

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

Education serves as a powerful instrument for societal transformation. It plays a vital role in imparting knowledge, skills, and information, while simultaneously preparing individuals to understand their rights and responsibilities within society and the nation. Beyond individual growth, education sustains economic, social, and cultural prosperity and fosters international collaboration through mutual tolerance and understanding (Karthikeyan, 2015). Developed nations enjoy prosperity partly due to their robust education systems, which reduce poverty, inequality, and lay the foundation for sustained economic success (World Bank, 2016). In contrast, less developed nations often struggle, in part due to the inadequacies of their education systems (Abugieye, 2010). Therefore, education is indispensable as it serves as the cornerstone for developing a nation's human resources (Prasad & Gupta, 2020).

As Asare (2011) states, "A sound education structure leads to an enlightened society and manpower development, which is able to lead a crusade for social transformation and economic progress". Education equips both teachers and students with a sense of agency, purpose, and the skills required to positively influence their lives and the lives of others (Karthikeyan, 2015). It is a critical component in the modern, technological, and industrialised world (Asare & Nti, 2014), and fosters the ability to combat societal issues such as violence, injustice, and corruption (Prasad & Gupta, 2020). In contemporary society, people with access to quality education are better equipped to achieve self-sufficiency, address challenges effectively, and contribute to poverty eradication globally (Asare & Nti, 2014).

However, despite the numerous benefits of education, university students and teachers in Ghana face a variety of challenges (Atta-Frimpong, 2013). Students often encounter educational, vocational, and personal/social problems, while teachers face predominantly personal and social issues. For instance, many students in Ghanaian universities grapple with problems such as poor programme choices, lack of relevant educational information, gender stereotyping in subject selection, ineffective note-taking, bad study habits, exam difficulties, and a lack of individuals to whom they can confide their concerns (Salawu, 2008).

Additionally, vocational challenges, such as career indecision and lack of information about their abilities and interests, further exacerbate their difficulties (Salawu, 2008).

In addition to academic and vocational concerns, students and teachers in Ghanaian universities also face personal challenges. These include mental health issues such as anxiety, stress, depression, suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, and low self-esteem (Salawu, 2008). While some of these problems are mild, others can have serious implications for individuals and society (Ocansey, 2018). The emotional strain caused by these challenges poses a significant threat to both the students and society at large, with far-reaching effects on their overall well-being and academic performance. As a result, these issues are a source of concern for parents and educational stakeholders (Ocansey, 2018).

In response to these challenges, university institutions are under pressure to provide effective solutions and support services that can help students overcome their academic, vocational, and personal difficulties (Ocansey, 2018). To address these concerns, the government of Ghana has implemented educational policies promoting the establishment of guidance and counselling services at all educational levels, including universities (Essuman, 2015). These policies ensure that guidance and counselling centres are integrated into the university education system to provide essential support to students and teachers.

Guidance and counselling centres play a crucial role in supporting students' academic, vocational, and personal development. These centres provide professional advice to students, helping them navigate educational decisions and personal challenges (Atta-Frimpong, 2013, as cited in Taylor & Buku, 2006). Ignoring the importance of guidance and counselling within a university setting can lead to significant disruptions in the educational system, resulting in wastage and disorder (Ocansey, 2018). As a result, many universities in Ghana have established guidance and counselling centres to offer academic, vocational, and moral guidance to students, as well as social and personal support to teachers (Campbell & Nutt, 2008; Ocansey, 2018).

Educational guidance and counselling services assist students in making critical decisions about their academic journeys, including selecting programmes and courses, and preparing them for future educational opportunities (Eyo, Joshua & Esuong, 2010; Egbo, 2015). These services provide students with preventive, developmental, and curative support, helping them create realistic educational plans for their future. Additionally, vocational guidance and counselling ensure that students make informed career choices, based on a thorough

understanding of their strengths, interests, and available career opportunities (Taylor & Buku, 2006). Vocational guidance should be based on accurate self-knowledge and up-to-date career information to help students align their aspirations with suitable employment opportunities.

Furthermore, guidance counsellors in universities work to identify the factors that influence students' career choices and interests. By applying the principles of vocational guidance and counselling, they assist students in making informed decisions about their future careers (Lunenburg, 2010). As a result, many students actively seek help from guidance and counselling centres to address their concerns and find solutions to their challenges.

In addition to academic and vocational guidance, counsellors are essential in helping both students and teachers address personal and social issues. Counsellors play a crucial role in identifying the root causes, symptoms, and signs of various problems affecting university community members. By providing appropriate support and intervention, counsellors help prevent disruptions, violence, and other negative behaviours within the educational environment (Lunenburg, 2010; Sultana & Watts, 2004). Guidance and counselling centres provide a space for individuals to develop essential social skills, including effective communication, patience, respect, and empathy (Ocansey, 2018). These skills contribute to a positive and productive educational environment.

However, the effectiveness of guidance and counselling centres is contingent upon the availability of adequate resources. Essential resources, such as trained personnel, physical infrastructure, and financial support, are required to ensure that these centres can function effectively and meet the needs of students and teachers (Adoga, 2018). Without sufficient resources, the centre's ability to provide quality services is compromised, and it becomes difficult to address the challenges faced by students and teachers (Atta-Frimpong, 2013). The lack of adequate resources in some public universities' guidance and counselling centres has led to perceptions of inefficiency among students and parents (Alale (2019); Hordofa, 2018). Therefore, the availability of resources is critical to the successful operation of guidance and counselling services in universities.

6.1.1 Guidance and Counselling: Historical Perspective

Guidance and counselling have increasingly become recognised as vital components of the educational system over the past few years. These services have deep roots in the democratic ideals of individual rights, dignity, and personal worth, particularly in the United States, where

the guidance and counselling movement originated. In the U.S., the development of formal guidance systems has long been associated with efforts to support the personal and academic growth of individuals, reflecting a broader societal commitment to addressing personal challenges in educational settings.

Guidance and Counselling in Ghana

In Ghana, the practice of guidance and counselling traces its origins back to the 1960s, though it was initially informal and based largely on traditional methods. Before the formal establishment of school-based guidance programmes, Ghanaian society relied heavily on informal guidance, often provided by respected community leaders. These informal guidance practices were deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of the nation and were typically offered by adults such as traditional chiefs, family heads, and religious leaders. These figures, regarded as sages, would offer advice on matters of marriage, societal conduct, and social responsibilities (Atta-Frimpong, 2013). Moreover, guidance was often intertwined with cultural expressions such as dance, poetry, music, and traditional medicine, further underscoring the importance of these practices in everyday life. Atta-Frimpong (2013), as cited in Essuman (1999), notes that this guidance was voluntary and performed by various community leaders, particularly in educational settings, where teachers, chaplains, and school prefects would offer advice on moral, financial, and personal issues.

In the 1960s through the 1990s, formal guidance and counselling began to take shape in Ghanaian educational institutions. Key figures and institutions played a significant role in the establishment and development of structured guidance and counselling services. These services gradually evolved from the informal practices into a more organised approach, focusing on addressing academic, vocational, and personal challenges faced by students. The role of guidance counsellors in Ghanaian schools became more defined as the educational system increasingly recognised the importance of providing students with the necessary support to navigate their personal and educational lives.

6.1.2 Policy Perspectives: Higher Education

Recognising the value of guidance and counselling, Ghana's educational policies began to incorporate these services into national planning and strategy. The establishment of guidance and counselling within higher education took a significant step forward in 1976, when the Ministry of Education introduced policies aimed at supporting students with social,

behavioural, and personal challenges (Taylor & Buku, 2006). These early policies laid the groundwork for the formal inclusion of guidance and counselling within the higher education system. The objectives of these policies included the establishment of guidance programmes and the formal introduction of counselling services across universities, both of which were designed to improve the overall educational experience for students.

In the early 1980s, further steps were taken to strengthen guidance and counselling services in Ghanaian higher education. The 1981/82 national budget incorporated funding for guidance and counselling services to help improve the quality and accessibility of support available to university students (Atta-Frimpong, 2013, as cited in Essuman, 1999). This initiative marked a significant turning point in the development of university counselling services, with an emphasis on supporting students' personal and academic well-being.

