

**FUNCTIONING OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING CENTRES IN PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES OF GHANA**

A

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1.0 INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping society, as it is the key to disseminating knowledge, skills, and values that enable individuals to understand their rights and responsibilities, thereby fostering societal progress. It promotes economic, social, and cultural development while encouraging global collaboration and mutual understanding (Karthikeyan, 2015). The prosperity of many developed nations can be attributed to the strength of their education systems, which reduce poverty, inequality, and lay the foundation for sustainable growth (World Bank, 2016). However, less developed countries, including Ghana, face numerous challenges in their educational systems that hinder their progress and development (Abugieye, 2010).

Education is undeniably the cornerstone of human resource development and national progress (Prasad & Gupta, 2020). A robust education system not only drives economic growth but also creates an enlightened society, equipped to address critical issues such as violence, injustice, and corruption (Asare, 2011; Prasad & Gupta, 2020). Furthermore, education empowers individuals to achieve self-sufficiency and actively contribute to poverty eradication (Asare & Nti, 2014). In this context, education serves as an essential driver for building a strong, progressive society.

In Ghana, despite the importance of education, university students and teachers face a myriad of challenges that impact their academic success and overall well-being. These challenges include issues related to academic choices, vocational uncertainty, personal/social struggles, and limited access to guidance (Atta-Frimpong, 2013; Salawu, 2008). University students in Ghana frequently experience difficulties such as making poor academic decisions, lack of educational information, gender bias in subject selection, inadequate study habits, and feelings of isolation. Additionally, vocational challenges, including career indecision and lack of career information, further complicate their academic experience (Salawu, 2008). These issues contribute to significant emotional and social difficulties for both students and teachers, including stress, anxiety, substance abuse, and teenage pregnancy, which adversely affect their performance and engagement within the university (Salawu, 2008; Ocansey, 2018).

Recognising these challenges, the Ghanaian government has implemented policies aimed at enhancing guidance and counselling services across all educational levels, including universities (Essuman, 2015). The establishment of guidance and counselling centres within universities is a critical response to these issues, providing essential services to address both

academic and personal/social challenges faced by students, as well as the personal difficulties of teachers (Campbell & Nutt, 2008; Ocansey, 2018). These services play a pivotal role in helping students make informed decisions, providing career guidance, and addressing emotional and psychological issues that hinder their academic and personal development.

The role of guidance and counselling centres within universities is integral to supporting students throughout their academic journey. These centres offer preventive, developmental, and curative counselling services that assist students in making informed educational decisions and planning their careers (Eyo, Joshua & Esuong, 2010). Vocational guidance is particularly vital, helping students align their interests and abilities with appropriate career opportunities, ensuring realistic career choices (Taylor & Buku, 2006). The work of guidance counsellors in guiding students through their career choices is essential for helping them prepare for their future careers (Lunenburg, 2010; Sultana & Watts, 2004).

Beyond supporting students, guidance and counselling centres also play a significant role in assisting teachers, addressing personal and social challenges that may affect their professional performance. Counsellors are trained to recognise and respond to these issues, preventing disruptions in the academic environment and fostering a positive atmosphere for both teachers and students (Lunenburg, 2010). The centres also serve as a hub for developing essential social skills, such as effective communication, honesty, patience, and respect, all of which contribute to creating a conducive learning environment (Ocansey, 2018).

For guidance and counselling centres to function effectively, adequate resources are essential. These include human resources, physical infrastructure, and financial support, all of which are necessary to provide comprehensive and efficient counselling services (Adoga, 2018). However, many public universities in Ghana face resource constraints that significantly limit the effectiveness of their guidance and counselling services, leading to dissatisfaction among students, parents, and educational stakeholders (Alale, 2019; Hordofa, 2018). The availability of these resources is critical to ensuring that guidance and counselling centres can adequately address the challenges faced by students and teachers in the academic environment.

2.0 IMPLICATIONS OF REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE FOR PRESENT STUDY

A total 73 research studies from both Ghana and abroad were reviewed. Out of these, 29 studies were related to counselling need and functioning of guidance and counselling centres. This

theme includes human, infrastructure, and financial resources that aid in the effective functioning of guidance and counselling centres. 13 studies are related to problems of guidance and counselling centres. 31 studies were related to perception of guidance and counselling centres. It included teachers/lecturers, students and parents perceptions, and counsellors' role and performance.

