

# CHAPTER I

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 1.1 Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping society by fostering the dissemination of knowledge, skills, and values that enable individuals to understand their rights and responsibilities. It is the foundation upon which societal progress is built, fostering economic, social, and cultural development while promoting global collaboration through mutual tolerance and understanding (Karthikeyan, 2015). Many developed nations owe their prosperity to the strength of their education systems, which reduce poverty and inequality and create the foundation for sustainable economic growth (World Bank, 2016). In contrast, less developed countries often face challenges stemming from weaknesses in their educational systems, which impede progress (Abugieye, 2010).

The importance of education cannot be overstated as it serves as the cornerstone for the development of human resources in any nation (Prasad & Gupta, 2020). A robust education system not only contributes to economic development but also leads to the creation of an enlightened society, equipped with the necessary skills to address societal issues such as violence, injustice, and corruption (Asare, 2011; Prasad & Gupta, 2020). Furthermore, education enables individuals to achieve self-sufficiency and provides them with the knowledge to contribute meaningfully to the eradication of poverty (Asare & Nti, 2014). Thus, education plays an essential role in building a strong, progressive society.

However, despite the vital role of education, university students and teachers in Ghana face a range of challenges that hinder their academic success and well-being. These challenges include educational, vocational, and personal/social issues faced by students, and personal/social issues faced by teachers (Atta-Frimpong, 2013). University students in Ghana often encounter difficulties such as choosing the wrong academic programmes, lack of educational information, gender stereotyping in subject selection, poor study habits, difficulties in notetaking, exam-related problems, and a general sense of isolation, with few resources to turn to for guidance ((Salawu, 2008). Moreover, vocational challenges, such as career indecision, lack of career information, and an inability to assess one's abilities, further complicate students' educational experience ((Salawu, 2008).

Additionally, both teachers and students are confronted with personal and social challenges that impact their emotional well-being and academic performance. These issues include anxiety, stress, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, and low self-image ((Salawu, 2008). Some of these issues are minor, while others are more serious, and they can interfere with students' and teachers' ability to function effectively within the university environment (Ocansey, 2018). These challenges not only disrupt the academic process but also raise concerns among parents and educational stakeholders (Egbo, 2015; Ocansey, 2018).

Recognising these challenges, the Ghanaian government has implemented educational policies designed to promote guidance and counselling services at all levels of education, including universities (Essuman, 2015). These policies have led to the establishment of guidance and counselling centres in universities across the country, providing essential services to address the educational, vocational, and personal/social challenges faced by students, as well as the personal/social problems of teachers (Campbell & Nutt, 2008; Ocansey, 2018). Such services are crucial for helping students make informed decisions, providing career guidance, and addressing emotional and psychological issues.

The role of guidance and counselling centres in universities is central to the overall educational framework. These centres offer a variety of services, including preventive, developmental, and curative counselling, to assist students in making informed educational decisions and planning their futures (Eyo, Joshua & Esuong, 2010). Vocational guidance, in particular, helps students match their characteristics and interests with appropriate career opportunities, ensuring that they make realistic career choices (Taylor & Buku, 2006). The role of guidance counsellors in identifying and addressing the factors influencing students' career choices is vital in helping students navigate their educational journey and prepare for the workforce (Lunenburg, 2010; Sultana& Watts, 2004).

In addition to supporting students, guidance and counselling centres also assist teachers by addressing personal and social challenges that may impact their professional performance. Counsellors are trained to identify the signs and causes of these issues and provide appropriate interventions, preventing negative outcomes such as disruptions in academic environments and other forms of social dysfunction (Lunenburg, 2010)). The guidance and counselling centre also serves as a hub for developing social skills among students and teachers, such as effective communication, honesty, patience, and respect, all of which are crucial for fostering a positive educational atmosphere (Ocansey, 2018).

To function effectively, guidance and counselling centres require adequate resources. These include human resources, physical infrastructure, and financial support, all of which are necessary for the smooth operation of counselling services (Adoga, 2018). Without these resources, counselling centres cannot provide the necessary support to address the problems faced by students and teachers (Atta-Frimpong, 2013). Unfortunately, many public universities in Ghana face resource constraints, which hinder the effectiveness of their guidance and counselling services, resulting in dissatisfaction among students and parents (Alale, 2019; Hordofa, 2018). The availability of resources is critical to the functioning of these centres and their ability to address the challenges that students and teachers face in the academic environment.

## **1.2 Guidance and Counselling: Historical Perspective**

Over the past few years, guidance and counselling have emerged as essential aspects of education. It has deep roots in America's democratic concern for individual rights, dignity, and worth. The guidance and counselling movement first started in the United States of America.

### **1.2.1 Guidance and Counselling Movement in the World**

The development of guidance and counselling services can be traced back to the early 20th century, with the first notable efforts emerging in Boston, USA. George Merrill, a California educator, pioneered individual guidance and educational counselling, specifically in follow-up and placement programmes for former students. The guidance movement formally began in 1908 when Frank Parsons, a Boston-based social reformer, launched vocational counselling, an initiative that laid the foundation for organised guidance services (Atta-Frimpong, 2013). This movement quickly spread to other civic organisations, Christian associations, and cities across the United States, eventually reaching various countries worldwide, including France, England, Japan, Norway, Australia, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, and Ghana. As a British colony, Ghana experienced various trends in career guidance before its independence, eventually adopting a more formalised approach to guidance and counselling services.

### **1.2.2 Guidance and Counselling in Ghana**

In Ghana, guidance and counselling services emerged in the 1960s, although the practice of guidance can be traced to informal and traditional methods before this period. In the pre-modern context, guidance was often provided by influential community members such as

elders, traditional chiefs, and religious leaders. These individuals were regarded as sages, offering advice on a range of matters including marriage, morality, and social conduct. Their guidance was typically delivered through various cultural practices such as dance, poetry, music, and traditional medicine (Atta-Frimpong, 2013). Additionally, guidance was informally integrated into educational settings, where teachers, chaplains, school prefects, and housemasters offered moral and social advice to students. This informal practice continued in boarding schools, where these individuals helped students address personal, financial, and moral issues, as well as orienting new students to the school environment. The early 1960s to 1990s saw a gradual transition towards a more formal, organised approach to guidance and counselling, as certain individuals and educational institutions contributed significantly to the development of this service.

### **1.2.3 Guidance and Counselling in Ghana: Contributions of Individuals and Institutions**

Between the 1960s and 1990s, several individuals and institutions in Ghana played key roles in the establishment of formal guidance and counselling services. One of the prominent figures in this development was D.O.K. Dankwa, a lecturer at the University of Cape Coast. Dankwa was instrumental in advocating for the formation of guidance and counselling programmes within the country's second-cycle institutions. He lobbied for the introduction of guidance and counselling courses at the University of Cape Coast's Institute of Educational Planning and Administration and contributed to the development of vocational programmes that trained teachers to serve as guidance coordinators (teacher counsellors) in schools. Dankwa's efforts culminated in the establishment of graduate-level programmes in guidance and counselling and the integration of counselling courses into the undergraduate education curriculum (Atta-Frimpong (2013).

Another key figure was Nathaniel Kofi Pecku, who also worked at the University of Cape Coast from the 1970s to the 1990s. Pecku supported the guidance and counselling movement by delivering lectures at conferences and training sessions aimed at heads of teacher training colleges and secondary schools. His contributions included working alongside Dankwa to implement vocational courses for teachers, enabling them to become guidance coordinators in their schools. Pecku also played a significant role in the organisation of graduate-level guidance and counselling programmes at the university, further formalising the training of guidance professionals (Atta-Frimpong (2013).

