non-academic workers at UNZA perceive workplace counselling?
2. To establish the counselling needs of non-academic staff at the University of Zambia
3. To find out how workplace counselling can help non-academic workers at UNZA

The main purpose of the study was to establish whether the workplace counselling services were a necessity to the non academic staff at the University of Zambia. Therefore, the study began by establishing or asking the staff how they understood workplace counselling in their own view. The findings established that most non academic workers understood workplace counselling. The study collected data from both males and females. From the data collected the study showed that males were more than the females as shown.

In this study, 80 respondents participated in the study representing 44 males signifying 55% and 36 females indicating 45% of the total representation. The participants were both non academic staff and Heads of Department.

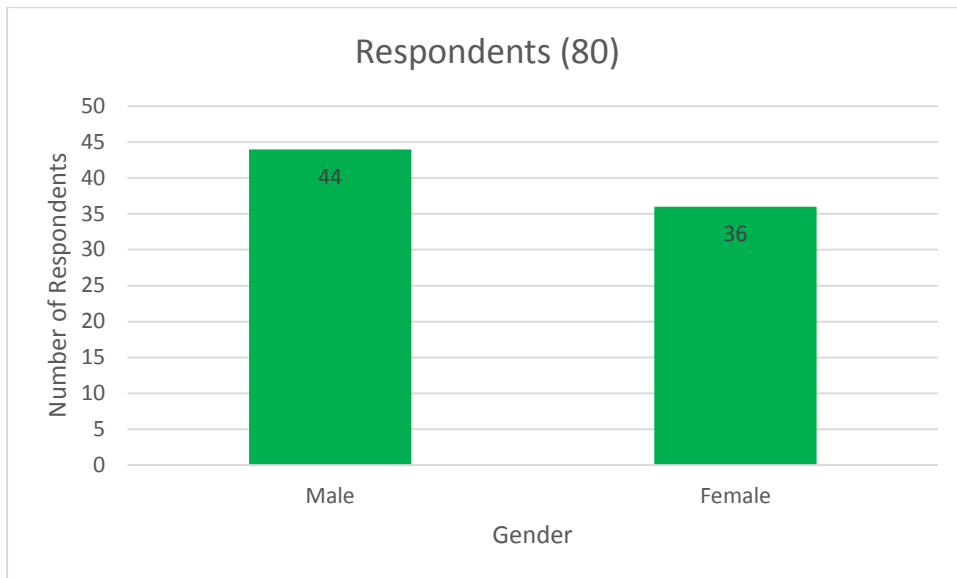


Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Number of Respondents (source, field data 2018)

The Study observed that there were disparities in the way respondents answered the research question. This variation was based on Gender as indicated the figure above. The study established that out of the 80 respondents that were targeted, 44 males respondents answered the questionnaires and 36 females.

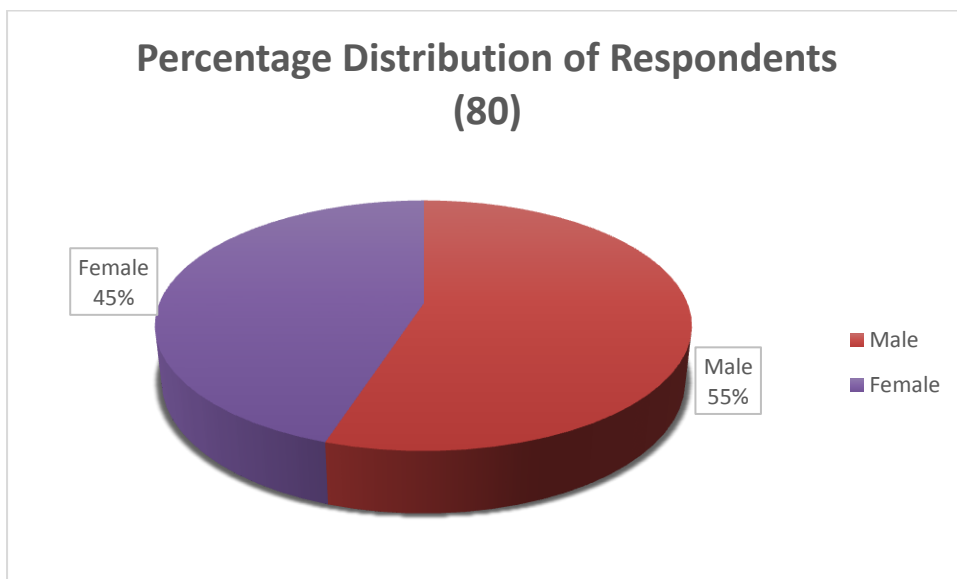


Figure 2: Percentage Gender Distribution of Respondents (source, field data 2018)

The figure above shows the percentage distribution based on gender. This shows the percentage of males that took part in the study and the percentage of females. The study showed that out of the population of 80 respondents, 45% were females and 55% were males

#### 4.1 How non-academic workers at UNZA perceive workplace counselling

The study sought to establish how non academic workers perceived workplace counselling at workplace. On the first objective which was to establish how non academic workers perceive workplace counselling. The study found that there was a mixture of responses from the respondents. The figure 3 below shows the responses of both females and males on the understanding of workplace counselling. 15 males and 12 females showed that they had a clear understating according to the findings. Whereas 22 males and 18 females indicated that they had no concrete understanding of workplace counselling while 7 males and 6 females indicated that they did not even have an idea or any understanding.