Out of the literature reviewed, 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".

3.0 RATIONALE

The role of education in fostering students' academic growth is critical, but in Ghana, many students face significant challenges that hinder their academic progress. These difficulties, such as struggles with exam failures, often lead to confusion, frustration, and disappointment, especially when compounded by external pressures from parents or relatives during the university enrollment and course selection processes. One of the most pressing issues is the lack of adequate vocational guidance for university students, leaving many ill-prepared for their future careers (Salawu, 2008). Without proper career counselling and guidance throughout their university experience, students often face uncertainty regarding their future professional paths. Delaying career guidance until after graduation only exacerbates these challenges, leading to confusion about career options and a sense of disillusionment about their vocational futures.

This issue is compounded by the increasingly tumultuous atmosphere within Ghana's public universities. Instances of internal unrest, such as strikes and riots, along with a rise in student suicides, have contributed to a climate of violence and instability within these institutions (Brooklyn, 2023). These incidents not only disrupt students' educational experiences but also pose significant risks to their vocational and social development. If left unaddressed, the consequences of these challenges could be dire, underscoring the importance of strengthening guidance and counselling centres to provide the necessary support for students. Effective and well-resourced guidance and counselling services are essential for addressing these concerns and ensuring the holistic development of students in Ghanaian 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.

Unfortunately, many guidance and counselling centres in Ghanaian universities remain underfunded and under-resourced (Aidoo, 2011). The shortage of qualified counsellors, along with inadequate physical and financial resources, severely hampers the effectiveness of these services. This lack of resources leads to long waiting times for counselling sessions, diminishing the quality of support available to students and staff, and impeding timely access to mental health and academic assistance. The scarcity of counsellors further exacerbates the problem, limiting the ability of these centres to offer the comprehensive support that students need to navigate personal, social, vocational, and academic challenges (Kauchak & Eggen, 2011). As a result, students and staff may be left without the necessary resources to address their concerns, compromising their overall well-being and academic success. 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 play a pivotal role in the underperformance of guidance and counselling services in Ghanaian universities. Insufficient funding leads to a shortage of qualified counsellors, increased workloads, and a decline in service quality. Moreover, these financial limitations hinder the development of necessary physical infrastructure, such as offices, furniture, computers, and internet connectivity, which are essential for providing effective counselling services. Without proper funding and resources, guidance and counselling centres may struggle to reach underserved populations and provide adequate mental health support for both students and staff. This lack of resources further threatens the sustainability of these services, potentially leading to reduced operational hours or closures, which would have a devastating impact on those in need of support (Unwada & Godfrey, 2020). By examining the state of physical infrastructure, the researcher wants to gain insights into whether these centres foster a conducive atmosphere for counselling.

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

4.1 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?

4.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Functioning of guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana.

4.3 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 perception of the teaching staff and students towards the functioning of guidance and counselling centres.

4.4 EXPLANATION OF 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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).

4.7 RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE STUDY

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

4.8 POPULATION

The population of the current study consisted of all fifteen public universities of Ghana, all the 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.

4.9 SAMPLE

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The stratified random sampling technique was used to group the 15 public universities in Ghana into three strata: North zone, Central zone, and South zone. The researcher employed this sampling strategy to ensure that all groups in the population had the same chance of being represented in the sample.

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%), thus constituting University for Development Studies. In the Central zone, one out of the four public universities was selected (30%), thus constituting Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. Finally, three out of eight public universities in the South zone were selected (30%), thus constituting University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast and University of Education, Winneba.

All 42 counsellors of the five sampled public universities formed the part of the sample. In proportion, 106 out of 352 teaching staff members who visited the guidance and counselling centres were selected (30%). 523 out of 1745 students who visited the guidance and counselling centres were selected (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.

4.10 DESCRIPTION OF TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The researcher provided the tools below to achieve the study objectives and collected the data.

- 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.

4.7.4.1 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.

5.0 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The data collection process for this study began with the researcher obtaining an introductory letter from the Department of Education, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, to seek permission from the sampling universities' authorities and respondents including counsellors, teaching staff, and students.