In 2007, the Ghana Education Reform Committee, led by Anamuah-Mensah, further emphasised the significance of guidance and counselling within the educational system. The reform highlighted the importance of providing students with the necessary support to make informed choices and decisions while promoting discipline both in higher education and within society at large. The committee's reforms also underscored the importance of expanding educational services to include guidance and counselling, with a special focus on training teachers in the provision of support for students with special needs (Ministry of Education Republic of Ghana, 2007).

Additionally, the 2008 white paper on educational reforms further solidified the role of guidance and counselling in Ghanaian education. This policy document focused on coordinating and supervising guidance services throughout the country, emphasising collaboration between universities and educational institutions specialising in psychology and education to create assessment tools and frameworks for effective guidance delivery (Atta-Frimpong, 2013). The white paper's recommendations ensured that guidance and counselling became an integral part of the national educational agenda, providing a framework for the future development of these services.

In more recent years, the Ministry of Education has continued to refine its policies on guidance and counselling, with the 2018 policy document outlining specific strategies and activities to strengthen these services. This includes the integration of life skills education, sexual education, and support for orphans and vulnerable children into the curriculum. The policy also

stresses the importance of developing and enhancing guidance and counselling services at the university level to reduce harmful behaviours such as drug abuse, internet fraud, and exposure to inappropriate media. Additionally, the policy aims to build confidence among counsellors by providing clear guidelines and a supportive framework for their work (Ministry of Education Republic of Ghana, 2018). These developments reflect the growing recognition of guidance and counselling as a cornerstone of student support and success in higher education, with a strong emphasis on ensuring that these services are adequately resourced and accessible to all students.

6.1.3 Guidance: Meaning and Concept

The concept of guidance has been extensively explored by various authors and experts, each offering their perspectives on its meaning and application. The term "guidance" can be traced to its root word, "guide," which means to direct, pilot, manage, steer, aid, assist, lead, inform, point out, or show the path (John, 2015). This foundational understanding underscores the essential purpose of guidance as a process aimed at supporting individuals in navigating life's challenges. In a more specific context, Bedu-Addo (2016) defines guidance as "a process of helping an individual to understand himself (personality, interests, likes, dislikes, potentials, strengths, weaknesses, aspirations, etc.) as well as his human and physical environment; to take meaningful decisions, make intelligent choices, so that such an individual will be able to improve his functionality." Similarly, Benedette et al. (2022) view guidance as a tool to help individuals make sense of themselves and their world. Atta-Frimpong (2013) further elaborates that guidance involves the totality of formal educational services intentionally planned and executed to aid students in their development to their fullest potential.

Based on these definitions, guidance can be understood as a process designed to assist individuals or groups in their environment. Unlike counselling, which often involves professional and confidential interactions, guidance is a more general and informal process. It is preventive and developmental, not necessarily requiring a professional practitioner but rather any mature individual in a position to provide support. It involves a continuous effort to help students at all levels of education rediscover their strengths and weaknesses and align them with their life goals, all within the context of their external influences. Guidance spans across all levels of education, from nursery school to university, making it an integral part of the student's educational journey as well as their overall well-being.

Guidance incorporates 21st-century ideas derived from two related traditions, as outlined by (Watts & Kidd, 2000; Rwechoka, 2014). As a notion, guidance focuses on the optimal development of the student, whereas as a process, it facilitates self-awareness and self-direction helping students understand their skills and limitations, solve problems, and make independent decisions. It is closely connected to career (vocational) guidance, which prepares students for the workforce, as well as to educational guidance. The primary objective of guidance programmes is to help students create meaningful plans that promote satisfaction and adjustment in all aspects of their lives. This makes guidance an integral part of the educational process, not separate from it.

At its core, guidance can be broken down into a few key components:

Process: A constantly evolving event that changes over time.

Help: The purpose of guidance is to prevent, minimise, or resolve issues that individuals may face.

Individual: Guidance is specifically aimed at individuals, such as students, who are in a state of disequilibrium either academically or otherwise and require assistance to regain balance.

Self-understanding: Guidance helps individuals discover their identity, skills, abilities, likes, dislikes, and overall potential.

World understanding: It also aids in understanding the surrounding world, both physical and human, helping individuals navigate their environment and make decisions accordingly.

In essence, guidance is a service, aimed at meeting specific needs such as choice-making or decision-making in areas like education or personal development. It involves structured actions that are designed to make the service meaningful, relevant, operational, and accessible to those who seek it.

6.1.3.1 Guidance: Principles

According to John (2015), Guidance Principles are:

Guidance is for all: Every student needs guidance at all stages of life, from childhood to adulthood. Guidance is required in every student's life to solve their problems and fit into their family and society.

Guidance-Developed Capacities: Guidance focuses on the context of the overall development of a particular learner's personality rather than just one aspect. The guidance addresses the development of the whole person. It does not only focus on the student's academic performance. This implies that whatever event or obstacle a student faces should always be considered holistically to result in full personality development.

Individual Differences and Dignity: This is a pathway for each student's differences. Each individual has a combination of characteristics that make the person unique. The dignity of the individual is supreme. Respect for others should come naturally and not be affected by title, sex, age, or appearance.

Individual Behavioural Processes: This aids individual students in controlling their behaviour, such as liking, disliking, strengthening and weakening. According to this principle, guidance workers use personal interviews, counselling relationships, etc.

Cooperation: Students should not be forced. The student should consent by explicitly asking for help or suggesting that they need help. Do not force students to guide; it will lead to dis-cooperation.

Continuous Process: Guidance is lifelong; it starts from home to school and continues into society (Parents → Teachers → Community). Parents, teachers, and the community guide individuals to acquire the correct behaviour and values. It should be oriented toward a single objective.

6.1.3.2 Guidance: Important Characteristics

Murdock (2016) has shortlisted the characteristics of the guidance as follows:

Advantage of Guidance: The benefit of guidance should be extended to students who do not directly request it or who show a desire for it. However, the advantage of guidance should be extended to all who can gain directly or indirectly from it. As a result, the extent of its benefit should be expanded.

Guidance as a lifelong process: Guidance is lifelong since it is necessary at every stage of life. A student must address a variety of issues at each location. Without resolving these issues, no one can move forward. Similarly, advice should not be tailored to a specific range. This

approach is appropriate for all age groups. The existence of issues in life, as well as efforts to solve them, is natural. As a result, guidance is always needed.

Acceptance of individuals: Education is made up of students. If education is not strengthened, it will fall behind. Each student with an education status must be accepted, which is critical. Equal opportunities should be given to each student to develop their personality. Guidance aims to allow individuals to establish their energies and capacities. As a result, we embrace a student's worth by providing possibilities for expression based on education, occupation, family, abilities, and capabilities.

Guidance based on objective data analysis: Data are collected in the guidance programme. These data pertain to numerous facets of life. Only by objectively analysing these data can we find advice. Objective data analysis is critical. Nothing can be concluded without this. The entire advice process appears to be useless in the absence of this. As a result, it is essential to make data concerning guidance seekers available to guidance workers so that positive outcomes can be determined after analysis.

Importance to individual differences: Individual differences should be prioritised. No two people indeed are the same. Even twins are very different. Various measures can be used to test and assess multiple aspects of students' differences or personalities. This aspect cannot and should not be neglected in a guidance programme. Various variables cause these variances, and we can see the influence of these variations on a student's personality. This characteristic encompasses individual conflicts caused by heredity and environmental factors. Both of these variants are significant.

Individuals as average persons: According to these characteristics, the majority of individuals seeking guidance should be treated as usual, and it should be ensured that every normal or abnormal student can benefit from assistance. Often, people believe that guidance should be offered only to those who have experienced difficulty. The guidance programme is not solely for troubled students. All students should cultivate an attitude of equality.

6.1.3.3 Types of Guidance Service

The primary guidance services include information services, evaluation services, orientation services, follow-up services, placement services, appraisal services, referral services, consultation services, and counselling services.

Information Service: The information service provides students with accurate and up-to-date information about their educational, vocational, personal, and social opportunities and growth.

Evaluation Service: It is a procedure for evaluating guidance programmes. It is not a straight service to students as compared to other services.

Orientation Service: Orientation services help students better adjust to any new environment. Information or training is given to students before they start new activities.