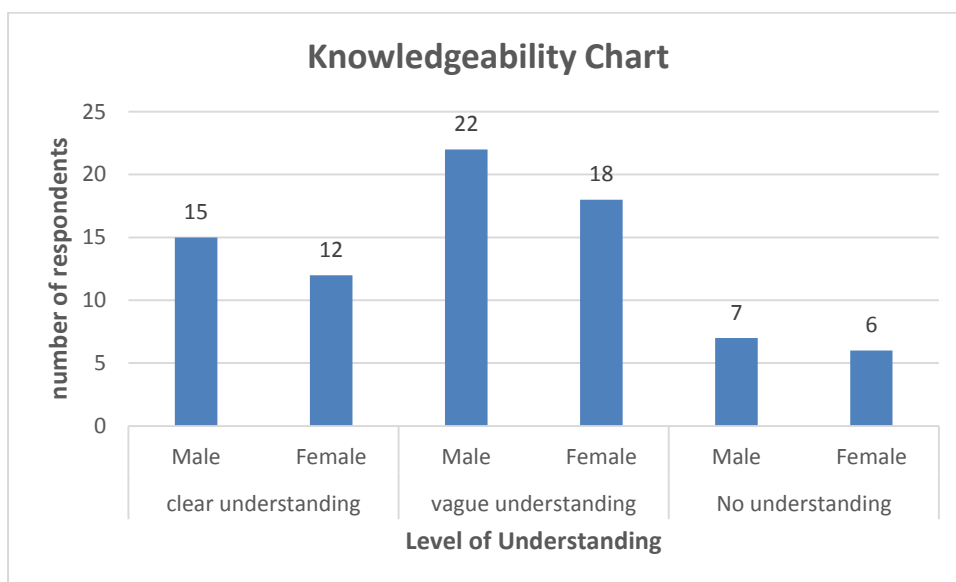


Figure 3: Knowledgeability bar chart (Source, field data 2018)

Figure 4 below summarises the overall knowledgeability among the respondents that shows 27 respondents had a clear understanding while 40 had a scant understanding of workplace counselling and 13 respondents had no idea about workplace counselling.

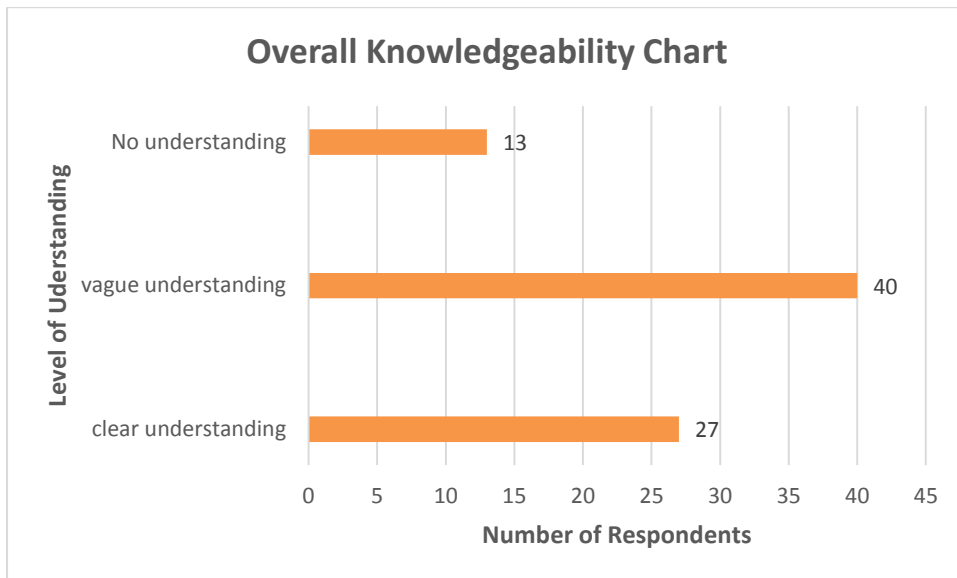


Figure 4: Overall Knowledgeability bar chart (Source, field data 2018)

Figure 5 below shows the distribution of respondents in percentages. The respondents that indicated clear understanding was represented by 34% and those that indicated that they did not have a concrete understanding were formed 50% while those that had not understanding or idea of workplace counselling formed 16%.