As part of the preliminary phase of the study, informal introductory visits were made to the guidance and counselling centres of the universities included in the sampling frame. These visits were essential for establishing rapport and gaining a better understanding of the centres operations.

The research data was collected using a questionnaire and perception scales which was personally administered to the respondents. The questionnaire and perception scales was distributed during the respondents' free time to ensure that their work hours were not disrupted.

To maintain the integrity of the data collection process, no interference with the respondents' regular duties was made.

The data collection process took place over a period of three months, from June to August 2023. During this time, the researcher personally collected data through the use of questionnaires, an observation schedule, and perception scales in each sample university, ensuring comprehensive data collection across the targeted group of respondents. This approach was carefully designed to ensure that the data gathered was both accurate and reliable.

6.0 PROCEDURE OF DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 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 using percentage analysis. However, the data collected from the open-ended questions were also analysed qualitatively using content analysis. 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 using content analysis.

6.2 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.

The intensity index was used to determine the intensity statements of the teaching staff and student. In each dimension, the average intensity index was calculated. The perception Scales had five options: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree.

7.0 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Objective 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

Human Resources

- ❖ The majority of the counsellors in guidance and counselling centres in the public universities of Ghana had Ph.D. degrees with 6-10 years of working experience.
- ❖ Most of the counsellors had specialised in school and careers.
- ❖ The majority of the counsellors are lecturer counsellors.
- ❖ Most of the counsellors are from university of Cape Coast.

Financial Resources

- ❖ Most of the guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana received funding from their university administration.
- ❖ All the guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana received 1-5% of their university budgetary provisions.
- ❖ The budgetary allocation given to the centres to organise guidance and counselling services was insufficient.
- ❖ Most of the guidance and counselling centres received funding for physical infrastructure resources once a year.

Physical Infrastructure Resources

- ❖ It was found that guidance and counselling centres in the public universities of Ghana had sufficient stores for storage. However, they had insufficient offices for counsellors. Also, there are no separate rooms for testing and interviews.
- ❖ It was found that the guidance and counselling centres had sufficient tables, chairs, cabinets, cupboards, writing boards and notice boards.
- ❖ It was found that guidance and counselling centres had sufficient films. However, they have insufficient printers, scanners, computers, and telephones. Also, they do not have active internet for online counselling.
- ❖ It was found that guidance and counselling centres had sufficient daily newspapers, employment news, magazines, journals, monographs, career information manuals, records/files, charts and posters.

Major Findings of Objective 2

Objective 2: To examine the functioning of guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana.

Vocational Guidance and Counselling

- ❖ All the counsellors provided vocational guidance and counselling on developing career skills to their students. Most of them also provided vocational guidance and counselling on career choices, student self-employment and career assessment to their students.
- ❖ All the counsellors assisted their students with the latest and appropriate job information on vocational guidance and counselling. Most of the counsellors also assisted their students in occupational choices and the needed skills for applying for employment during vocational guidance and counselling.
- ❖ All of the counsellors organised vocational orientation for students to get information on how to make career choices. Most of them also organised students with knowledge in a specific career and organised entrepreneurial seminars for students.
- ❖ Less than half of the counsellors organised vocational seminars for students twice a year.

Educational Guidance and Counselling

- ❖ All the counsellors provided educational guidance and counselling on how to get information on the availability of scholarships, stipends, loans, etc. Most of the counsellors also provided educational guidance and counselling on choices of educational programmes and developing good study habits.
- ❖ All the counsellors assisted their students with the prescribed curriculum on educational guidance and counselling. Most of them also assisted their students in getting information on further education and developing knowledge and skills necessary for further studies on educational guidance and counselling.
- ❖ Most of the counsellors organised educational guidance and educational counselling programmes, respectively, for their students.
- ❖ Less than half of the counsellors organised educational seminars for students twice a year.