Follow-up Services: Follow-up services involve procedures and techniques that counsellors use to determine how individual students progress after going through other guidance services.

Appraisal Service: The appraisal service collects, analyses, and uses various objective data to understand the student better.

Referral Service: Referred to medical personnel, peer counsellors, police, religious leaders, legal personnel, other counsellors, sponsoring agencies, heads of schools, other teachers, parents/guardians, or the social welfare department. Students were referred to the appropriate place.

Placement Service: This study categorised placement into three types: educational, vocational, and social standing. Educational placement includes assigning students to groups or programmes best suited to their capabilities, abilities, and interests.

Consultation Service: Consultation occurs when an individual seeks help, information, or advice from another person or a source that renders such assistance.

Counselling Service: Counselling is a service that plans to help individual students analyse their capabilities, achievements, interests, and modes of adjustment to new decisions they must make.

6.1.4 Counselling: Meaning and Concept

While guidance and counselling are often used interchangeably, they differ in meaning and application. Counselling, as a concept, has been defined in various ways, with scholars focusing on different aspects of the process. Some definitions emphasise the process of counselling itself, while others focus on the relationship between the counsellor and the counselee. The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2019) defines counselling as a

contractually agreed-upon meeting between a student and a counsellor, focusing solely on the student's interests at a specific time and place. Similarly, the European Association of Counselling (2013) describes counselling as an integrated, beneficial relationship designed to address a student's issues. According to Bedu-Addo (2016), counselling is "an interactive process of joining the counselee, who is vulnerable and needs assistance, with the counsellor, who is trained and educated to provide help." The goal of counselling is to assist the counselee in understanding themselves and the reality of their environment. Athar (2019) adds that counselling involves helping individuals deal with and overcome problems, a process that links a person's capabilities and decisions to their future choices. This suggests that counselling, among other things, is a process intended to be used by educated and trained counsellors to assist an individual in self-analysis by linking his capabilities, accomplishments, interests, and adjustment to whatever new decision he has made or will make. However, Mohd (2020) summarised counselling as a professional connection between a certified counsellor and a student.

Counselling can thus be understood as a mutual relationship between a professionally trained counsellor and a student or teacher who is seeking help. It occurs in a confidential environment, where the counsellor assists the student in overcoming personal or academic challenges. The nature of the counselling relationship can vary depending on the specific needs of the individual, including developmental issues, crisis management, decision-making, and personal insights. The goal of counselling is to provide opportunities for individuals to work toward a more satisfying and resourceful life.

In a counselling session, the counsellor plays an active role by listening attentively and patiently to understand the difficulties from the student's or teacher's perspective. This understanding allows the counsellor to help the individual see their situation more clearly and explore alternative ways of thinking and acting. Counselling can take place face-to-face or online, with both parties agreeing to engage in a process designed to resolve a defined problem through collaborative deliberation. This process encourages the individual to make decisions autonomously, fostering self-determination.

Counselling can be broken down into several core components:

Informing: The counsellor provides the necessary information to the teacher or student.

Advising: The counsellor suggests practical actions based on the individual's goals or interests, offering multiple options.

Counselling: The counsellor assists the individual in understanding their needs, feelings, or motivations, guiding them toward making their own decisions.

6.1.4.1 Modes of counselling

Counselling is usually conducted in two ways: face-to-face and online (Health Assured, 2018).

Face-to-face counselling entails a qualified professional meeting with each client in a confidential environment to discuss and counsel them on any challenges. (Lisa, 2020). This type of counselling is highly effective and the oldest as it offers a personalised service while remaining completely confidential.

Online counselling is a more modern approach that occurs over the internet (Murdock, 2016). Online counselling is a technological method for clients who use a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone (Morrow, 2021). It works with apps such as Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams, FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom, and Webex (Ansah et al., 2019).

6.1.4.2 Counselling: Principles

Kumar (2020) listed the principles of counselling as follows:

Empathy: Instead of displaying pity, put yourself in the student's position and reflect accordingly (empathy is the ability to identify with a person).

Agreement between the two: For counselling to occur, there should be a collective agreement between the counsellor and the student, e.g., day, time, and place to meet.

Acceptance: Accept the student's physical, psychological, social, economic, and cultural circumstances.

Counselling is not mandatory: Students should not be forced for counselling.

Communication: Communication should be verbal and nonverbal and should be considered skilled.

Counselling is a private relationship: It must be dealt with privately and not in the public domain.

Confidential environment: This implies that no third party will obtain the information discussed, and when this happens, the students will feel comfortable and confident in their problems. The counsellor always keeps the student's name and situation private and assures the students of this.

Not giving advice: The counsellor only suggested practical action measures. The counsellor provides the student with many options and recommendations according to their interests.

6.1.4.3 Counselling: Important Characteristics

Palmer (2000) listed the characteristics of counselling as follows;

Counselling measures each individual: Each student is one kind. It is a reality that not all students look alike. They differ in various ways, including interests, abilities, attitudes, personality traits, aptitudes and values.

Counselling is directed towards achieving a specific goal: Setting goals is essential in counselling. Setting and achieving realistic goals is vital in counselling sessions.

Professional service: Counselling can be provided only by someone highly qualified. It should not be delivered by inexperienced personnel.

Counselling provides a complete understanding of human development: Each stage has developmental tasks and traits to accomplish. The effects of the student's engagement with the environment and accomplishment of tasks are the essential variables determining the student's general personality at a given time.

Everyone has access to counselling: any student, despite their age, caste, gender, occupation, or social class, requires counselling at various stages of their development. It must be provided to everyone who needs it at any moment.

Counselling has no time limit: it is crucial in all phases of life. At various times during life, humans require counselling on various subjects.

Counselling is a continuous procedure: counselling cannot be confined when difficulties exist.

The primary purpose is to help the learner attain total growth.

Counselling should generate accurate data: counselling services are built on information about each student. As a result, a counsellor must have up-to-date information on the student.

6.1.4.4 Counselling Techniques

Bedu-Addo (2016), counsellors use three essential counselling techniques: directive, electoral, and non-directive.

Directive counselling: Counsellor-centred counselling is another name for this type of counselling. In this counselling technique, the counsellor actively participates in the counselling process.

Non-directive counselling: This is a counselling technique in which the counselee (student) is at the centre of the process. Rather than the counsellor, the student plays an active role in leading the counselling process.

Eclectic counselling: Depending on the situation, eclectic counselling combines directive and non-directive techniques. This counselling technique is best characterised by the counsellor's freedom to use whatever procedures or practices appear most appropriate at any given time for any student.

6.1.5 Difference between Guidance and Counselling

The terms 'guidance' and 'counselling' are comparable in most ways and are two sides of the same coin. Despite the confusion of the terms “guidance” and “counselling”, it is necessary to distinguish between them.

- ❖ Guidance is an umbrella term for a comprehensive educational programme of activities and services aimed at helping students make and carry out satisfactory life adjustments, whereas counselling is a component of guidance services (appraisal, placement, orientation, referral, follow-up, information, etc.). However, counselling is a subset of guidance in that it is one of the services of guidance (Bedu-Addo, 2016).
- ❖ Guidance is provided for a person or group of persons, and confidentiality is not guaranteed; however, counselling sessions always occur individually, and privacy is guaranteed (Andhra, 2023).

- ❖ Guidance refers to assisting students in their overall growth (preventive and developmental), whereas counselling is typically focused on assisting teachers and students with issues (supportive and remedial) (Bedu-Addo, 2016).
- ❖ Guidance is ideal for dealing with educational and career issues, whereas counselling is better for dealing with sociopsychological and other individual problems (Lai-Yeung, 2014).
- ❖ Guidance can be provided by anyone (principals, teachers, priests, parents, qualified school counsellors, or any school employees) at any venue (school, marketplace, mosque, temple, church, etc.) or through any communication channel. (Television, billboards, radio, and so on). On the other hand, counselling may be provided only by a qualified counsellor in a confidential environment, either face-to-face or online (Bedu-Addo, 2016).
- ❖ Guidance assists individuals in making the best decisions and provides customers with ready answers, whereas counselling helps them change their perspective and develop well-informed solutions (Andhra, 2023).
- ❖ Guidance is recommended for all students; however, counselling is recommended only for individual teachers or students facing ongoing or temporary problems that information alone cannot fix. As a result, counselling serves a therapeutic purpose (Karan, 2023).