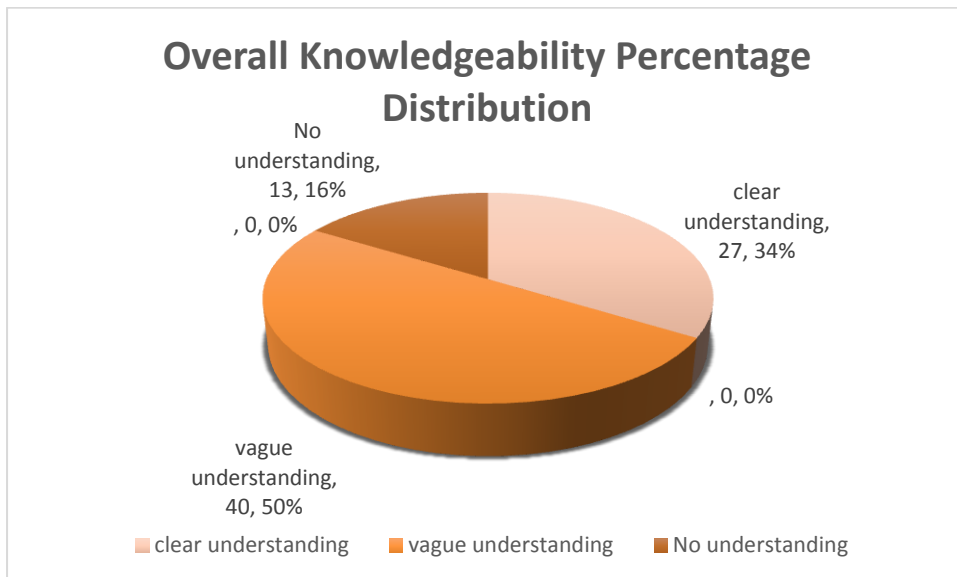


Figure 5: Overall Knowledgeability Percentage (Source, field data 2018)

It was established that there were many responses for perceptions of workplace counselling from the study that showed that some of the workers felt that workplace counselling is not necessary since they did not have psychological problems. In their responses they indicated

that this only applies or can best be offered to people with psychological problems such as mental health. Participants who answered the questionnaire point out that:

*“Workplace counselling is counselling which involves provision of professional assistance and guidance in resolving personal or psychological problems. This form of counselling targets employees and the numerous problems they face with regard to their work.”*

*“Work place counselling is the service offered to workers”* whereas other respondents indicate that *“ it is a service offered to people with psychological problems”*. (participant)

*“I have no psychological problems therefore I do not need counselling unless those people with psychological problems. So I do not think it necessary, no.”* (participant)

Other participant interviewed pointed out that:

*“I understand workplace counselling as counselling given to workers where you have a guidance by the system or counselling offered to workers with personal problems or professional matters, but I don’t have a concrete understanding of it because it is not a common phenomena at this institution even in our school..Like I have said, I have been at the institution for 12 years, I have never head of this service.*

*Other participants said: Workplace counselling, do I even have an idea about workplace counselling, I really have no idea! unless may be I just give it a guess. Otherwise it is something I don’t even think about it has not even crossed my mind. I even know it exists at UNZA. I thought our counselling centre only deals with students.*

In this vain, the study established that workers showed how they perceived or viewed workplace counselling in their own understanding. This can be attested by the figures below which shows the actual responses of the views of workers concerning workplace counselling were. From the aforementioned, the study found that there were a lot of work that the

Counselling Centre of the University of Zambia had to do to make workers aware about their services and make them accessible to the workers. Both Management and Counselling Centre should provide information on the services being offered to the workers at the counselling centre and the Counselling centre itself should be visible to the University of Zambia working community other than concentrating on the students needs only.

However, it was surprising to note that most of the participants perceived or viewed that the counselling being offered at the institution were not for workers but students and that they expressed ignorance about the existence of the services.

#### 4.2 Counselling needs of non academic workers at workplaces

The study also sought to establish the needs workplace counselling can address at a workplace. Figure 6 shows the distribution of respondents' responses on the counselling need of workers at the University of Zambia that can be addressed by workplace counselling. 9 of the respondents indicated that there were no needs that counselling can address since they had no psychological problems. 32 of the respondents indicated work related problems but did not specify them while 39 respondents indicated stress, alcohol, HIV/IDS and many other needs they wanted workplace counselling to address. From the responses the study established that the workers had a lot of needs that needed the services of workplace counselling.