J. Opoku, a lecturer at the University of Cape Coast, also made notable contributions to the growth of guidance and counselling in Ghana. Opoku published several articles in newspapers that highlighted the importance of guidance and counselling for national development. He was also involved in organising and providing guidance and counselling programmes for students at the University of Cape Coast, helping to raise public awareness about the significance of these services in educational settings (Atta-Frimpong (2013)).

Other individuals, such as Joseph Kpakpoe-Allotey and E.T. Akwetey, worked as officials at the Curriculum Research and Development Unit (CRDU), now known as the Curriculum Research Development Division (CRDD) of the Ghana Education Service (GES). Their contributions included piloting the use of cumulative record cards in elementary schools and teacher training colleges, as well as partnering with the Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) to create professional courses for training guidance coordinators in secondary schools. Bulley, an expert in psychological testing at the University of Ghana, also played a critical role by introducing career selection tests for the country's industrial, military, and commercial sectors, thus extending the scope of guidance and counselling beyond educational institutions.

Several institutions were pivotal in establishing guidance and counselling services in Ghana. The Ghana Secondary School in Koforidua hosted many institutional conferences aimed at teacher training colleges and secondary schools. The Curriculum Research Development Unit (CRDU), now CRDD of GES, was the institutional body responsible for the planning, organisation, and coordination of guidance and counselling services in Ghanaian schools. Established in the late 1960s, the CRDU oversaw the introduction of guidance and counselling into both first and second-cycle schools. The University of Cape Coast also played a central role, where training in guidance and counselling began. The university's Faculty of Education and the Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) offered vacation courses to train guidance coordinators, who later served as teacher counsellors in their respective schools. The university's contributions included developing graduate programmes and incorporating guidance and counselling courses into undergraduate education programmes.

### **1.3 Policy Perspectives: Higher Education**

To enhance the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in Ghana, the government has implemented various policies and initiatives, beginning with the establishment of guidance and counselling centres within higher education institutions. This commitment reflects the

growing recognition of the importance of guidance and counselling in educational planning. In 1976, the Ministry of Education took significant strides by officially incorporating guidance and counselling into the educational policy framework. This move was aimed at addressing the social, behavioural, and personal challenges faced by students in higher education institutions (Taylor & Buku, 2006). The policy outlined key initiatives, including the establishment of formal guidance programmes and the introduction of structured guidance and counselling services in higher education.

By the 1981/82 academic year, the Ghanaian government further reinforced its commitment to guidance and counselling by allocating funds for these services in the national budget. This budgetary allocation aimed to improve the quality of guidance and counselling provided to both teachers and students, marking an important step towards strengthening support systems within the educational sector (Atta-Frimpong, 2013; Essuman, 1999). This financial support was intended to ensure that educational institutions could effectively offer professional counselling services to help students navigate their academic, personal, and social challenges.

In 2007, the Ghana Education Reform Committee, under the leadership of Anamuah-Mensah, highlighted the critical role of guidance and counselling in supporting students in making informed decisions, planning their academic and career paths, and fostering discipline within higher education. The reform policy emphasised the need for expanding educational services to include guidance and counselling, particularly focusing on the importance of information-sharing initiatives. This reform also placed special emphasis on the training of teachers in special needs guidance and counselling, ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities or specific educational needs, would have access to appropriate support (Ministry of Education Republic of Ghana, 2007).

Further developments in educational policy came in 2008 with the introduction of a white paper on educational reforms. This document called for the planning, coordination, and supervision of guidance services across the country. It also advocated for collaboration between universities and institutions specialising in psychology and education to develop standardised tests and assessment tools for guidance and counselling services (Atta-Frimpong, 2013). This collaboration aimed to ensure the quality and consistency of guidance services in Ghana's educational institutions.

The most recent policy developments, outlined in the Ministry of Education Republic of Ghana 2018 policy document, focus on the strategic integration of guidance and counselling services within the educational system. The policy emphasises the need to develop curricula that incorporate life skills education, sexual education, support for orphans and vulnerable children, and special educational needs. Additionally, it highlights the importance of strengthening structures at the university level to support guidance and counselling services (Ministry of Education Republic of Ghana, 2018). The policy also advocates for the establishment of comprehensive support structures to address issues such as drug abuse, internet fraud, occultism, exposure to obscene material, and inappropriate dressing. By ensuring the availability of professional counselling services at all educational levels, the policy aims to reduce these harmful behaviours and provide counsellors with the confidence and resources needed to fulfil their roles effectively.

Through these various policy measures, the government of Ghana has demonstrated a sustained commitment to improving guidance and counselling services, recognising their crucial role in promoting students' overall well-being and academic success in higher education.

## **1.4 Guidance: Meaning and Concept**

### **1.4.1 Guidance**

The concept of guidance has evolved significantly over time, encompassing a broad range of definitions and applications. As a discipline, guidance impacts nearly every aspect of human endeavour ((Sedofia, 2014), which makes it difficult to offer a singular, precise definition. Despite this, numerous scholars and practitioners have made substantial contributions to the understanding of what guidance entails. At its core, the term 'guidance' is derived from the verb 'to guide,' which means to direct, manage, steer, or lead an individual through a process (John, 2015). In the context of education, guidance is viewed as a process through which individuals are directed towards educational, vocational, and personal decisions through a series of informed choices.

Several definitions have been put forward to capture the essence of guidance. For instance, Bedu-Addo (2016) defines guidance as 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". This definition implies that guidance is a process of supporting an individual in understanding themselves, as well as their personal and physical surroundings, to make meaningful judgments and intelligent decisions that will allow the person to improve their functionality. Similarly, Benedette et al. (2022) point out that guidance helps individuals make sense of themselves and their world. This implies that continuous guidance helps individuals understand their strengths and limitations and achieve their life objectives within their environment. Agwu (2020) takes a more familial approach, describing guidance as a form of parental influence that steers individuals toward decisions deemed to be in their best interests. Extending this concept further, Taylor & Buku (2006) propose that guidance is a lifelong process that assists individuals in defining their life goals and overcoming challenges. This lifelong aspect highlights the dynamic and continuous nature of guidance, which adapts to an individual's needs from birth to death. Athar (2019) point out that guidance is described as assisting people in realising and developing their potential and suggestions made by an experienced person on handling an issue. Atta-Frimpong (2013) summarised guidance as the total number of formal educational services purposely planned and executed to aid students in developing themselves to the maximum extent possible.

Moreover, guidance is described as a process aimed at helping individuals or groups through preventive and developmental measures. Unlike counselling, guidance does not necessarily require professional training or confidentiality but instead involves the steady support of individuals by mature, experienced persons in their environment. Guidance helps students at all educational levels rediscover themselves, understanding their strengths, weaknesses, and life goals within the context of environmental forces. It is not confined solely to academic growth but extends to the overall well-being and development of the individual, starting from early education and continuing through to university and beyond.

In conceptualising guidance, it is important to recognise its key characteristics;

**Process:** - A process is an event that is constantly changing throughout time. This means that guidance is not just one occurrence but a set of goal-oriented acts or steps that are supplied gradually over time.

**Help:** - Guidance helps or provides in the sense that its ultimate goal is to avoid, minimise, or solve issues. Individuals are therefore alerted (or prepared) to address impending challenges,

deal with existing negative behavioural patterns, accept their strengths, shortcomings, and uniqueness, and actively contribute to society.

It deals with;

Individual: - In this context, the term "individual" refers to students or persons who are in a general condition of disequilibrium, either academically or otherwise. As a result, such persons require aid in overcoming their disequilibrium and achieving equilibrium.