Social/Personal Guidance and Counselling

- ❖ The majority of the counsellors provided social/personal guidance and counselling on personality development to their teaching staff and students. Most of the counsellors also provided social/personal guidance and counselling on safety issues, assertiveness and interpersonal skills.
- ❖ All the counsellors assisted their teaching staff and students in recognising their strengths and weaknesses during social/personal guidance and counselling. Most of them also assisted their teaching staff and students in carrying out character-building activities and different types of emotional problems during social/personal guidance and counselling session.
- ❖ All the counsellors provided social/personal orientation on cooperation with friends of the opposite sex effectively to their teaching staff and students. Most of them provided social/personal orientation on effective use of leisure time for teaching staff and students, successful adjustment to the environment and solution to their emotional problems.
- ❖ Most of the counsellors organised social/personal seminars twice a year for teaching staff and students.

Use of Time in Guidance and Counselling Centres

- ❖ Guidance and counselling centres in the public universities of Ghana open at 8:00 a.m. and close at 5:00 p.m.
- ❖ The majority of the counsellors report at 8:00 a.m. and leave at 5:00 p.m.
- ❖ The guidance and counselling centres work 5 days a week, and most of the counsellors spend an average of 45 minutes on teaching staff and students during counselling sessions.

Counselling Tools and Techniques

- ❖ The majority of the counsellors used verbal and non-verbal communication as a medium of communication during the counselling process.
- ❖ Majority of the counsellors used personality tests and interviews techniques to collect data of their teaching staff and students. Most of the counsellors also used achievement tests, aptitude test, diagnostic tests and intelligence tests and observation techniques to collect data of their teaching staff and students.

- ❖ The majority of the counsellors used cognitive and rational emotive behavioural theory. Most of the counsellors also used psychoanalytic, behavioural and humanistic theories as a basis of the counselling techniques and therapies.
- ❖ All the counsellors used direct counselling techniques during the counselling process. Most of the counsellors also used eclectic counselling and Non-direct counselling.

Services Provided by the Counsellor

- ❖ Majority of the counsellors informed their teaching staff and students of the university's guidance and counselling centre during orientation programmes for fresh students. Most of the counsellors also informed their teaching staff and students of the university's guidance and counselling centre during university gatherings.
- ❖ All the counsellors meet their teaching staff and students at guidance and counselling centres for counselling sessions.
- ❖ All the counsellors provided guidance services such as information services, evaluation services, orientation services, and follow-up services to their teaching staff and students.
- ❖ The majority of the counsellors provided online follow-up services and face-to-face interview follow-up services to their teaching staff and students. Most of them also provided discussion follow-up services to their teaching staff and students.
- ❖ All the counsellors act as advocates creating awareness of the guidance and counselling centre, act as a resource person for the community, act as a liaison between the university and the community, and as a counsellor for their teaching staff and students.

Online Counselling

- ❖ Majority of the counsellors in the guidance and counselling centres in Public university of Ghana did not conduct online counselling for their teaching staff and students.
- ❖ Majority of the counsellors in the university guidance and counselling centres preferred face-to-face counselling to online counselling.
- ❖ Public university guidance and counselling centres did not have reliable internet for online counselling facilities.
- ❖ Majority of the counsellors used smartphones for online counselling. Less than half of the counsellors also did not use any of the devices for online counselling.

- ❖ Majority of the counsellors responded that their teaching staff and students benefited from their online counselling.

Keeping Record of Counselling Sessions

- ❖ The majority of the counsellors kept records, sessions, and progress notes of their teaching staff and students in their offices.
- ❖ The university authorities checked most of the counselling records maintained by counsellors.

Recording of Counselling Sessions

- ❖ Most of the counsellors recorded the sessions of their teaching staff and students during counselling.
- ❖ Most of the counsellors used smartphones to record the counselling service of their teaching staff and students. Half of the counsellors also used laptops to record their teaching staff and students.
- ❖ The majority of counsellors used audio recordings to record the sessions of their teaching staff and students during counselling.

Major Findings of Objective 3

Objective 3: To find out the problems facing guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana.

- ❖ All the counsellors stated that the centres have inadequate number of counsellors. Most of them also stated heavy workload problems as lecturer counsellors.
- ❖ All the counsellors stated that the centres face inadequate funding for the campus and community outreach programmes. Most of the counsellors also stated inadequate funding to organise seminars and programmes.
- ❖ All the counsellors responded that the centres were facing inadequate number of offices for counsellors. Most of them also responded that the centres were facing inadequate tables and chairs.
- ❖ None of the guidance and counselling centres have active internet networks for online counselling.