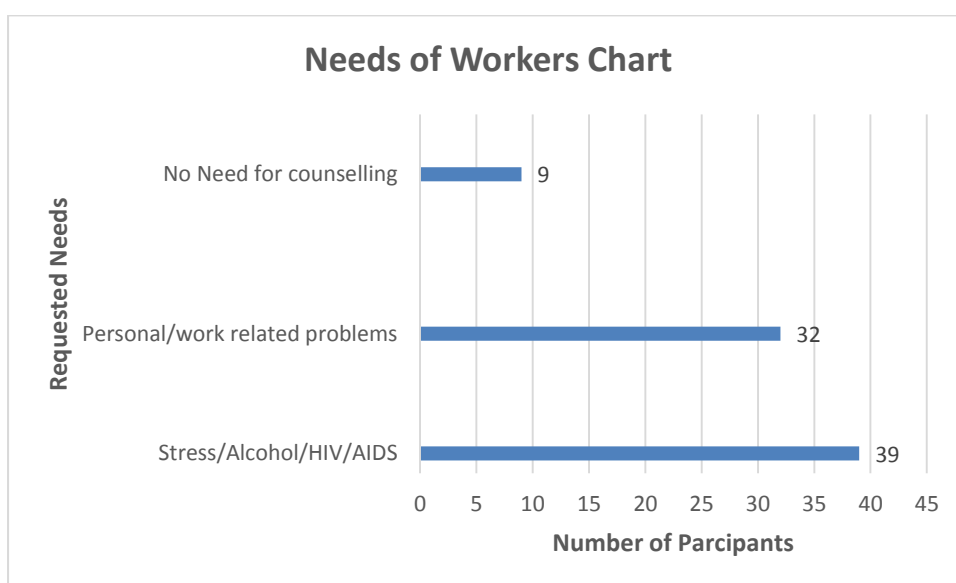


Figure 6: Needs of Workers chart (Source, field data 2018)

Figure 7 below shows the distribution in responses by percentage. 11% indicated that there was no need of workplace counselling, 40% indicated personal problems and work related while 49% indicated stress, alcohol, HIV/AIDS and many more specific general problems.

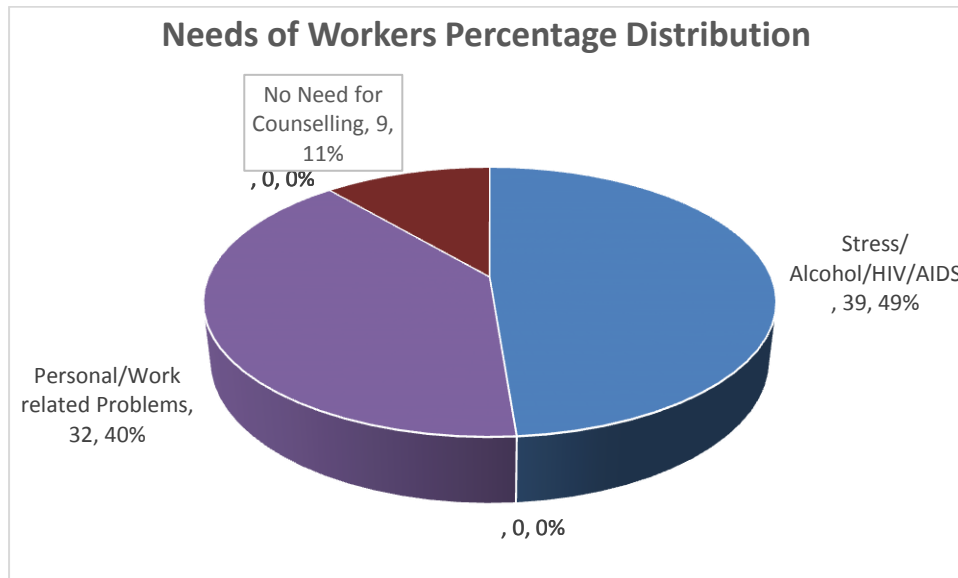


Figure 7: Needs of Workers Percentage Distribution, (Source, field data 2018)

The study established that there were many needs that non academic workers actually not only non academics workers but even the academic staff had needs that workplace counselling could address.

Further in the participants responses both from the questionnaires and interview guide the following are some of the responses indicated by participants as they answered the questionnaires and the interview:

*“To counsel the workers on how to change their attitude towards work. Most workers report late and knock off early before 17:00 hours. Stress, accountability, volatile situation were some of the needs that can be handled by workplace counselling service”.*

Further in the responses, on counselling needs of non academic staff at a workplace, some of the respondents who were interviewed stated that among the needs they felt workplace counselling should address were:

*“Discrimination, which according to the respondent, workers are discriminated based on gender or age. If a person is young, may be that person can be discriminated based on that. He or she might have good ideas but because they are young people might not take their ideas seriously. Also workers not being satisfied. One thinks is putting in more but he or she might see that they are not appreciated that person might need counselling”.* (respondent from an interview guide)

*“Conflicts and personal problems are some of the needs that workplace counselling can handle at a workplace.”* (Participant)

Among the respondents who answered the questionnaire some of them said:

*“Alcoholism, HIV/AIDS, financial problems, work relationships between the supervisors and the workers, Being trustworthy, Punctuality, develop a transparent, cordial relationship with staff, health problems, marriage problems and Debt management.*

#### **4.3 How workplace counselling can help non-academic workers at workplace.**

The study indicated that out of 80 participants, 67 of the respondents indicated that workplace counselling can help workers at the University of Zambia representing 84% whereas 13 of the respondents indicated that they were not very sure of the benefits of workplace counselling thus representing 16% of the participants. The figure below shows the distribution of the responses according to the participants.