Assisting them to;

Understanding oneself entails discovering one's own identity. That is, they develop an understanding of their unique personality or orientation. Furthermore, guidance assists individuals in realising their full potential, including their skills, abilities, capabilities, likes, dislikes, shortcomings, goals, etc. This indicates that the guidance coordinator must be well-versed in the person's personality and how it influences his life choices.

Their world: - Here, guidance is defined as assisting the individual in understanding both his physical as well as human surroundings. The individual is helped to comprehend how to cope with inanimate objects (emotions, books, opinions, etc.) and people, all of whom impact the action the individual eventually takes. The social atmosphere enables the individual to deal with illogical concerns that impair his ability to perform efficiently. For example, how a parent interacts with a teenager can significantly increase his functionality. This will happen if he knows the teenager's behavioural and cognitive habits.

Guidance can be understood as service. In this regard, guidance geared at meeting a need (choice/decision-making, marital, educational, etc.) is distinguished by structured acts that make it meaningful, relevant, operational, and accessible to students and persons.

Guidance comprises 21st-century ideas that stem from two distinct but related traditions (Watts & Kidd, 2000). Guidance is a notion and a procedure (Rwechoka, 2014). As a notion, guidance worries about the student's optimal growth. The procedures assist the student in developing self-awareness (awareness of one's skills and limits) and self-direction (the capacity to solve issues and make independent decisions and choices). The concept is also a development of career (vocational) guidance services for students in preparation for the world's work and the development of guidance as an educational concept. Guidance programmes, activities, and

services primarily aim to assist an individual student in carrying out appropriate plans to achieve sufficient adjustment and satisfaction in all parts of their daily life. It is not distinct from education but is integral to the educational programme concept and process.

Any functioning guidance programme lies in its principles. The guidance principles depend on several fundamental ideals from guidance practitioners.

#### **1.4.2 Guidance: Principles**

The framework for guidance is guided by several key principles, which outline its nature, requirements, and objectives. John (2015) identifies several fundamental principles of guidance that underpin its effectiveness as follows:

**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.

Guidance is greatly aided by wise and knowledgeable leadership. It is often said that it is the principal of the school. This statement applies to structured guidance programmes. The intelligent application of the principles to the delivery of university programmes of guidance services is beneficial not only to the younger or older students for whom such programmes are designed but also to their parents, members of the school staff, and the community. In order to benefit from the functioning of guidance and counselling in our various university centres, counsellors need to practice guidance characteristics. The guidance characteristics help counsellors stay on their toes when dealing with students' problems.

### **1.4.3 Guidance: Important Characteristics**

The characteristics of the guidance include the entire educational process, beginning with the student's birth. It is characterised by processes or services designed to help individual students reach full maturity and serve society. It is also seen as a tool that helps achieve the general goals of education. 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.

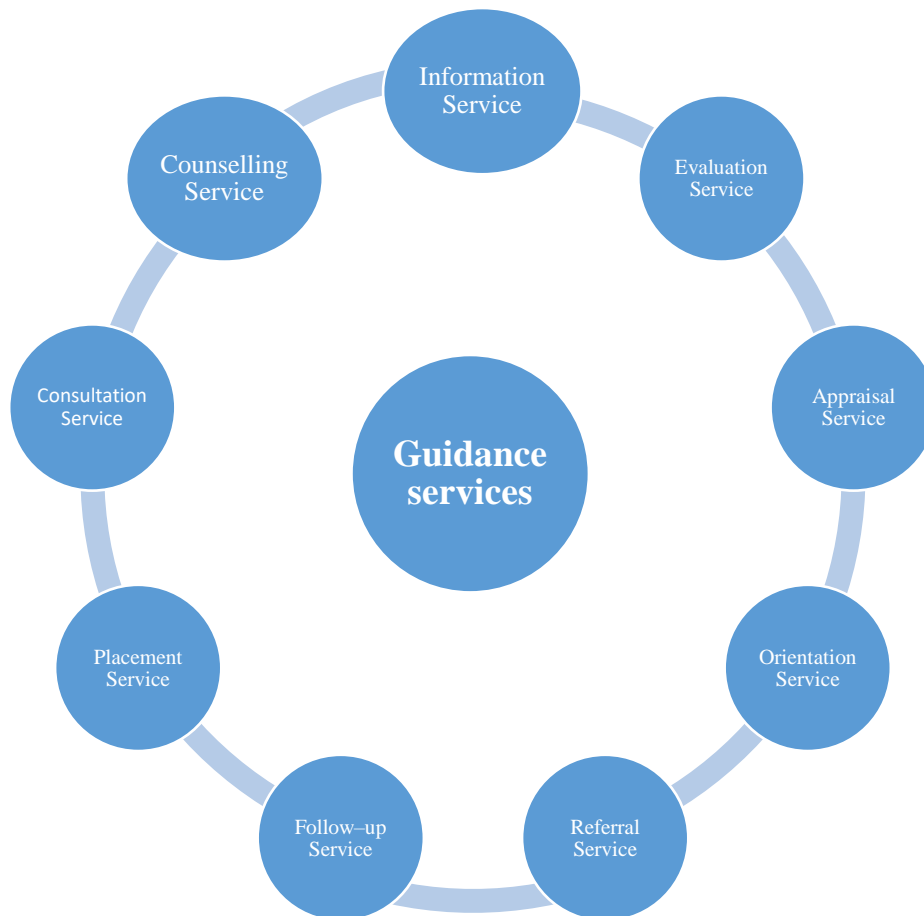
Importance to individual differences: Individual differences should be prioritised. No two people indeed are the same. Even twins are very different. Various measures can be used to test and assess multiple aspects of students' differences or personalities. This aspect cannot and should not be neglected 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.

As mentioned earlier, any such gaps will reduce the functioning of universities' guidance and counselling centres' services. Hence, taking a comprehensive look at guidance characteristics in various guidance and counselling centres is prudent.

#### 1.4.4 Types of Guidance Services

Figure 1.1 Structure 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. The world has become more complex and highly competitive with science, technology, politics, and industry advances. Therefore, students need more information on social, vocational, personal and educational opportunities to work toward them.

**Evaluation Service:** This is a procedure for evaluating guidance programmes. It is not a direct service for students compared to other services. Evaluation as a service in guidance assesses how the programme meets the objectives for its effective functioning. It leads to the conclusion

that assessments are performed on programmes regularly to identify any flaws or determine whether the programme's objectives are being met.

**Orientation Service:** Orientation services help students better adjust to any new environment. Information or training is given to students before they start new activities. New students from one level of education to another target are to be inducted or introduced to the new school life, the world's work, and future studies. An orientation service is provided to help students adjust better to any new environment.

**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. Additional guidance services can include counselling, placement, orientation, or referral.

Feedback from follow-up studies and research activities will help counsellors learn the new techniques to employ in their counselling. Allow counsellors to understand the strengths and weaknesses of students both inside and outside the school (university) work.

**Appraisal Service:** The appraisal service collects, analyses, and uses various objective data to understand the student better. This service plan collects, studies, and uses multiple subjective and objective personal, social, and psychological data about each student.

**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. Students are also assisted in entering acceptable higher education institutions. Vocational placement is concerned with helping students know and accept themselves, choosing jobs, preparing for them, documenting them, and adjusting to them. Social order addresses social problems, such as placing students in social groups to help develop their positive self-concept and appropriate social skills. This approach is an aspect of guidance that helps students find the opportunity to proceed from one area of educational opportunity to another to select relevant courses that will align.

**Consultation Service:** Consultation occurs when an individual seeks help, information, or advice from another person or a source that renders such assistance. Guidance involves discussing ideas among agencies, teachers, parents, and other guidance officials to assist students in overcoming their problems and other issues.