Despite these differences, the overall goal of guidance and counselling is to effect a behavioural change that allows teachers and students to gain realisation and self-direction and live a more productive, happier, and satisfying life. Guidance is an example of a general assisting method that includes various activities. Other activities, unlike counselling, are based on the helper's expertise, abilities and experience in a specific field.

6.1.6 Education System in Ghana

The present educational system in Ghana has been divided into two parts (pre-Tertiary education and tertiary education). Pre-Tertiary education has also been divided into basic education and secondary education. Basic Education comprises Kindergarten (Pre-School) Education covering (2) years, followed by Primary School Education covering (6) years (3 years of Lower Primary and (3) years of Upper Primary) and (3) years of Junior High School Education. It is also followed by secondary education, which consists of (3) years of senior high school, secondary technical/vocational school, or commercial school. From this level, the

individual can enter a tertiary educational institution to pursue further studies for (3) to (4) years, as specified in the various programmes. Tertiary education in Ghana consists of university education, polytechnic universities, professional institutions, colleges of education and nursing colleges.

Tertiary Education (Higher Education)

Tertiary education is education offered after the secondary level. It includes University Education, Polytechnics University Nursing College, the College of Education, Professional Institutions and other institutions providing training leading to awards of diplomas and degrees. Ghana tertiary institution students are admitted based on their performance on the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). A maximum of 24 points (six credit passes) are required to apply for a bachelor's degree. The institutions enrol students in certificate, diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in various academic and professional fields. Students spend two or three years on a diploma, which is not equivalent to a bachelor's degree. A bachelor's degree is usually obtained after four years of study in a particular field. There are two types of master's degrees: one-year programmes with a final paper based on a literature review and two-year programmes with a final paper based on a year of independent research. Both can lead to a PhD, generally completed in three years as part of a doctorate programme.

6.1.7 Objectives of Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education

Iyejare (2022) identifies Higher Education guidance and counselling objectives as follows:

- To provide equipment, marketing and training programmes should be designed to improve student employment opportunities.
- Students should be taught through entrepreneurial training to become effective and skilled.
- Relevant job information should be provided, and the space between students and the job market should be bridged.
- Training and seminars on career and vocational lecture information, study habits, personal-social characteristics, etc., should be organised.
- Organising students/parents' community forums and engaging in debate with them on how to become model students for other guidance and counselling centres to learn.

- The guidance and counselling centre must develop and coordinate guidance-centred activities. The guidance centre must plan and coordinate guidance-oriented activities according to students' needs.
- The living and learning environments should be improved through counselling, training and community interventions.
- Higher Education authorities should help students better understand and effectively design and implement educational programmes.

6.1.8 Importance of Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education

Teachers and students are increasingly facing complex challenges in their daily lives, which necessitate the provision of guidance and counselling services. These services play a crucial role in helping both teachers and students navigate various situations effectively, enabling them to perform optimally. In higher education, university students require guidance and counselling in diverse areas, including education, careers, occupations, social issues, health, morals, and personal matters. Bhattacharjee (2021) emphasises that the functioning of educational guidance and counselling centres fosters the development of students' self-direction, particularly in addressing psychologically related challenges that may impact their academic performance. By offering support, these centres facilitate students' ability to manage difficulties, enhance their problem-solving skills, and provide the tools needed to cope with various issues they may encounter during their academic journey.

The presence of guidance and counselling centres significantly contributes to students' and teachers' success by helping them understand what needs to be done, when, and how to do it most effectively (Iyejare, 2022). These centres promote self-awareness in students, helping them live in peace and harmony with their peers while fostering a sense of respect for others within the school environment. This guidance is not limited to academic or professional growth but extends to personal development, teaching students how to navigate both internal and external challenges. As a result, these services contribute to the development of well-rounded individuals who can address their problems in a constructive manner.

Moreover, guidance and counselling centres offer a confidential space where both teachers and students experiencing personal challenges can seek advice and clarity. According to Atsuwe & Albert (2018), these centres provide a supportive environment where individuals can ask questions and engage in discussions about sensitive topics such as alcohol and drug use,

personal emotions, and other concerns. Dharni (2020) further underscores that these centres play a pivotal role in helping students adjust to various life situations, empowering them with the skills needed to face difficulties and find solutions. By assisting students in managing personal issues, guidance and counselling help foster healthier, more resilient individuals.

In addition to supporting personal growth, guidance and counselling services play a key role in shaping the behaviour and discipline of students. As Sahu (2020) notes, counselling sessions guide students on how to behave appropriately in different contexts, thereby contributing to the development of their social and emotional skills. This not only helps students make informed decisions but also supports them in adjusting to their responsibilities, particularly in challenging life circumstances (Oliver, 2021). Counselling services aid in addressing educational needs, providing vocational guidance, and assisting students with personal issues, thus helping them to better navigate their academic and personal lives.

The role of guidance and counselling centres extends beyond just offering advice; they also serve as platforms where teachers and students can discuss matters that make them uncomfortable. According to Sandipan (2022), these centres provide a safe space for individuals to share their concerns and seek guidance. Through this process, students are taught essential skills, such as effective communication, empathy, and respect for others, which help improve their interactions with peers (Muktar & Kyauta, 2017). Counsellors at these centres also work with students to foster self-esteem and respect for individual differences, assisting them in understanding their strengths and how to relate to others in various situations (Sood, 2016).

Ultimately, guidance and counselling services in higher education are indispensable for both personal and academic development. They offer students the necessary tools to manage challenges, improve interpersonal relationships, and build self-confidence. Through these services, students gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their potential, helping them become more capable of navigating the complexities of life and achieving success in their academic and professional pursuits.

6.1.9 Types of Guidance and Counselling

The three significant areas of educational guidance and counselling are educational, vocational, and personal/social (Gordon, Guez, & Allen, 2000).

6.1.9.1 Educational Guidance and Counselling

Educational guidance and counselling refer to the guidance students need throughout higher education. The educational purpose of guidance and counselling services deals with academic progress and adjustment, knowledge and skills, selecting appropriate courses in line with an individual student's needs, interests, and abilities, and pursuing the correct type of advanced training at the university (Taylor & Buku, 2006). It also helps students solve problems that they face at the university. Most notably, education is the process of guiding students toward proper development. All aspects of university education are closely related to educational instruction. In addition, the survey included objectives, goals, curricula, disciplines, teaching methods, and activities within the curriculum. Also, these guidelines help adapt programmers to the skills and abilities of students. This process helps students make wise decisions regarding their future educational life. Again, this process allows students to plan an academic plan and quickly implement it. Educational guidance concerns all aspects related to student education. It also guides students in choosing schools, courses, study habits, etc. It again helps students grow and develop. Based on the above viewpoints, one could conclude that educational guidance and counselling are procedures for assisting a student in developing a proper educational plan and advancing through it.

6.1.9.2 Vocational Guidance and Counselling

Vocational guidance and counselling offer students general information about career choices to make rational, intelligent, and suitable occupational choices and adjustments based on the student's potentialities, interests, capabilities, and achievements (Taylor & Buku, 2006; Atta-Frimpong, 2013). Vocational guidance and counselling help students prepare for work and help them get started and move forward. Most notably, the perspective of modern education is much broader. Therefore, this type of guidance helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, it helps students choose a profession that can adapt to any situation. In other words, vocational guidance helps students with career choices and other related aspects. It also assists students in getting to know the world of work by coming to the university. It also helps students understand their potential and what they can become. Ultimately, this depends on what students can achieve in their daily university life. Additionally, students must be on the right track to prepare for life. In other words, it is a generally accepted process that helps students better understand themselves.

6.1.9.3 Personal/Social Guidance and Counselling

Personal and social guidance and counselling refer to the guidance provided to teachers and students to overcome their problems independently. It provides services for people who exhibit unhappiness, anger, personality maladjustment, inability to meet needs, failure to achieve aspirations, lack of knowledge, anxiety, annoyance, neurosis, excessive frustration, or partial or total disappointment (Saminu & Isa, 2022). This area focuses on self-knowledge, social skills, and safety issues. Teachers and students can develop their talents, potential, particular aptitudes, incompetence, feelings, and interests, increase and exhibit favourable attitudes and habits, and eliminate bad attitudes and habits. It also helps teachers and students solve social, health, moral, spiritual, and ethical problems. There are two types of personal guidance: written and verbal. They help students organise their lives.