Major Findings of Objective 4

Objective 4: To measure the perception of the teaching staff and students towards the functioning of guidance and counselling centres.

Perception of the Teaching Staff

Details of Counsellors

- ❖ The average intensity index of 3.60 indicated that the teaching staff perception was a favourable towards the details of counsellors, which included qualification of counsellors and experienced counsellors. However, teaching staff had an unfavourable perception of sufficient number of counsellors.

Use of Time in Guidance and Counselling Centres

- ❖ The average intensity index of 4.41 indicated that teaching staff perception was a favourable towards the use of time in guidance and counselling centres, which included regularity of counsellors and adequate time given to the teaching staff during guidance and counselling sessions, respectively.

Services Provided by the Counsellor

- ❖ The average intensity index of 4.26 indicated that teaching staff perception was a favourable towards the services provided by a counsellor, which included referring of teaching staff to other agencies, use of appropriate counselling techniques, counsellors confidentiality, liaison between the university and the community, use of latest psychological tests, relationship with teaching staff and effective counselling to teaching staff.

Online Counselling

- ❖ The average intensity index of 2.93 indicated that teaching staff perception was neither a favourable nor an unfavourable, it was undecided towards online counselling. However, teaching staff had an unfavourable perception, which included effectiveness of online counselling and adequate resources for online counselling. Teaching staff also had a favourable perception towards the benefits of online counselling.

Keeping Records of Counselling Sessions

- ❖ The average intensity index of 4.53 indicated that teaching staff perception was a favourable towards keeping of records, which included having appropriate ethics in keeping of records, and keeping updated records.

Social / Personal Guidance and Counselling

- ❖ The average intensity index of 4.34 indicated that teaching staff perception was a favourable towards social/personal guidance and counselling, which included conduct of social/personal counselling, conduct of social/personal guidance, assistance in personal/social problems, and organisation of relevant orientation programmes on social issues.

Perception of the Students

Details of Counsellors

- ❖ The average intensity index of 3.53 indicated that the students perception was a favourable towards details of counsellors, which included qualification of counsellors and experienced counsellors. However, students had an unfavourable perception towards sufficient number of counsellors.

Use of Time in Guidance and Counselling Centres

- ❖ The average intensity index of 4.26 indicated that students perception was a favourable towards the use of time in guidance and counselling centres, which included regularity of counsellors, and adequate time given to the students during guidance and counselling sessions, respectively.

Services Provided by the Counsellor

- ❖ The average intensity index of 4.13 indicated that students perception was a favourable towards the services provided by a counsellor, which included referring of students to other agencies, use of appropriate counselling techniques, counsellors confidentiality, liaison between the university and the community, use of latest psychological tests, relationship with students and effective counselling to students.

Online Counselling

- ❖ The average intensity index of 2.73 indicated that students perception was neither a favourable nor an unfavourable, it was undecided towards online counselling.

However, students had an unfavourable perception, which included effectiveness of online counselling and adequate resources for online counselling. Students also had a favourable perception towards the benefits of online counselling.

Keeping Record of Counselling Sessions

- ❖ The average intensity index of 4.29 indicated that students perception was a favourable towards keeping of records, which included having appropriate ethics in keeping of records, and keeping updated records.

Social / Personal Guidance and Counselling

- ❖ The average intensity index of 4.46 indicated that students perception was a favourable towards social/personal guidance and counselling, which included conduct of social/personal counselling, conduct of social/personal guidance, assistance in personal/social problems, and organisation of relevant orientation programmes on social issues.

Vocational Guidance and Counselling

- ❖ The average intensity index of 4.24 indicated that students perception was a favourable towards vocational guidance and counselling, which included conduct of vocational guidance services, conduct of vocational counselling services, assistance given in relevant job information and assistance given in developing career skills.

Educational Guidance and Counselling

- ❖ The average intensity index of 4.34 indicated that students perception was a favourable towards educational guidance and counselling, which included conduct of educational guidance programmes, conduct of educational counselling programmes, assistance given in prescribed curriculum and help given in relevant study skills.

8.0 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.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

10.0 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.

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