**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. In light of this, counselling can be defined as a service that aids learners in self-awareness and judgement, primarily emphasising personal growth and development. As a result, it serves as the primary driver of growth for guidance services. In conclusion, counselling services assist and guide specific students to better understand their educational, vocational, and personal requirements and plans via private conversations in a comforting setting. Therefore, counselling aims to alter behaviour, but this depends on the student's voluntary involvement.

## **1.5 Counselling: Meaning and Concept**

### **1.5.1 Counselling**

Counselling and guidance are terms often used interchangeably, yet they differ in meaning and function. While guidance tends to be broader, counselling is a more specific process aimed at addressing an individual's personal issues. A range of definitions for counselling has been proposed by scholars, each emphasising different aspects, such as the relationship between the counsellor and the student, or the nature of the counselling process itself. The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2019) defines counselling as a mutually agreed-upon meeting between a student and a counsellor, focusing on the student's interests at a particular time and place. Similarly, the European Association of Counselling (2013) describes counselling as a supportive relationship designed to help a students address their issues. Bedu-Addo (2016) describes counselling as "an interactive process of joining the counselee, who is vulnerable and who needs assistance, and the counsellor who is trained and educated to give his assistance, the goal of which is to help the counselee learn more effectively about himself and the reality of his environment". Athar (2019) further expands on this, stating that counselling involves assisting individuals in addressing and overcoming personal problems. 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. According to Bhattacharjee (2021), counselling is a form of talk therapy that provides a space for students to discuss their issues in a safe and supportive environment. Rwechoka (2014) emphasises the importance of the professional relationship between the counsellor and the student in resolving personal issues. Mohd (2020) succinctly defines counselling as a professional connection between a certified counsellor and a student, aimed at resolving specific problems.

From these definitions, it becomes clear that counselling is a mutual, professional relationship between a counsellor, who is trained to offer assistance, and a student or teacher, who seeks help to overcome personal challenges. The counselling relationship may vary based on the individual's needs but typically involves addressing developmental issues, making decisions, solving problems, managing crises, and gaining personal insights. The ultimate goal of counselling is to help individuals lead more fulfilling and resourceful lives. During counselling sessions, the counsellor listens actively and patiently, seeking to understand the concerns of the student or teacher. The counsellor then helps them view the situation from a different perspective, facilitating a clearer understanding of their issues. In this regard, counselling can take place in both face-to-face and online settings, where a joint agreement is established between the counsellor and the student or teacher to work together toward resolving the issue at hand (Davidson, 2020).

Counselling encompasses various functions, including informing, advising, and helping the individual explore their needs, feelings, or motivations to make informed decisions.

**Informing:** Involves the counsellor providing relevant information to the student or teacher.

**Advising:** Entails suggesting practical solutions and providing multiple options based on the individual's goals or interests.

**Counselling:** In its core function, helps the individual understand their own needs and motivations to make independent decisions for their personal growth and development.

Counselling can be conducted through two primary modes: face-to-face and online( Health Assured, 2018).

### 1.5.2 Modes of Counselling

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

**Face-to-face counselling:** This entails a qualified professional meeting with each teacher or student 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 personalised service while remaining completely confidential. One of the primary advantages of face-to-face counselling is that it allows teachers and students to form a personal relationship with a counsellor, making it more straightforward to build trust and address any concerns they may be experiencing (Assured Health, 2018). Face-to-face counselling allows the therapist to create a deeper relationship with the teacher or student, which allows for a more in-depth understanding of the teacher or student position. This counselling is delivered in private consulting rooms, which provide a confidential, relaxing environment and eliminate the risk of being overheard or judged. A one-on-one appointment with a skilled counsellor allows them to read the teacher or student body language, which can sometimes help them better comprehend their thoughts and feelings more clearly. It also ensures that complex emotions are picked up and that no essential details remain unnoticed. A face-to-face counselling service is also highly effective when dealing with sensitive issues, as misunderstandings may be cleared because they are intimate gatherings and can be more informal.

**Online counselling:** Is a more contemporary approach that leverages technology to provide counselling services through the internet (Murdock, 2016). Online counselling is conducted through various platforms such as Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams, FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom, and Webex (Ansah et al., 2019). This mode offers flexibility and convenience, as it allows students and teachers to access counselling services from any location, using devices like desktop computers, laptops, tablets, or smartphones (Murdock, 2016). Online counselling is typically delivered in two ways: video conferencing, which mimics face-to-face interaction, and text-based communication, where counselling occurs through written chat. Both methods provide an effective means of delivering counselling support, though face-to-face interactions are often considered more personal and conducive to building trust (Bozkurt, 2013; Morrow, 2021).

### **1.5.3 Counselling: Principles**

Counselling depends on certain well-accepted concepts, such as professional activities. The professional service addresses well-defined procedures and specific guiding principles. Kumar (2020), listed the principles of counselling as follows:

**Empathy:** Instead of displaying pity, put yourself in the teacher or student 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 teacher or student, e.g., day, time, and place to meet.

**Acceptance:** Accept the teacher or student physical, psychological, social, economic, and cultural circumstances.

**Counselling is not mandatory:** Teachers and students should not be forced into 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 teacher or student will feel comfortable and confident in their problems. The counsellor always keeps the teacher or student name and situation private and assures the teacher or student of this.

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

Counselling principles address the development of the whole teacher or student. It does not only focus on the student academic achievement. However, studies should also focus on different aspects, such as social and physical aspects. Counselling is a two-way process; thus, counselling occurs between two people, always a counsellor and a teacher or a student, except in group counselling. Wango (2006) emphasises the need for a professional relationship in counselling, stating that one must be instructed to assist the other. In the counselling procedure,

the counsellor may employ several techniques.

#### **1.5.4 Counselling: Important Characteristics**

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

**Counselling measures each individual:** Each teacher or student is one kind. It is a reality that not all teachers or students look alike. They differ in various ways, including interests, abilities, attitudes, personality traits, aptitudes and values. This implies that a strategy or technique for one teacher or student may not work for another. As a result, counselling teams measured each teacher or student individually.

**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 teacher or student engagement with the environment and accomplishment of tasks are the essential variables determining the teacher or student general personality at a given time.

**Everyone has access to counselling:** Any teacher or 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. When activities are designed to help a person overcome obstacles, the services must be terminated once a remedy is found. Nevertheless, efforts must be made to keep the same situation from reoccurring. There is no such thing as a one-time counselling session.

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

teacher or student. The counsellor should gather information from trustworthy sources such as classmates, teachers, and parents, utilising trustworthy and established techniques and psychological tests.

A characteristic of counselling is that it is a process that aims to help the teacher or student make and support themselves by making better decisions. The counsellor's repertoire of skills includes interventions designed to build understanding relationships and help change certain aspects of how the teacher or student feels, thinks, and acts. It consists of every teacher or student, regardless of age, caste, etc., and considers their aptitudes, abilities, values, interests, personality traits, and attitudes.

### **1.5.5 Counselling Techniques**

Bedu-Addo (2016) states 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. The counsellor teaches teachers or students how to solve their problems. The counsellor plays an essential role in immediate counselling procedures. The counsellor controls the process as well as the leader of the situation. The counsellor handles most problem-solving; the teacher or student is not the focus. The counselee (teacher or student) works under the counsellor's guidelines. The counsellor attempts to direct the counselee's (teacher or student) thinking by informing, explaining, interpreting, and occasionally advising.

The counsellor gathers and analyses all available information about the teacher or student to gain a thorough understanding. They summarise and organise the data to comprehend the teacher or student abilities and limitations, adjustment, and maladjustment. They arrive at conclusions about the nature and origins of his problems. They forecast the evolution of their problems. The counsellor tells the counsees what they should do to solve their problems and then monitors the consequences or effects of their advice. The counsellor prescribes the solutions or course of action for the counsees. Directive counselling is also called prescriptive counselling.