Moreover, the guidance tells students who they are now and what they can become. It also allows students to see from the proper perspective. With personal guidance, there is no easy task. The overall development of a student's personality depends on the development of the student's habits and attitudes.

6.1.10 Theories of Counselling

Counselling theories provide frameworks for understanding and addressing the various challenges individuals face. One prominent theory is the behavioural theory, which assumes that all behaviours are learned through experiences, particularly from childhood. According to Angel, (2013), behaviours that are reinforced or approved during early development tend to become ingrained and are likely to be repeated, as they provide satisfying experiences. Conversely, if a behaviour is not reinforced, it is likely to diminish. In behavioural counselling, the counsellor begins by assessing the individual's behaviour to identify problematic behaviours. Behavioural analysis allows the counsellor to understand the circumstances influencing these behaviours and whether they form part of a larger pattern.

Another widely acknowledged approach is cognitive theory, which posits that mental processes, or cognition, significantly influence human behaviour (Courtney, 2022). In this theory, the focus is on how individuals think about and interpret situations. Many counsellors blend behavioural and cognitive treatments to address dysfunctions or issues in students and teachers. This combined approach helps individuals examine the reasonableness of the assumptions underlying their behaviours. Through this process, both cognitive restructuring

and behavioural change are targeted to alleviate dysfunctions and improve the individual's responses to various situations.

Closely related to cognitive theory is rational emotive theory, which suggests that emotional disorders and dysfunctional behaviours stem from irrational beliefs or thoughts (eGyankosh, 2018). This theory asserts that emotional distress does not arise from reality itself but from how individuals perceive and interpret reality. Irrational thoughts are deemed unhealthy and detrimental to mental well-being, while logical, rational thinking is considered more adaptable and beneficial. In counselling, the therapist's role is to help individuals transform these "crooked" or irrational thought patterns into rational, healthy ones. This process is essential for resolving the difficulties faced by teachers and students, as it helps them better manage their emotional and behavioural responses.

6.1.11 Tools of Guidance and Counselling

In addition to these counselling theories, guidance and counselling services employ various tools to assess and support individuals in their personal and academic development. The primary tools used by guidance practitioners can be categorised into standardised and non-standardised methods, both of which are crucial for gathering data on an individual's needs, strengths, and challenges.

Standardised tools are designed to be administered and scored consistently across various settings and populations. These tools follow predetermined procedures or criteria, which makes them reliable for comparing data across different groups. Standardised tools are commonly used in guidance and counselling to assess students' interests, aptitudes, achievements, intelligence, and personality traits (Khan, 2019). They are instrumental in helping counsellors evaluate students for placements, provide guidance, and assist in career or academic planning. Such tools facilitate self-knowledge development, decision-making skills, and the acquisition of new behaviours by students.

On the other hand, non-standardised tools offer more flexibility and can be tailored to the specific needs of an individual or situation. These tools are administered and scored in various ways, allowing them to be adapted to the context in which they are used. Non-standardised methods include rating scales, case studies, interviews, sociometry, questionnaires, observations, biographies, anecdotal records, and cumulative records (Bhardwaj, 2018). These tools provide a means for individuals in emotional distress to openly discuss concerns and

collaboratively work through solutions with minimal guidance. Although non-standardised tools are more context-specific, they are equally valuable for gathering reliable data, especially when tailored to unique circumstances.

Both standardised and non-standardised tools play complementary roles in the guidance and counselling process. They help gather primary data, enabling practitioners to offer targeted advice and support. However, it is essential for guidance professionals to apply these tools in a manner that ensures reliable and objective data, ensuring the effectiveness of their interventions and recommendations.

Psychological Tests

Psychological tests are verbal or written assessments of an individual's behaviour (Hussain, 2022). A variety of psychological tests can help individuals comprehend various human dynamics.

Psychological Tests: Types

There are eight major types of psychological testing (Ditzell, 2021): personality tests, emotional intelligence tests, achievement tests, aptitude tests, attitude tests, neuropsychological tests, projective tests and intelligence tests.

Personality Test: This test assesses teachers and students actions, attitudes, and character traits influenced by their surroundings and behaviour, feelings, and even clinical disorders (Harper, 2023).

Emotional Intelligence Test: An emotional intelligence test is necessary to effectively assess an individual's honesty through an Emotional Quotient (EQ) and provide advice on raising it (Millacci, 2023).

Achievement Test: Achievement tests assess skills and knowledge gained at a specific grade level, typically through planned instruction such as training (Wikipedia, 2018). It is used to evaluate a student's readiness for a particular level of education.

Aptitude Test: An aptitude test assesses an individual's abilities, determining how well they will perform where they have no prior training or knowledge. Aptitude tests are used in schools to determine whether students are capable of doing so.

Attitude Test: Measures how much we like or dislike different things. It intends to approach and seek to be associated with something we want while avoiding, shunning, or rejecting things we do not. It is used to assess people's attitudes.

Neuropsychological Tests: Neuropsychological tests assess a person's cognitive abilities (Chiara et al., 2018). Neuropsychological examinations are essential psychological tests for determining diseases such as brain injury and Alzheimer's disease and emotional disorders like anxiety or depression.

Projective Test: A projective test is an examination that uses ambiguous stimuli, such as inkblots (Rorschach Test) or enigmatic pictures (Thematic Apperception Test) (Augustyn, 2020). It aids in eliciting responses that may reveal aspects of the subject's personality by projecting internal attitudes, traits, and behaviour patterns onto external stimuli.

Intelligence Tests: Alfred Binet, the inventor of intelligence tests, created the IQ test to evaluate new students and determine which learners require more help (Susman, 2022). He concluded that some students could answer more complex problems than the average. He then understood that the phrase "multidimensional" refers to the variety of aspects that determine how intelligent a person is. The above tools which include various types of tools are important resources for the function of guidance and counselling centres.

6.1.12 Functioning of Guidance and Counselling Centres

The concept of functioning refers to the act of performing a task or fulfilling the objective of a given responsibility. In the context of guidance and counselling, functioning can be understood as a purposeful programme designed to assist individual students in achieving a balanced and well-rounded personality, encompassing physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and vocational development based on their unique needs (Corey, 2018). The success of a guidance and counselling programme is largely dependent on the effective functioning of the centre, which involves the application of appropriate counselling techniques, methods, and skills. Furthermore, the resources available at the centre play a crucial role in ensuring that these objectives are met (Corey, 2018).

The ability of the counsellor to utilise these resources effectively is a critical factor in the successful functioning of a guidance and counselling centre. A well-functioning centre requires counsellors to possess the necessary skills to apply the right techniques and methods to address

the diverse needs of students. As such, the resources available whether human, physical, informational, or financial serve as integral components in solving the various problems that arise within the university setting. These resources are essential for the counsellors to provide meaningful support to students and to ensure that the guidance and counselling programme can be effectively delivered.

Counselling resources such as human resources (qualified counsellors and staff), physical infrastructure (facilities and equipment), informational resources (guidance materials, literature), and financial support are all necessary to facilitate the smooth operation of a guidance and counselling centre (Ibrahim, 2021). When these resources are adequately provided, the guidance and counselling programme becomes both theoretical and practical, thereby offering students a comprehensive and accessible service. Well-equipped centres also promote active engagement from both teaching staff and students, encouraging them to take advantage of the services offered. By ensuring that resources are available and effectively utilised, the centre can create an environment that motivates students to seek help and support.

Furthermore, the availability and proper utilisation of resources not only enhance the competence of the counsellors but also improve the overall effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme. Well-equipped centres allow counsellors to fulfil their roles more efficiently, providing students with the necessary support to address academic, personal, and vocational challenges. Ultimately, the effective functioning of a guidance and counselling centre relies heavily on the resources it has at its disposal, as well as the skills of the counsellors in applying these resources to meet the diverse needs of students.

6.1.13 Role of University Counsellor

- The counsellor's first professional role is to improve the welfare of the teachers and students.
- The counsellor must develop plans and activities to help improve teachers and students interests.
- The counsellors also create and implement strategies to assist students with academic, career, personal, and social needs within the school environment and provide individual and group counselling to students on educational, vocational and personal/social guidance.