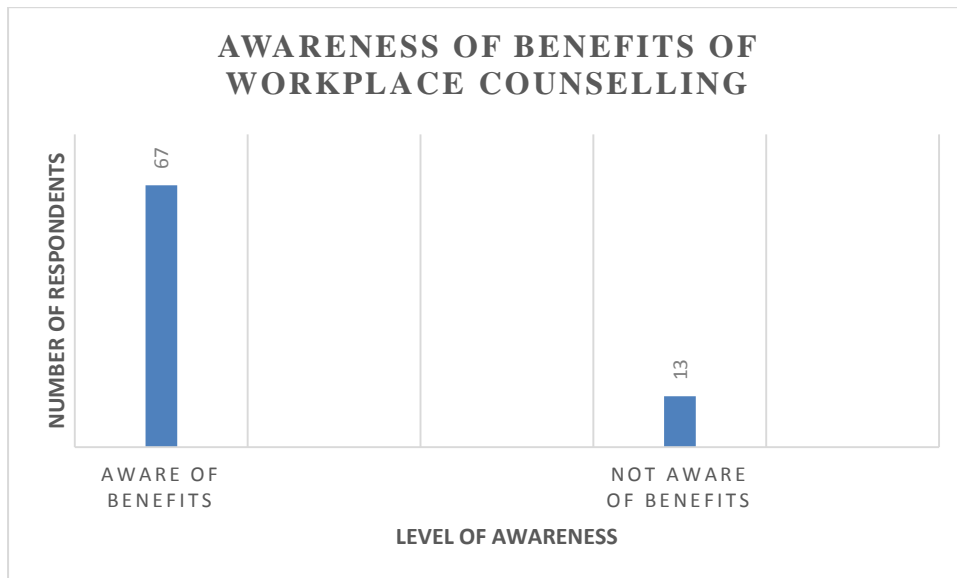


Figure 8: Awareness of Benefits of workplace Counselling, (Source, field data 2018)

The study found that most of the workers believed that workplace counselling is helpful to workers. This was arrived at by taking the number of respondents who had a clear understanding of workplace and those who had a scant understating put together they formed 67 culminating into 84% while those who did not have any idea of the workplace counselling were 13 thus forming 16% as show in the figure below.

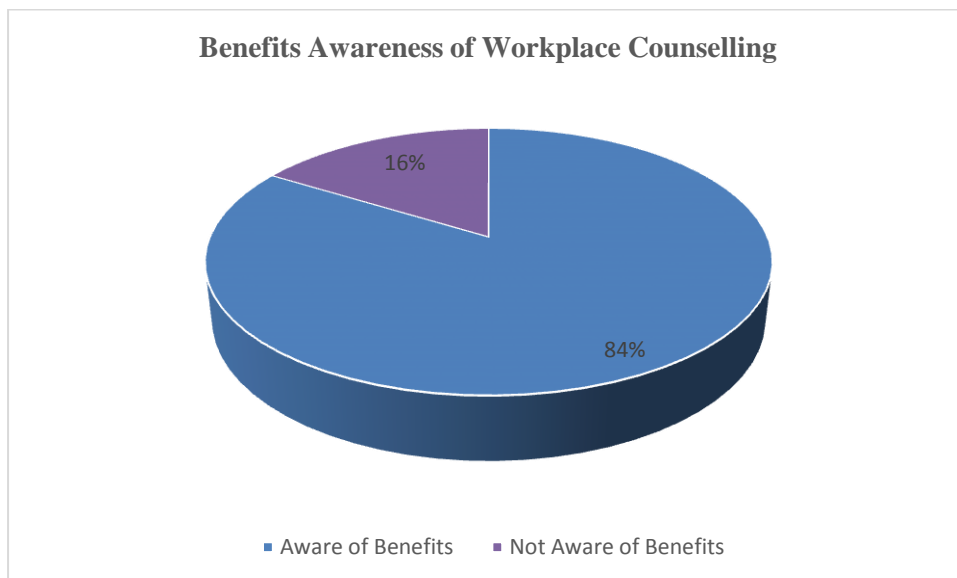


Figure 9: Benefits Awareness of Workplace Counselling, (Source, field 2018)

The study sought to establish how workplace counselling services were of help to the non academic workers at the University of Zambia. The findings from the study were that the services could be of help to workers if these services were visible to the workers. Also if the services were well marketed and accessible to workers, benefits are there. The responses of some of the participants were as follows:

*“Workers will begin to look at issues differently. This would help a person know that he or she is not alone in this situation and burdens like that will become lighter and in the end empower the workers and they will begin to perform well at work. This can only be achieved if counselling centre marketed and publicity could be enhanced so that every worker even academic staff know that counselling services offered at the Institution are accessed by staff not only students. Even myself Head of Department I do not know that the services offered at counselling centre can also be accessed by us”*(Participant).