**Non-directive counselling:** This is a counselling technique in which the counselee (teacher or student) is at the centre of the process. Rather than the counsellor, the teacher or student plays

an active role in leading the counselling process. The teacher or student comes to the counsellor during this process with an issue. The teacher or student provides all the details about his problems. The counsellor develops a rapport with the counselee based on mutual trust, acceptance, and comprehension. The counsellor assisted him in analysing and synthesising his difficulties, diagnosing the future development of his problems, deciding how to solve his issues, and analysing his strengths and weaknesses. Before making a final decision, the counsellor considers the consequences of their solutions. This counselling technique is known as "permissive" counselling. Non-directive counselling aims to ensure the teacher or student independence and integration rather than resolve the problem. It is a learning experience for the teacher or student.

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 for any teacher or student at any given time. This counselling is for someone willing to try any promising procedure, even if their theoretical bases differ significantly. This counselling acknowledges that each theory may contain some truth and that practical necessity takes the lead over belief as long as an ending decision between theories cannot be made. In this context, the counsellor may begin with a directive technique but switch to a non-directive technique as needed. The counsellor may also start with non-directive techniques and switch to directive techniques.

Therefore, in this counselling, the counsellor uses both directive and non-directive counselling and any other type of counselling that may be considered helpful for changing the teacher or student ideas and attitudes. As a result, depending on the situation's needs, the counsellor can switch between directive and non-directive techniques. It is possible to say that directive and non-directive counselling are at opposite ends of the guidance spectrum. Eclectic counselling bridges the gap and adjusts between direct and indirect techniques.

## **1.6 Difference between Guidance and Counselling**

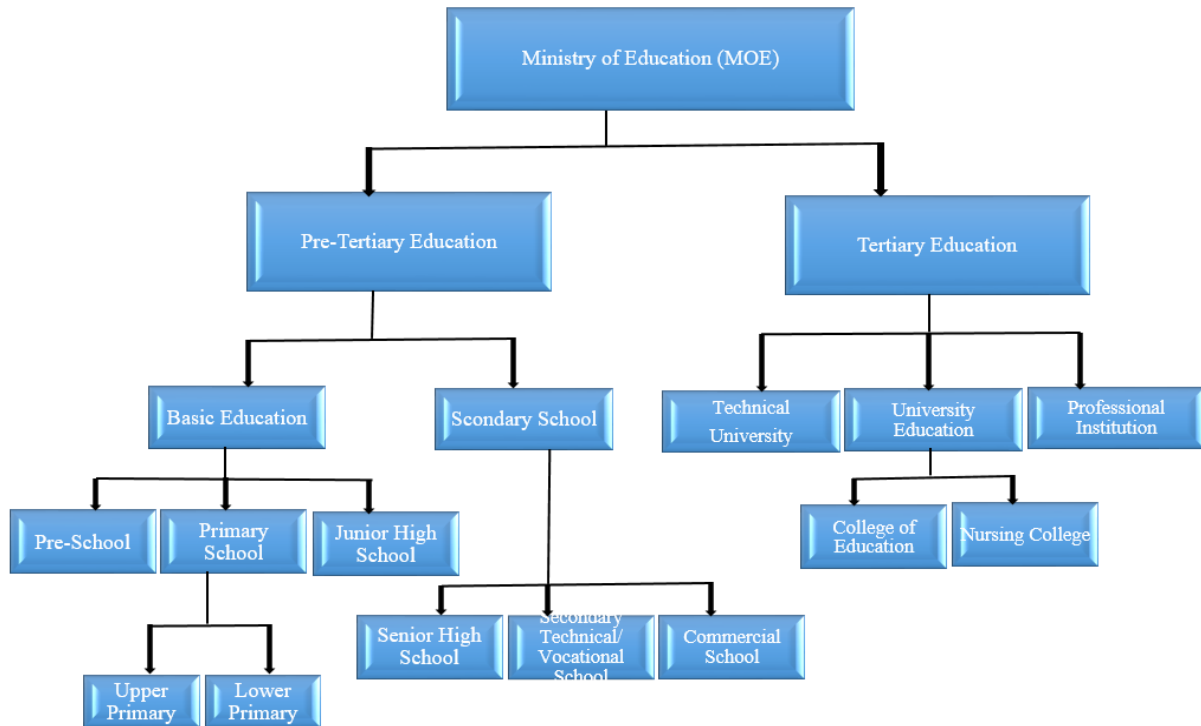
The terms 'guidance' and 'counselling' are comparable in most ways and are two sides of the same coin. Despite the confusion of the terms "guidance" and "counselling", it is necessary to distinguish between them.

- ❖ 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.

## 1.7 Education System in Ghana

Figure 3 Components of Educational System



Source: Authors' construct (2022)

Ghana regained her political independence from the British in 1957 and is presently practising a multiparty democracy system for the election of president and members of the Parliament. According to Population and Housing Censuses, in 2021, Ghana's population will reach approximately 31 million. Ghana has three major divisions in terms of geographical location. These are areas located along the coast, rainforest and savannah. The coastal areas lie along the southern part of Ghana; the rainforest is located in the central part of the country, while the savannah comprises areas in the northern part of Ghana. There are two seasons in the country: dry and rainy. The dry season is divided into Harmattan (November to mid-February) and hot (February to April) seasons. The rainfall events are divided into two seasons: a major season occurs between April and July, and a minor season occurs between August and October.

Agriculture is the main occupation for approximately 60% of citizens. They grow crops, tubers, and livestock; however, those in coastal areas fish in the sea and rivers. The products from the farm are intended for consumption, but leftovers are sold to fund their children's education.

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 (higher education) 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. Tertiary education aims to develop people with intellectual and analytical minds, equip people with knowledge and skills to conduct basic and applied research and produce high- and middle-level human capital for the various sectors of the economy. In the present knowledge-based economy, tertiary education is essential for creating, disseminating and applying knowledge to meet developmental needs. 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. Admission to Ghanaian universities is quite challenging. Education is considered reasonable, demonstrating that human resources are more important than material resources. The payment of workers and the provision of

stationaries, machinery, infrastructure, etc., for establishing a public university or any public educational institution are solely the responsibility of the Government of Ghana.

### **Minimum Requirement of Lecturer in Ghana**

For one to become a lecturer in Ghana, National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) and the National Accreditation Board (NAB) both recognise a doctorate as the minimum qualification for a university lecturer in Ghana (Kuseh, 2013). Ansah et al. (2019) further state that the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) requires a person to have a degree, i.e., a Ph.D., before they can lecture in Ghana tertiary institutions.

However, institutions are forced to employ employees with lesser qualifications since there are frequently insufficient academics with doctorates in particular disciplines. As a result, someone with a Master's degree in research can lecture. A minimum of a year must pass throughout the master's program's research component. An MPhil (Master of Philosophy) is one of these degrees. To become a counsellor in Ghanaian universities, one must obtain the minimum requirement to lecture in Ghana.

### **1.8 Objectives of Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education**

Academic development, vocational growth, and personal or social development are the key objectives of Higher Education guidance and counselling centres (Oluremi, 2014). Iyejare (2022) identifies the objectives of guidance and counselling in higher education as follows:

- To provide equipment, marketing and training programmes to design and 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.

The objectives of guidance and counselling are to help teachers and students deal with immediate problems and prepare for future problems. For guidance and counselling to be meaningful, they must be unique to each teacher or student because they address teacher and student specific issues and expectations. The higher education guidance and counselling objectives are immediate, long-term, and process objectives. It is necessary to evaluate the objectives of the guidance and counselling centres. The objectives are the central ideal and general directives for all guidance and counselling centres to determine the centre's functioning.