- Individuals or groups of teachers and students with personal problems, such as social and emotional problems, are assisted in personal development and good functioning.
- Counsellors advise students on study techniques, job applications, and interviews.
- The counsellor refers teachers and students to other agencies.
- When teachers and students have problems beyond the counsellor's work boundaries, the counsellor needs to guide them to appropriate agencies.
- The counsellor is an intermediary between the school system and the community.
- The counsellor compiles and provides occupational information to students.
- Counselling activities are planned freely and flexibly according to the school's needs.

6.1.14 University Counsellor: Characteristics

Bedu-Addo (2016) and Oluremi (2014) outline the following characteristics of a counsellor.

Ethical: Being ethical also improves the counsellor's professional characteristics. This permits the teachers and students to have confidence in the counsellor to the point where they are willing to discuss the most intimate 'sides' of their lives while seeking help from the counsellor.

Good Listener: As a counsellor, you should listen more than speak. You must be okay with giving your teachers and students time to talk about their problems and feelings. You need to understand what your teachers and students are saying intuitively.

Non-judgmental: As a counsellor, you may hear different personal information and meet various teachers and students. They tell or hear deep secrets of some students past, including sexual and criminal activity. You should do your best to express joyous gratitude instead of judging. Although you may need to judge certain behaviours, teachers and students should not feel you are judging them.

Enthusiastic: The counsellor is supposed to be enthusiastic. This suggests that the counsellor is supposed to be actively involved in supporting the teacher or student in addressing his difficulties during the counselling process. This level of involvement must be maintained even while dealing with a demanding teacher or student.

Capacity for intimacy: Intimacy in this context does not imply a close, intimate sexual or physical relationship with the teacher or student. Instead, this capacity to be intimate refers to the counsellor's ability to be near, acquainted, personal, and private with the teacher or student

and their problem(s) while remaining professional and ethical in his interactions with the teacher or student.

Encouraging: The power of encouragement is prudent for counsellors. Many teachers and students find it difficult to find hope in their direction. One of the counsellors' main responsibilities is to inspire hope in the hopeless.

Authenticity: Authenticity is vital when working with teachers and students. Teachers and students will know if you are wrong or if you are telling them about the actual concern. They will not disclose their secret to you or have faith in your advice unless they believe you are authentic.

Patient: Counsellors must be patient while conversing with their teachers and students. It will take time for some to accept some things and move in a positive direction. Some teachers and students must have multiple conversations before moving toward a specific change.

Tactful: Because counselling is such a sensitive subject, tact is essential to success. The counsellor must be extremely tactful in both voice and actions during counselling. This makes the teacher or student feel appreciated and, more significantly, secure enough to share more about himself with the counsellor.

Compassionate: As a counsellor, it is essential to have compassion for your teachers and students problems and make them feel that you care about them. You cannot empathise with every issue your teachers and students share, but you should be compassionate with how they feel.

Research-oriented: Becoming an effective counsellor requires spending a lot of time researching. To help your teachers and students, you need to do up-to-date research. This includes reading magazines, articles and books regularly. You cannot learn everything you have to know while in school. Some of your skills and knowledge may come from your research after you start meeting teachers and students.

Discrete: Confidentiality is paramount when you are a counsellor. Individuals should be able to maintain confidentiality to have confidence in their most affectionate interests.

Self-Aware: Counsellors must know their weaknesses, anxieties, and fears to help them build an effective counselling relationship. It is prudent not to oppose what teachers and students share. You should be able to control your emotions during the session.

The guidance and counselling centres functioning in the universities help produce responsible students who fit human resource needs. It also helps to build a more prosperous and advanced nation. The counsellor's role in guidance and counselling centres is crucial and contributes to the overall functioning of guidance and counselling centres in the universities. Therefore, counsellors must know their boundaries of competencies and provide services based on their training qualifications, techniques, and experience.

6.1.15 Guidance and Counselling Centres at the University Levels: The Present Scenario

University students in Ghana face numerous challenges that can hinder their academic, vocational, and social development. Among these challenges are educational, economic, personal adjustment, and interpersonal issues, including peer group influence, substance abuse (e.g., smoking, drug and alcohol use), poor self-concepts, and conflicts with the opposite sex. Some students are also involved in cultism, leading to more severe problems such as internal riots, violent confrontations, and property destruction. These issues not only affect students' personal lives but also impact their academic performance and social integration, making it essential for universities to provide adequate support through guidance and counselling services.

However, guidance and counselling centres in Ghana are currently facing significant resource challenges that hinder their effective functioning. These resource deficits affect the administrative efficiency of the centres and limit their ability to provide the necessary support to students and teaching staff. In particular, guidance and counselling centres at Ghanaian Colleges of Education struggle with inadequate resources, preventing them from offering high-quality services. According to a study by Aidoo (2011) titled "Administration of Guidance and Counselling in Colleges of Education in Ghana," both tutors and students considered the introduction of guidance and counselling services satisfactory but expressed dissatisfaction with the operational aspects of the centres, largely due to the lack of resources. As noted by Kathuri, Magero & Wamalwa (2018), these shortcomings have rendered the centres less beneficial to both students and teaching staff. Furthermore, parents and students have also perceived these centres as underperforming, with a lack of confidentiality in the counselling process further undermining their effectiveness (Alemu, 2013; Hordofa, 2018; Fia, 2018). As a result, some individuals view visiting the guidance and counselling centres as unnecessary, further limiting their use (Alale, 2019; Sedofia, 2011).

6.1.16 Dimensions in the Study

For guidance and counselling centres to function effectively, several key resources are required. One of the most critical resources is physical infrastructure. A well-functioning centre needs adequate office space, material storage facilities, and furnishings that support both individual and group counselling sessions. The absence of a dedicated office space, where confidentiality can be maintained, reduces the centre's ability to provide a secure and ethical counselling environment. For example, sharing office space with other staff members makes it difficult to ensure privacy, which is essential for the ethical conduct of counselling. In addition to basic office furniture and storage, the integration of modern technology, such as computers and related peripherals, is increasingly important in the age of globalisation. Counsellors require access to computers for data storage, retrieval, and the use of relevant software programs to assist in information management and counselling services. Internet access is also critical for keeping up with the latest developments in counselling practices and facilitating electronic communication and information sharing with students.

In addition to physical infrastructure, financial resources are essential for the effective operation of guidance and counselling centres. Adequate funding is needed to carry out a variety of essential activities, including professional development through training and workshops, career counselling, vocational seminars, and field trips. Funds are also necessary for the procurement of materials, the maintenance of the centre's facilities, and the organization of events such as career days. Without sufficient financial resources, the ability of guidance and counselling centres to offer these crucial services is severely limited.

Furthermore, the human resources available to the counselling centre are integral to its success. Counsellors must possess the necessary qualifications, skills, and attitudes to effectively guide and support students. The competence of a counsellor is determined not only by their formal qualifications but also by their ability to engage in evidence-based practices, their sensitivity to cultural and individual differences, and their ongoing professional development. According to Suhag et al. (2017), counsellors should have a comprehensive knowledge base that includes psychology, personality theory, counselling techniques, research methodologies, and professional ethics. These competencies are vital for ensuring that counselling services are delivered effectively and that students receive appropriate support. A lack of these resources, including insufficiently trained counsellors, can render a guidance and counselling centre ineffective, preventing it from fulfilling its potential role in supporting students and staff.

6.1.17 Rationale of the Study

Education serves as a vital pathway for students to display and enhance their talents and potential, ultimately fostering their academic growth. However, students in educational institutions, particularly in Ghana, encounter many challenges that hinder their progress. Many students struggle to meet these demands, leading to confusion, disappointment, and frustration, especially when faced with exam failures. External pressures from parents or relatives often compound this struggle during university enrollment and course selection processes.

In Ghana, the challenge of acquiring adequate vocational knowledge is prevalent across all educational levels, particularly for university students aspiring to further their studies and enter the workforce. Without proper guidance, many students find themselves ill-prepared and uncertain about their future career paths (Salawu, 2008). Therefore, providing vocational information and guidance during their university experience is crucial rather than delaying this support until after graduation. This lack of clarity about career options contributes to disappointment and confusion among students regarding their professional futures.