Further other responses pointed out that:

*Both Management and workers can be helped by accessing the counselling services offered at a workplace.* (Participant)

This is similar to the findings of the research done by McLeod (2003) which showed that workplace counselling “offer the employer a service that is valued by employees and that has potential for savings by reducing sickness, absenteeism take pressure off Managers through the availability of a constructive means of dealing with difficult staff or situations and contribute to its reputation as a caring employer”.

Most of the participants indicated that: workplace counselling can help the workers at the institution if only this service can be properly advertised. But as it is here, nothing so far has been done to make workers aware that this service is available. While the other respondents said that workplace counselling can help workers improve their work performance and address most of their personal pressing issues that might affect the work.

By helping to minimise the conflicts that management and workers experience especially issues to do with conditions of service and the breakdown in the communication between

Management and the workers. Counselling services help a lot in this way, because once the workers are counselled then an amicable solution is found and thus helping in harmonising relationships among the workers. Resolving things amicably, failure to execute the jobs diligently workplace counselling can come in to sort out such issue. Sit them down and sort out such issues for those people who might fall into depression.

*Many are the times when colleagues fall in depression or have pressing issues, I have never heard of any person saying that they had visited the counselling centre. All what comes out is people start asking that where is the family or where are his children to help this person. Issues like depression, stress, conflicts can be resolved nicely by professionals and psychologically qualified counsellors, and promote peace in the workplace and later lead to a harmoniously type of situation and positive relationship between workers. Management is very silent on this one. They need to come out strongly and inform us that such services are important and that they are accessible to all.(Participant)*

The above responses indicated that the workers at the University of Zambia appreciated the services of workplace counselling, and they were willing to access them as long as there was sensitization of the same. They also indicated that they were in appreciation of these services knowing the impact or the gravity of what role counselling plays in harmonising situations and mitigating the many problems faced in their day to day activities at work places if offered correctly to individuals. These responses show similarity with what researchers identify as workplace counselling. In their paper, does workplace counselling work? McLeod and Henderson (2003) see work place counselling as a service that offers employees a facility that is confidential, easily accessed, provides a properly qualified and supervised practitioner, does not raise the threat of a diagnosis of psychiatric disorder, and promises to alleviate distress within a reasonably short period of time.

On the other hand, a few of the respondents indicated that it is not beneficial since even management does not even take up the responsibility of informing the workers about the services, meaning there is need to sensitize people and also need to market properly the services at the University of Zambia for the full benefit to be actualised.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.0 Introduction**

The Chapter discusses the findings of the study which sought to establish the perception of workplace counselling by non academic staff, their counselling needs and how counselling can help them at the University of Zambia.

The study revealed that among the respondents that participated, 27 had a clear understanding or perception of workplace counselling while 40 had a scant understanding and 13 had not idea about workplace counselling at the University of Zambia. This is similar with the findings of a study that was carried out by Akoth, (2014) on the understanding of workplace counselling among staff. He came up with the findings that there were several perceptions by staff on the concept of workplace counselling. Some of which were that it is a way of improving and solving the problems which affect the members of staff on a daily basis. His study results showed that staff perception of workplace counselling was not true to the concept of workplace counselling. However, there was a mix of accurate perceptions of workplace counselling and also misconceptions.

Further from the findings of the study on the counselling needs of the non academic staff, most respondents were of the view that there are a lot of counselling needs that needed the services of workplace counselling. These include stress, alcohol, HIV/AIDS and many more specific general problems. These findings agree with that of Cheh, 2003, stating that it was evident that there was real need for employee counselling programmes to be implemented in the workplace to address the various social and psychological problems being faced by the Malaysian workforce. The report further went on to state that employee counselling was to be a major activity in the promotion of employee development and stressed that supervisors and managers should be engaged in formal counselling sessions for the purpose of handling grievances, dealing with discipline matters and improving performance and also helping employees in career development.

As regard work place counselling, this help workers to handle their day to day problems and enable them to face the issues as they come. This can be achieved only if the counselling services could be publicised by both management and the counselling centre at the University of Zambia. The revelations in the study are in line with the findings of McLeod (2001) in

counselling in the workplace which states; counselling helps to manage stress. From the participants' answers, the study indicated that the participants had a lot of needs that needed the services of a qualified counsellor from the work place to manage their needs and help them make right decisions so as to foster production in an organisation.