### **1.9 Importance of Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education**

The lives of both teachers and students are becoming increasingly complex, necessitating the need for guidance and counselling services to help them navigate various challenges. In higher education, these services play a crucial role in helping students and teachers achieve their fullest potential. University students, in particular, require guidance and counselling to address a wide range of issues, including academic performance, career choices, social concerns, health, morals, and personal situations. As Bhattacharjee (2021) notes, the establishment and functioning of educational guidance and counselling centres promote students' self-direction, particularly in solving psychologically related problems that impact their studies. These centres provide valuable support for students as they face different types of issues, ultimately enhancing their problem-solving skills and enabling them to better manage challenges that arise in their personal and academic lives (Iyejare, 2022).

The role of guidance and counselling centres extends beyond academic assistance, fostering the development of self-awareness in students. These centres encourage students to live in harmony with their peers by teaching them the importance of respect and appreciation for others within the school environment. According to Iyejare (2022), the services offered through

these centres assist both students and teachers in determining what actions to take, when to take them, and how to improve their decision-making processes. By offering such guidance, students develop skills that help them not only solve problems within the educational setting but also navigate external challenges in their personal lives. As a result, these services significantly contribute to the overall well-being and personal growth of both teachers and students.

Moreover, guidance and counselling centres provide a confidential space where students and teachers experiencing difficulties in their lives can seek support, ask questions, and gain clarity on various issues. Atsuwe & Albert (2018) highlight that these centres offer a safe environment for individuals to discuss sensitive topics, such as alcohol use, drug abuse, personal feelings, and more. By addressing such concerns, counselling services help students develop the skills necessary to adjust to difficult situations and build resilience in the face of adversity. Additionally, counselling contributes to shaping the behaviour of both students and teachers, guiding them in making better choices and improving their conduct in various situations (Dhami, 2020; Sahu, 2020).

The importance of guidance and counselling is also evident in its ability to help students make informed decisions and adjust to different life circumstances. According to Oliver (2021), these services enable students and teachers to manage their responsibilities effectively, particularly when they encounter specific life challenges. This includes providing support in addressing educational needs, offering vocational guidance, and fulfilling personal requirements. Furthermore, counselling allows individuals to discuss uncomfortable or distressing issues with professionals in a confidential setting, thereby fostering a sense of trust and providing an avenue for personal growth (Sandipan, 2022). In this way, guidance and counselling services equip students with the tools they need to navigate a range of challenges, enhancing their ability to thrive both in and out of the classroom.

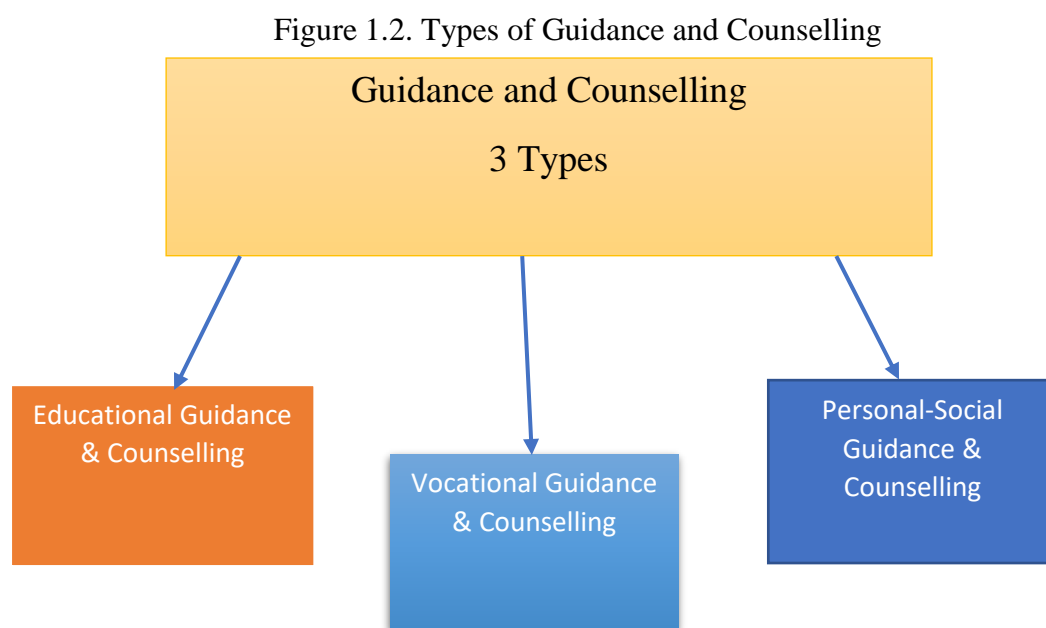
Additionally, guidance and counselling centres contribute to the development of interpersonal skills, promoting positive social interactions and emotional intelligence. Muktar & Kyauta (2017) emphasise that counselling services educate students on how to communicate politely and maintain healthy relationships with their peers. Through this process, students learn how to behave appropriately in various social settings, improving their overall interactions with others. Counsellors play an essential role in helping students understand and embrace individual differences, fostering a sense of self-respect, and cultivating a more inclusive and

respectful environment. Sood (2016) notes that counselling sessions provide students with the necessary guidance to cope with challenges in school life, while also encouraging them to recognise and appreciate the potential, capacities, and talents of others.

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.

### 1.10 Types of Guidance and Counselling

Guidance and counselling services provided in the university system aim to provide services that facilitate all teachers and students total developmental needs and growth. The university guidance and counselling services should assist students needs in three main areas: educational, vocational, and personal/social, and teachers needs in personal/social. This means that university guidance and counselling comprise three areas. The three significant teaching-level guidance and counselling areas are educational, vocational, and personal/social (Gordon, Guez, & Allen, 2000).



Source: Adapted from Adamu (2014)

### **1.10.1 Educational Guidance and Counselling**

Educational guidance and counselling play a pivotal role in supporting students throughout their higher education journey. These services are designed to assist students in making informed decisions regarding their academic progress, adjustments, and course selections based on their individual needs, interests, and abilities. According to Taylor & Buku (2006), the primary objective of educational guidance is to help students achieve academic success by aligning their educational choices with their strengths and aspirations. This guidance also helps students navigate the university environment, including choosing appropriate courses and planning for future academic endeavours. In essence, educational guidance and counselling support students in developing a clear academic plan, which they can execute effectively. By providing a structured approach to educational decision-making, this process helps students optimize their academic experience and set a solid foundation for their future educational pursuits.

### **1.10.2 Vocational Guidance and Counselling**

Beyond educational guidance, vocational guidance and counselling are also crucial components of the student support system in higher education. These services focus on helping students explore and understand various career options, ensuring that they make informed and rational occupational choices that align with their potential, interests, and capabilities. As highlighted by Taylor & Buku (2006) and Atta-Frimpong (2013), vocational guidance aids students in preparing for the workforce by helping them understand their strengths and weaknesses, thereby guiding them toward careers that match their abilities. This process also facilitates students' entry into the professional world by providing insights into various career paths and the skills required to succeed in them. Ultimately, vocational guidance helps students recognize their potential and prepare for their professional futures, ensuring that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in their chosen fields.