The atmosphere within Ghanaian public universities has been marred by internal unrest, including riots, strikes, and instances of violence, which have resulted in injuries and property damage. Alarming, there has been a rise in student suicides within these institutions (Brooklyn, 2023). Such incidents not only disrupt the educational experience but also pose significant threats to students' vocational and social development. The consequences could be dire if these issues persist without adequate professional counselling. Addressing the above challenges of university students requires effective and efficient guidance and counselling centres with adequate resources to support both teaching staff and students within the universities. Therefore, Ghana, as a developing country, the researcher needs to examine its public universities guidance and counselling centres to find out whether it has improved from time to time.

Many of Ghana's guidance and counselling centres are underequipped and lack essential human, financial, and physical resources (Aidoo, 2011). These insufficient resources at the universities guidance and counselling centres undermine the administration of guidance and counselling service delivery in Ghana. The inadequate number of qualified counsellors further exacerbates challenges for guidance and counselling centres. An inadequate number of counsellors can significantly diminish the quality and quantity of support available to both teaching staff and

students at the guidance and counselling centres. This inadequate often results in long waiting times for those seeking counselling, which can hinder timely access to essential mental health and academic support. Consequently, students may struggle to find the guidance necessary to navigate various personal, social, vocational, and educational challenges (Kauchak & Eggen, 2011). However, Ghana is a developing country, and its economy is improving daily. The present state of human resources needs to be studied in the guidance and counselling centres.

Financial constraints also play a critical role in the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services. Insufficient funding can lead to inadequate counsellors, increased workloads, and decreased service quality. Additionally, these financial limitations can result in inadequate facilities and resources, restricting the ability to create a supportive environment for counselling sessions. As a result, guidance and counselling centres may find it challenging to reach underserved populations, diminishing the overall impact of their services and leaving vulnerable groups without necessary assistance. Ongoing financial issues threaten the sustainability of these services, potentially leading to closures or reduced operational hours. Such constraints can severely limit access to mental health support for both instructors and students (Unwada & Godfrey, 2020). Therefore, the funding resources and deficiency of finances need to be investigated in Ghana's guidance and counselling centres.

The physical infrastructure of guidance and counselling centres, such as offices, furniture, computers, and internet connectivity, is crucial for effective service delivery. A lack of these resources can hinder counsellors' ability to conduct workshops, facilitate group discussions, or provide one-on-one support, including online counselling. The physical environment in which counselling services are offered significantly influences their accessibility and effectiveness. By examining the state of physical infrastructure, the researcher wants to gain insights into whether these centres foster a conducive atmosphere for counselling.

Out of the literature reviewed, it was found that there were few studies on the functioning of guidance and counselling centres in public universities in Ghana. The studies focused on the effective and efficient administration of guidance and counselling centres in Ghana. However, the researcher did not come across any study focusing on the availability of human, financial, and physical infrastructure resources, functioning of guidance and counselling centres, problems facing guidance and counselling centres and teaching staff and students perception towards guidance and counselling centres. Therefore, the researcher embarks on this Study, titled "Functioning of Guidance and Counselling Centres in Public Universities of Ghana".

6.1.18 Research Questions

Based on the above rationale, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. How does the availability of resources help in the functioning of guidance and counselling centres?
2. How do guidance and counselling centres function in public universities of Ghana?
3. What problems are faced by guidance and counselling centres?
4. What are the perceptions of the teaching staff and students towards the functioning of guidance and counselling centres?

6.1.19 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the resources of guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana in terms of:
 - (i) Human resources.
 - (ii) Financial resources.
 - (iii) Physical infrastructure resources.
2. To examine the functioning of guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana.
3. To find out the problems facing guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana.
4. To measure the perceptions of the teaching staff and students towards the functioning of guidance and counselling centres.

6.1.20 Delimitation of the Study

The present study was delimited to five public universities in Ghana, namely, the University of Ghana (UG), the University of Cape Coast (UCC), the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) and the University for Development Studies (UDS).

6.1.21 Explanation of the Terms

Functioning: Functioning these are the availability of resources and their need to provide services to the teaching staff and students.

Human Resources: Refers to counsellors qualifications, their roles, their time management, their counselling knowledge and techniques, and their record-keeping within the centres.

Physical Infrastructure Resources: These are tangible items used in guidance and counselling centres, such as counsellors' offices and furniture. Communicating online and offline using printed and non-printed documents, such as daily newspapers, employment news, magazines, journals, telephone, and the internet.

Financial Resources: These are the funding such as sources of funding and frequency of funds provided to the centres for the administration of the centres.

Public Universities: These are universities funded by the government of Ghana.

6.1.22 Operational Definition of the Term

Perception: Perception in this study refers to the score obtained in the perception scales administered to teaching staff and students in the guidance and counselling centres.

6.2 Review of Related Literature

The present review of related literature focuses on the various aspects of guidance and counselling centres. The studies have been reviewed from 1991 to 2023. An attempt has been made to examine research from diverse perspectives around guidance and counselling centres.

6.2.1 Classification of Review of Related Literature

The investigator reviewed 73 related studies. The studies have been reviewed from 1991 to 2023. The reviewed literature provided insight into key areas like guidance and counselling centres human resources, physical infrastructure resources, financial resources, counselling need, time management, problems facing guidance and counselling centres, teachers and students perception of guidance and counselling.

The most commonly research design used was the descriptive survey design. It was also learned that these researchers mostly used simple random and purposive sampling to select samples. The majority of these investigators collected their data through questionnaires. Others also applied for questionnaires and interviews. The collected data were analysed quantitatively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Others were analysed qualitatively. Some also used both quantitative and qualitative analysis. It was learned from the related literature that qualitative and quantitative methods could be used in conducting a descriptive survey study.

Out of the literature reviewed, it was found that there were few studies on the functioning of guidance and counselling centres in public universities in Ghana. The studies focused on the effective and efficient administration of guidance and counselling centres in Ghana. However, the researcher did not come across any study focusing on the availability of human, financial, and physical infrastructure resources, functioning of guidance and counselling centres, problems facing guidance and counselling centres and teaching staff and students perception towards guidance and counselling centres. Therefore, the researcher embarks on this Study, titled "Functioning of Guidance and Counselling Centres in Public Universities of Ghana". Perhaps suggestions could be sought to improve guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana.

6.3 Methodology

6.3.1 Research Design of the Study

The researcher adopted a descriptive survey method for this current study.

6.3.2 Population

For this study, the population consisted of all fifteen public universities of Ghana, all counsellors at guidance and counselling centres in the 15 public universities of Ghana, all teaching staff, and all students who visited guidance and counselling centres in the 15 public universities of Ghana.

6.3.3 Sample

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The 15 public universities were grouped into three strata: North zone, Central zone, and South zone. The

lottery method was used to select the universities in each zone. One out of the three public universities in the North zone was selected (30%). In the Central zone, one out of the four public universities was selected (30%). Finally, three out of eight public universities in the South zone were selected (30%). All 42 counsellors of the five sampled public universities formed part of the sample. In proportion, 106 out of 352 teaching staff members who visited the 5 sample public universities guidance and counselling centres were selected as sample (30%). 523 out of 1745 students who visited the 5 sample public universities guidance and counselling centres were selected as sample (30%).

The sample covers five public universities, 42 counsellors from the five sampled public universities, 106 teaching staff and 523 students. The total sample size selected was 671 participants.

6.3.4 Description of Tools

As per the requirements of the objectives of the study, data selected to human, financial, and physical infrastructure resources; functioning of the guidance and counselling centres; and problems facing the centres was required. Data related to perceptions of the teaching staff and students towards the functioning of guidance and counselling centres was needed. The tools were constructed by the researcher to collect the data to achieve the objectives.

- I. Questionnaire: To achieve objective no. one, two and three of the present study. A questionnaire for counsellors was constructed.
- II. Observation schedule: An observation schedule to achieve objective no. one (physical infrastructure resources) was prepared.
- III. Perception Scale: To achieve objective no. four, perception scales for teaching staff and students was constructed.