On the work place counselling can help the non academic staff at the University of Zambia, the study reveals that the non academic staff have not utilised fully the counselling services offered at the institution. As such they have not been helped much the services even though most respondents were of the view that they could have been helped a lot by the service. From the afore said, it could be assumed that both the University Management and the University of Zambia Counselling Centre have not done much in sensitizing the people on what services are offered and the benefits that are there for them.

## **CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.0 Introduction**

The purpose of the study was to establish how the non academic staff viewed workplace counselling at the University of Zambia. The study also presented the views of needs that the staff at the University of Zambia felt should be addressed by workplace counselling. This chapter presents the summary of findings of the study, conclusion and recommendations drawn from what the respondents suggested and felt should be done.

### **6.1 Summary of Findings**

#### **How non-academic workers at UNZA perceive workplace counselling**

The study sought to establish the perception of workplace counselling by non academic staff at the University of Zambia. The study was guided by the three research questions: to establish how non academic workers at the University of Zambia perceive workplace counselling. The study found out that most workers at the University of Zambia had a clear understanding of the workplace counselling as a counselling that involves the provision of professional assistance and guidance in resolving personal or psychological problems and that it targets employees and their numerous problems they face with regards to their work. Others have a scant knowledge of the workplace counselling while a few expressed ignorance about the service and that they did not even think it was necessary to offer it at the higher institution of learning like UNZA because in their opinion the service is offered to the people with psychological problems. Others understood it to be counselling offered to the people who cannot make decision on their own.

### **6.2 Counselling needs of non-academic staff at the University of Zambia**

On the other hand, the study sought to establish the counselling needs of these workers, it was established that they had a lot of needs which counselling services at a workplace needed to attend to. They identified a lot of needs some of which were personal issues, work related and career related need. This according to literature review of Cheh, 1993 that also shows that employees have three times as many accidents, four times the rate of absenteeism, make more health insurance claims and more likely to make mistakes at their work and take sick

leave under such circumstances. These add on to the loss of work time and productivity for the organisation. It was therefore, evident that there was real need for employee counselling programmes to be implemented in the workplace to address the various social and psychological problems being faced by the Malaysian workforce. The only barrier for the staff in accessing these was lack of confidentiality by the people offering the services. Workers thought that once they accessed this service at a workplace, everybody will hear about the problem.

### **6.3. How workplace counselling can help non-academic workers at UNZA**

Further in terms of findings the study sought to establish how workplace counselling can help non academic staff at the University of Zambia, What come out strongly was that workplace counselling could be of help when offered nicely and properly. By so doing, it can promote harmony at the institution and that they can also add to the good performance of the students thus enhance productivity and improve the work relationship among the non academic staff. Workplace counselling results of this study indicates that it is a very good service when offered to workers and properly advertised. There are long term benefits of the services both to workers and management in that it reduces chances of workers falling into depression, being stress and bring harmony and positive relationship among workers this is in accordance with the Cheh, 1993. The study's findings at the University of Zambia indicating that workers agree to it that workplace counselling is helpful; is in line with McLeod which showed that it seems reasonable to assume that workplace counselling might have a positive impact on the meaning of work, in terms of variables such as job satisfaction, motivation, relationships with colleagues, perceptions of the organisation as a source of stress and organisation commitment (McLeod, 2001).

This is in line with Joshi (2011) whose findings indicated that a primary research study that was done in Mumbai a city in India at a manufacturing company which had fine manufacturing sites across the country and four sales divisions. The purpose of the research was to find out whether there was a need for employee counselling at the company.

Further the study done at the University of Zambia found out that the majority of the sample responded positively to the use of workplace counselling though emphasis was on lack of

awareness of the services and preference for outside counselling due to issues to do with confidentiality and stigmatisation. The study further established that staff had interest in accessing the facilitate as long as the University of Zambia Counselling centre worked at marketing itself to the general populace. The study managed to distribute 80 questionnaires which were collected for data analysis and 10 interview guide. Out of the 80 respondents that participated in the study, 44 were males and 36 were females representing 55 percent males and 45 percent females.

#### **6.4 Conclusions**

The study found that the staff had a positive view of the workplace counselling. Therefore, the study concludes that there is a necessity for offering workplace counselling. However, there is need for publicity and sensitization of the services by both Management of the University of Zambia and the Counselling Centre in order for staff to be able to access these services. In addition, there is need for assurance that whenever the staff accesses these services confidentiality will be paramount and that there will be no need of exposure especially when it came to matters affecting the Institution or some of the Supervisors. Further discrimination and stigmatisation attached to counselling should not be there or should be avoided by all means so that workers freely access the service in order to improve their livelihood and work performance thus removing the notion that only people with psychological problems, those that are weak and cannot make their own decisions or those who are sick can access the service. Counselling is for all the people in that these workers experience a lot of problems that need sharing with qualified personnel in the field of counselling so that correct decision are made.