### **1.10.3 Personal/Social Guidance and Counselling**

In addition to educational and vocational guidance, personal and social guidance and counselling play an essential role in addressing the emotional, social, and personal challenges faced by students and teachers. This type of guidance helps individuals cope with issues such as unhappiness, anger, personality maladjustment, anxiety, and frustration, among others. According to Saminu & Isa (2022), personal and social guidance focuses on fostering self-

knowledge, enhancing social skills, and addressing safety concerns. It enables students and teachers to recognise their personal strengths and weaknesses, while also providing them with strategies to develop favourable attitudes and habits. Furthermore, personal guidance helps students address social, health, moral, and ethical issues, ultimately contributing to their overall personal growth and well-being. By offering both written and verbal forms of support, personal guidance empowers students to organise their lives, make informed decisions, and build resilience in the face of challenges.

The importance of guidance and counselling extends to the broader goal of fostering personal development and self-awareness. Through personal and social guidance, students gain clarity on their current identity and potential future, helping them navigate the complexities of university life and beyond. By emphasising the development of healthy habits, attitudes, and coping strategies, guidance and counselling contribute significantly to the holistic growth of students. This comprehensive approach ensures that students are not only academically prepared but also emotionally and socially equipped to succeed in various aspects of their lives.

## **1.11 Theories of Counselling**

Counselling theories provide frameworks for understanding and addressing the various challenges individuals face.

### **Behavioural Theory**

One prominent theory is the behavioural theory. B.F. Skinner (1904-1990), a prominent American psychologist and professor at Harvard, is widely recognised for his contributions to behavioural theory, which posits that all behaviours are learned (McLeod & August, 2022). The core principle of behavioural methods in counselling is that behaviours, especially those reinforced or rewarded during childhood, are likely to be repeated due to the pleasurable experiences they bring (Angell, 2013). Conversely, behaviours that are not approved, discouraged, or ignored tend to fade. Therefore, learned behaviours can be unlearned through similar processes. In the context of counselling, behavioural learning approaches and process theories are valuable tools for understanding and modifying the behaviours of both teachers and students. These approaches distinguish between positive and negative reinforcements. Positive reinforcement, for instance, refers to the rewarding stimulus given immediately or shortly after a desired behaviour is displayed, thus encouraging its repetition.

In counselling, the behavioural approach begins with assessing the teacher or student's behaviour to identify problematic patterns. This behavioural analysis helps counsellors understand the context that leads to certain behaviours, the consequences of these actions, and whether they follow a specific pattern (eGyankosh, 2018). After the counsellor analyses the situation, they examine whether the problematic behaviour changes due to the situation or because of changes in its consequences. A useful tool in this process is the ABC model of behavioural analysis. The "A" represents antecedents, or the events that occur before the behaviour begins. "B" signifies the problematic behaviours the teacher or student is facing, while "C" denotes the consequences or the relevance of the behaviour. After completing a functional analysis of the behaviour, the counsellor decides whether altering the antecedent ("A") or the consequence ("C") would result in a new, more desirable behaviour ("B"). The ultimate goal of behavioural interventions is to (1) create a new behaviour, (2) improve an existing behaviour, (3) weaken the problematic behaviour, or (4) shape the behaviour in the desired direction. To implement an effective intervention, counsellors first gather baseline data on the specific behaviours exhibited by teachers and students.

### **Cognitive Theory**

Another widely acknowledged approach is cognitive theory. Cognitive theory, as proposed by Aaron Beck, is grounded in the idea that cognition, or mental processes, significantly influences human behaviour (Hayes, 2022). According to this theory, individuals react to events or situations based on their beliefs, expectations, or attitudes, which means that underlying thought patterns drive behaviour. Thus, maladaptive behaviour is often the result of distorted or faulty thinking. To correct such behaviours or learn new, more adaptive ones, counsellors must work with individuals to identify and challenge the erroneous thought patterns underlying their behaviour. By changing these cognitive distortions, individuals can modify their behaviour and improve their emotional responses. Cognitive counselling helps teachers and students determine the rationality of the beliefs that shape their actions. It is common for counsellors to combine cognitive and behavioural approaches to address dysfunctional patterns of thinking and behaviour in teachers and students.

Henker (1982) observed several common cognitive errors in individuals engaged in various activities. One such error is mind reading, where an individual assumes they know what others are thinking without concrete evidence. For instance, a newly appointed school principal might conclude that a teacher who lost his job at the same school will be unfriendly toward them,

despite lacking any supporting evidence. Another cognitive distortion is fortune telling, in which an individual believes they can predict negative outcomes, such as assuming their tenure as principal will be unsuccessful.

Mislabelling and labelling are also prevalent cognitive errors, where individuals negatively label themselves or others based on specific actions. For example, someone might label themselves a “loser” for a minor mistake or call someone a “jerk” based on a single undesirable behaviour.

Emotional reasoning is another cognitive distortion in which people allow their emotions to dictate their thoughts. For instance, a person might believe they have been wronged simply because they feel angry, or they might assume they are to blame because they feel guilty.

All-or-nothing thinking refers to viewing situations in extreme terms, with no room for nuance. An example of this would be a student concluding that if their parents deny a single request, they do not love them at all.

Lastly, disqualifying the positive involves dismissing positive events or accomplishments, reinforcing negative self-beliefs. For example, a student might downplay praise for a task well done, attributing it to something trivial, thus reinforcing their poor self-image.

### **Rational Emotive Theory**

Closely related to cognitive theory is rational emotive theory. Albert Ellis introduced Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT), which is centred around the idea that irrational beliefs lead to emotional and behavioural problems (Davidson, 2020). Ellis developed the A-B-C-D-E model to help individuals address these issues (Courtney, 2022). In this model, "A" stands for the activating event, or the external situation that initiates the process. "B" refers to the beliefs, both rational and irrational that individuals hold about the event. "C" denotes the emotional and behavioural consequences that arise from these beliefs. The therapeutic process involves disputing the irrational beliefs ("D") and replacing them with more rational, adaptive beliefs. Finally, "E" represents the new emotional and behavioural effects that result from changing irrational thinking. Ellis argued that emotional distress is not caused by the events themselves, but by the way individuals interpret those events. He believed that irrational thinking is harmful, while rational thinking promotes mental well-being and healthy behaviour.

By changing irrational beliefs to more logical, reality-based thoughts, individuals can reduce emotional distress and improve their overall functioning.

Ellis identified several common irrational beliefs that can contribute to emotional and behavioural difficulties. These include the belief that a person must be competent in all endeavours for them to be worthwhile, or that external events like outdoor activities can lead to uncontrollable sadness. Other irrational beliefs include the view that criminals should always face punishment for their actions, or that dependence on others is inherently negative. Ellis also noted that it is common for individuals to believe it is normal to become upset when others face difficulties, even when such reactions are disproportionate to the situation. By addressing these irrational beliefs, REBT helps individuals take responsibility for their thoughts and actions, ultimately improving their emotional and behavioural outcomes.

The theories help to determining the counselling techniques and therapies the counsellor adopted for the client.

## **1.12 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.

According to Khan (2019), these tools assist guidance practitioners in collecting data in three key areas: educational guidance, vocational guidance, and social/personal guidance.

- In educational guidance, the tools help students gain a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, thus aiding in the planning of their academic programs.
- For vocational guidance, these tools provide insights into students' abilities and limitations, enabling more informed career choices.
- For social/personal guidance, they help counsellors work with students and teachers facing issues such as frustration, personality maladjustments, or emotional distress, offering factual evidence that supports their understanding and decision-making during counselling sessions.

These tools provide a broader, more subjective approach to gathering data and human assessment, which are essential for counsellors during counselling sessions.

### **Psychological Tests**

Psychological Tests represent another critical component of the tools used in guidance and counselling. These tests are verbal or written assessments designed to evaluate various aspects of an individual's behaviour and mental processes (Hussain, 2022). Psychological tests can help individuals understand the dynamics underlying human behaviour, and there are several types of psychological tests, each serving a distinct purpose.