6.3.4.1 Questionnaires for Counsellors

The questionnaire included dimensions such as human resources, financial resources, functioning of guidance and counselling centres and problems facing guidance and counselling centres. The questionnaire comprised of 87 items. The questionnaire was used to obtain data on human and financial resources, the functioning of guidance and counselling centres and problems facing the centres. Open-ended and close-ended questions were included in the questionnaire.

6.3.4.2 Observation Schedule

The observation schedule included components such as rooms, furniture, ICT equipment and document materials. The observation schedule comprised of 30 items. The observation schedule was used to obtain data on physical infrastructure resources of guidance and counselling centres.

6.3.4.3 Perception Scale for Teaching Staff

A 5-point Likert-type perception scale was constructed. The perception scale comprised of 22 items. The perception scale included dimensions such as qualification of counsellors, functioning of guidance and counselling and social/personal guidance and counselling. The perception scale was used to measure the perceptions of the teaching staff.

The perception scale had 5 alternatives stated in the scale. The scores of the alternatives ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The 5 alternatives included strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. The scores were assigned as follows: strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). For each statement, teaching staff were required to tick (✓) on one alternative only.

6.3.4.4 Perception Scale for Students

A 5-point Likert-type perception scale was constructed. The perception scale comprised of 30 items. The perception scale included dimensions such as qualification of counsellors, functioning of guidance and counselling centres, social/personal guidance and counselling, vocational guidance and counselling and educational guidance and counselling. The perception scale was used to measure the perceptions of the students. The perception scale had 5 alternatives stated in the scale. The scores of the alternatives ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The 5 alternatives included strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. The scores were assigned as follows: strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). For each statement, students were required to tick (✓) on one alternative only.

6.3.5 Validation of the Tools

The prepared tools were presented to eight experts in Education and Psychology for validation. The experts analysed and scrutinised the tools prepared by the investigator in terms of content appropriateness and relevance to the study. The language employed was also analysed for

ambiguity, comprehension and understanding of the questions by indicating relevant (✓) or irrelevant (x) to each item in every dimension and providing comments and suggestions. Based on the expert's suggestions, the tools were modified. The experts who validated the tools are listed in the appendix. In addition, the finalised validated tools were included in the appendix.

6.3.6 Data collection procedure

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from his guide at the Department of Education, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, to seek permission from the sampling universities' authorities and respondents i.e. counsellors, teaching staff, and students. Before gathering the data, informal introductory visits were made to the individual universities' guidance and counselling centres.

The questionnaire and the perception scales were administered personally to the respondents. The researcher personally collected the data using questionnaire, an observation schedule and perception Scales within a period of three months (June to August 2023).

6.3.7 Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively using descriptive analysis techniques, applying frequency, percentage and intensity index to achieve the study objectives. The data analysis was performed objectively as follows.

5.3.7.1 Data Analysis Pertaining to Objectives 1, 2 and 3

To study the functioning of guidance and counselling centres, both close-ended and open-ended questions were used to collect the data. The data collected from the close-ended questions were analysed quantitatively. However, the data collected from the open-ended questions were also analysed qualitatively. Both close-ended and open-ended questions were analysed using descriptive statistical analysis through frequency and percentage to determine the responses of the majority. The analysed data are presented in tabular form with frequencies and percentages for clarity.

To study the availability of physical infrastructure resources in guidance and counselling centres, an observation schedule was used to collect the data. The observation schedule data collected were analysed qualitatively.

6.3.7.2 Data Analysis Pertaining to Objective 4

Perception scales were used to collect data to study the perceptions of teaching staff and students towards the functioning of guidance and counselling centres. The data collected by the perception scales were analysed using descriptive analysis, employing frequency and percentage.

6.4 Implication of the Findings

The present study studied the functioning of guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana. The data collected from the study leads to the inferences of the present study. The findings from the present study have aided the researcher in deriving the following implications for further improvement in the present study.

6.4.1 Government of Ghana

- The government of Ghana should increase budgetary allocations to the universities to enhance guidance and counselling centres operational capacity and improve service delivery. This will increase their ability to provide effective services. Adequate budget allocations to the centres can bolster their functionality and bring an environment conducive to delivering comprehensive and accessible counselling services to teaching staff and students.
- The government of Ghana should provide adequate physical infrastructure resources such as counsellors offices, rooms, computers, and printers to the guidance and counselling centres. It will promote a holistic and student-centric approach to guidance and counselling within academic institutions.
- The government should establish more universities offering guidance and counselling courses that will train more trained counsellors to stop the inadequate number of counsellors in the guidance and counselling centres.
- The government of Ghana should implement standardised digital record-keeping systems for counsellors to ensure secure, organised, and easily accessible records of counselling sessions. This will improve the efficiency and accountability of the counselling process while facilitating better follow-up services for students.

6.4.2 University Administrations

- The university administrations should recruit more qualified personnel to reduce the workload on existing counsellors and ensure that teaching staff and students receive adequate guidance and counselling. This will help the counsellors to reduce prolonged waiting times for teaching staff and students seeking counselling, hindering their timely access to crucial mental health and academic support.
- The university administrations should invest in technological infrastructure like better internet connectivity to facilitate online counselling, which is increasingly important in the current educational landscape. Allocate space on the university website for guidance and counselling centres to facilitate session bookings, which could substantially augment the utilisation of online counselling services. This would ensure that students and teaching staff have equal access to counselling support, especially in remote or underserved areas.
- The university administrations should use their internally generated funds to construct office spaces for the counsellors in the guidance and counselling centres.

6.4.3 Guidance and Counselling Units

- The guidance and counselling unit should create awareness of the guidance and counselling services throughout the year, not only during orientation programmes for fresh students.
- The guidance and counselling unit should appropriately use the funds given to them specifically earmarked for the effective functioning of guidance and counselling centres. This will aid them to organise more programmes for teaching staff and students.
- The guidance and counselling unit should organise frequent workshops, seminars and in-service training for the lecturer counsellors in the guidance and counselling centres at least twice a year to ensure students receive up-to-date guidance and counselling. This can be achieved by allocating resources for event planning and involving industry professionals to provide practical insights.

6.4.4 Counsellors

- Counsellors should engage themselves in workshops and in-service training organised by the guidance and counselling unit to enrich their skills in online counselling.

- Counsellors should continue their dedication to using the available resources to maintain and strengthen their efforts to provide essential social/personal, vocational, and educational guidance and counselling services to their teaching staff and students. These will help students get current relevant job information and the prescribed curriculum.

6.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the researcher experience, findings and conclusions, the following suggestions were reached:

1. A study on functioning of guidance and counselling centres in private universities of Ghana.
2. A comparative study in counselling to evaluate the practices of guidance and counselling services in Ghana's public and private tertiary institutions.
3. A qualitative study on students experience with online counselling at universities in Ghana.
4. A study on the impact of guidance and counselling on students academic achievement in universities of Ghana.
5. Students' attitudes towards academic counselling services at public universities in Ghana.

6.8 Conclusion

The present study studies the functioning of guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana. The study focused on resources, i.e. human, financial and physical infrastructure, the functioning of guidance and counselling centres, problems facing guidance and counselling centres, and teaching staff and students perceptions. Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that studying guidance and counselling centres in educational institutions is essential. It was found that the guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana have human, financial and physical infrastructure resources but are insufficient. Inadequate resources such as counsellors, funding, offices for counsellors, and inactive internet network problems. Therefore, the study advocates for supporting and

strengthening approaches to address these resource concerns and enhance the efficacy of guidance and counselling centre services in public universities across Ghana. The present study found that the guidance and counselling centres are functioning. The counsellors used the available resources effectively to provide teaching staff and students with educational, vocational and social/personal guidance and counselling services. This indicated that providing more resources to the centres will aid the centres to function well. Therefore, counsellors must continue their dedication to use the available resources to maintain and strengthen their efforts to provide essential social/personal, vocational, and educational guidance and counselling services to their teaching staff and students. These will help students get current relevant job information and the prescribed curriculum. The present study also found that teaching staff and students had favourable perception towards the guidance and counselling centres service delivery. Hence, the government of Ghana, university administrations, guidance and counselling units and counsellors should corroborate to find solutions to the guidance and counselling centres problems. The implications of the findings are essential for improving the services delivery of guidance and counselling services.