The study also found out that despite the counselling centre being established at the University of Zambia for so many years now, none of the workers have used the services offered due to limited information. Therefore, workers run to their colleagues to seek help instead of the centre.

## 6.5 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations;

- Management should make known the services of the counselling centre to workers at the point of employment and make assurance that confidentiality will be the order of the day and that the people offering these services are qualified staff who take into consideration all the ethics of counselling and the code of conduct. Emphasis should be that these services are free and anyone is free to access them without any problems.
- Unza radio should be used to advertise and market the services offered in order for workers to be aware that the services being offered are not just for students but for everyone. Posters, pamphlets, brochures and public gatherings and recreation days should also be used to inform the masses about the service offered at the counselling centre to increase awareness.
- Management should take it upon themselves to find out what some of the barriers to accessing these services are so that it can help the workers solve or find help on some of the needs and challenges they are facing so as to reduce on some of these misunderstanding among workers and the huge financial debts that some find themselves in. Therefore staff will find it easy to suggest to colleagues to seek the help of the counsellors whenever they experiences pressing matters or matter related to work unlike what is prevailing.
- Whenever there are fairs and shows like the Agricultural Shows and Trade Fair, whoever goes to exhibit at these shows should publicise the services so that even the outsiders can have access to the service and by so doing even some of the staff at the institution watching or attending these shows would come to know about it.
- Further there is need to carryout future research to find out barriers to accessing workplace counselling at the University of Zambia and also to establish the effectiveness of the service at the same institution

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## **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

1. In your view, what is workplace counselling?
2. What are some of the problems or issues that workplace counselling can deal with at a workplace?
3. Do you think the non academic staff do utilize counselling services offered by UNZA?
4. What are some of the barriers that enable the non academic staff not to utilise these services?
5. What benefits do non academic staff get from these services if at all they utilise them?
6. How are staff made aware of the service at the Institution?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA**  
**AND**  
**ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NON ACADEMIC STAFF**

Dear Respondent

I am a Postgraduate student at the University of Zambia (UNZA) in collaboration with Zimbabwe Open University pursuing a Master of Science in Counselling. As part of the fulfilment for this programme, I am conducting a research on Workplace Counselling for Non Academic Staff at the University of Zambia.

I would appreciate if you kindly fill in this questionnaire. The Information provided will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity and will only be used for the purpose of this research and the information will only be accessed by the Researcher.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

You are not expected to indicate your name or the name of any other person on any part of the questionnaire.

Before you proceed with the answering of the items in this questionnaire, kindly read carefully and under the questions.

## Background Information

Tick what is appropriate

1. Gender

Male [    ]

Female [    ]

## Section A

2. What do you understand by workplace counselling?

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3. What are the needs that you think workplace counselling should be dealing with?

.....

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4. What do you think of workplace counselling, is it helpful to workers?

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5. What problems would you think counselling should be dealing with?

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.....

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6. Given an opportunity would you seek workplace counselling?

Yes [    ]

No [    ]

Not sure [    ]

7. If the answer is Yes or No, explain why you have or have not used the services.

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. Are you aware of workplace counselling services at UNZA?

Yes [    ]

No [    ]

## Section B

9. Tick what is appropriate from the statements below by agreeing or disagreeing

a. Workplace counselling is sign of good working conditions

Strongly agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

b. Workplace counselling is a counselling for employees with person and work related issues and problems

Strongly agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

c. Workplace counselling shows that the Institution cares for its employees

Strongly agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

d. Every Institution just need to have this service for it employees

Strongly agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

## Section C

10. Counselling is helpful to the Staff at UNZA?

Strongly agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

11. Workplace counselling beneficial to the member of staff?

Strongly agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

12. Do you agree or disagree with the statements below on some of the benefits of workplace counselling?

a. It improves relationship among its member

Strongly agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

b. Improves performance of its members

Strongly agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

c. Work life is improved

Strongly agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

d. Helps employees to cope with their work and family issues

Strongly agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

e. Counselling helps employees defining their problems

Strongly agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

13. In your own view what factors limits employees from accessing or using this service at UNZA?

.....

.....

.....

14. Do you think staff experience a lot of work related problems at UNZA?

Strongly Agree [    ]

Agree [    ]

Strongly disagree [    ]

Disagree [    ]

15. What suggestions would you make for the this service to be properly offered at UNZA

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.....

16. What is done to make staff aware of workplace counselling at UNZA?

.....

.....

.....

***Thank you for participating in this research***