## **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.

Among the eight major types of psychological testing are personality tests, which assess attitudes, behaviours, and character traits, influenced by an individual's environment and feelings (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 without 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.

Lastly, 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.

These psychological tools are essential for understanding human dynamics and contribute significantly to the functioning of guidance and counselling centres.

### **1.13 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.

### **1.14 Role of the University Counsellor**

Like all other university employees, university counsellors play a central role in the functioning of guidance and counselling centres (Nkechi, Ewomaoghene & Egenti, 2016).

Their primary responsibility is to improve the welfare of the teachers and students (Atta-Frimpong, 2013). The counsellor must develop plans and activities to help improve the 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. Additionally, individuals or groups of teachers and students with personal problems, such as social and emotional problems, are assisted in personal development and good functioning (Mashiapata, 2018). Furthermore, Counsellors advise students on study techniques, job applications, and interviews.

Moreover, the counsellor refers teachers and students to other agencies (Harrison & Gordon, 2021). Again, when teachers and students have problems beyond the counsellor's work boundaries, the counsellor needs to guide the teacher or student to appropriate agencies (He et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the counsellor is an intermediary between the school system and the community (Mishra, 2005). The counsellor compiles and provides occupational information to students. Counselling activities are planned freely and flexibly according to the school's needs.

## **1.15 University Counsellor: Characteristics**

To perform effectively in their roles, university counsellors must possess certain characteristics that enable them to build strong, trusting relationships with their clients.

**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 client's 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 competences and provide services based on their training qualifications, techniques, and experience.

## **1.16 Guidance and Counselling Centres at the University Levels: The Present Scenario**

At Ghanaian universities, guidance and counselling centres play a crucial role in providing support to both teaching staff and students. These centres address a wide range of issues, from educational challenges to personal and interpersonal struggles. Students in these institutions are grappling with numerous difficulties, such as academic pressures, economic constraints, and personal adjustment problems. Common issues include peer group influence, substance abuse, problems with relationships, poor self-esteem, and the lure of cultism and violence. In some cases, these challenges manifest in destructive behaviours, such as participation in internal riots, violent clashes, and property destruction, which not only disrupt the academic environment but also pose significant threats to students' social, vocational, and educational development. The severity of these problems calls for effective intervention through guidance and counselling services.

However, guidance and counselling centres in Ghanaian universities face significant resource constraints that hinder their ability to deliver effective services. These resource challenges impact the smooth functioning of the centres and limit their capacity to adequately support students and staff. A study conducted by Alale (2019) in the Ghana Colleges of Education revealed that guidance and counselling centres in these institutions suffer from resource-related problems, which prevent them from functioning as intended. These resource gaps affect the centres' ability to provide the necessary services, undermining their role in supporting the mental, academic, and emotional well-being of both students and staff.

Similarly, Aidoo (2011) examined the administration of guidance and counselling services in Ghana's Colleges of Education and found that while the introduction of these services was well-received by tutors and students, the administrative operations were hindered by the lack of resources. Despite the positive reception of the counselling services, the scarcity of essential resources made it difficult for the centres to meet the expectations of the university community. These findings are consistent with those of Kathuri, Magero & Wamalwa (2018), who highlighted that many guidance and counselling centres in Ghana are underfunded and inadequately equipped, limiting their effectiveness in addressing the needs of students and faculty.

This resource inadequacy is further exacerbated by the perception of students, staff, and parents, who view these centres as underperforming and ineffective. Alemu (2013) and Hordofa (2018) note that many parents and students perceive the centres as inadequate, primarily due to the lack of resources and poor service delivery. Confidentiality, which is a cornerstone of effective counselling, is also a significant concern. According to Fia (2018), the lack of confidentiality within the counselling process has further eroded the trust that students and staff place in these centres. As a result, many teaching staff and students regard visiting the guidance and counselling centres as unnecessary, a sentiment echoed by Sedofia (2011), who observed that the perceived inefficiency and inadequacy of the centres often lead to their underutilisation.

The combination of these challenges ranging from insufficient resources to issues surrounding confidentiality has undermined the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services at Ghanaian universities. The lack of adequate infrastructure, qualified counsellors, and financial support has resulted in a system that is unable to meet the growing demands of students and staff, contributing to the continued struggles students face with mental health, academic pressure, and personal development. It is evident that without addressing these resource issues, the guidance and counselling centres will continue to fall short of their potential to support students and faculty effectively.

### **1.17 Dimensions in the Study**

The functioning of guidance and counselling centre services revealed that guidance and counselling centres need mechanisms for determining how best to manage the centre to ensure that they provide practical guidance and counselling services (Plant, 2012). In evaluating the functioning of guidance and counselling centres in Ghanaian public universities, resources are needed to manage guidance and counselling effectively (Adoga, 2018). With a realistic examination of the infrastructural requirements for counsellors to play their role successfully, the quality and efficient management implementation of guidance and counselling centre programmes at universities in Ghana will remain a mirage. The provision of resources is an essential dimension of evaluation for quality efficiency management, performance, and smooth discharge of various tasks (Atta-Frimpong, 2013). The resources can be measured through the following:

The provision of physical infrastructure is one of the primary resources necessary for the effective functioning of guidance and counselling centres. Adequate office spaces, storage facilities, and counselling tools are crucial for maintaining a professional environment conducive to providing confidential services. A well-furnished, spacious office allows for individual and group counselling sessions while maintaining privacy and confidentiality, which is fundamental to ethical counselling practices. Sharing office space with other staff members compromises confidentiality and hinders the functioning of the centre. In this sense, the counsellor needs stationery, cabinets, shelves, and other hardware for data storage. Additionally, globalisation requires a computer setup for easy data storage and retrieval. Employing a computer and its peripheral facilities at the administration office helps restore the data. Again, various computer software programmes are available to assist with information retrieval and appraisal services.

The availability of telephone calls and other information devices can substantially improve counsellor's work. The realities of globalisation necessitate the counsellor's office to be outfitted with cutting-edge technology to facilitate global information. As the world rapidly becomes an international village, counsellors in Ghana need internet access to keep up with the latest information technology worldwide and disseminate information to students. Internet facilities for accessible communication and website creation, where information can be provided to both students and counsellors. Counsellors need information media for electronic counselling and other communications.

In addition to physical resources, financial support plays a critical role in ensuring the smooth operation of counselling services. Adequate funding is necessary to organise and maintain various counselling programmes, such as training workshops, career seminars, and personal development sessions. Financial resources also enable the purchase of materials, repairs, and the funding of outreach activities, including field trips and career days. Without sufficient funding, these activities may be compromised, limiting the ability of the guidance and counselling centres to provide comprehensive support to students and staff alike.

Equally important is the role of human resources in the functioning of guidance and counselling centres. The competencies, qualifications, skills and attitudes are crucial in implementing functioning management during counselling sessions. Guidance and counselling services should have a culture of continual improvement that includes regular teachers and students feedback and chances for constant training for counsellors. Counsellor competency involves

performing and understanding tasks consistent with one's professional qualifications. (Often with specialised training), sensitive to cultural and individual variance and anchored in evidence-based practices. Relevant job information should be provided, and the space between students and the job market should be bridged. Suhag et al. (2017) listed the knowledge a counsellor should have as Psychology knowledge, Personality knowledge, Counselling technique knowledge, Researchable knowledge, and Professional knowledge. All this knowledge is critical for counsellors to carry out their tasks at university guidance and counselling centres. Shortage in the above resources will render the function of guidance and counselling centre less.

### **1.18 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. Alarmingly, 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".

### **1.19 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?

### **1.20 Statement of the Problem**

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

### **1.21 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.

## **1.22 Delimitation of the Study**

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

## **1.23 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.

## **1.24 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.