

CHAPTER V

MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In the present study, the main purpose of the researcher was to examine the functioning of guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana. This chapter is devoted to the major findings of the present study and its discussion.

5.2 Major Findings

5.2.1 Major Findings of Objective 1

Objective 1: To examine the resources of guidance and counselling centres in public universities of Ghana in terms of

- (i) Human resources
- (ii) Financial resources
- (iii) Physical infrastructure resources

Human Resources

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

Financial Resources

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

Physical Infrastructure Resources

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

5.2.2 Major Findings of Objective 2

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

Vocational Guidance and Counselling

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

Educational Guidance and Counselling

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

Social/Personal Guidance and Counselling

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

Use of Time in Guidance and Counselling Centres

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

Counselling Tools and Techniques

- ❖ The majority of the counsellors used verbal and non-verbal communication as a medium of communication during the counselling process.
- ❖ Majority of the counsellors used personality tests and interviews techniques to collect data of their teaching staff and students. Most of the counsellors also used achievement tests, aptitude test, diagnostic tests and intelligence tests and observation techniques to collect data of their teaching staff and students.
- ❖ The majority of the counsellors used cognitive and rational emotive behavioural theory. Most of the counsellors also used psychoanalytic, behavioural and humanistic theories as a basis of the counselling techniques and therapies.
- ❖ All the counsellors used direct counselling techniques during the counselling process. Most of the counsellors also used eclectic counselling and Non-direct counselling.

Services Provided by the Counsellor

- ❖ Majority of the counsellors informed their teaching staff and students of the university's guidance and counselling centre during orientation programmes for fresh students. Most of the counsellors also informed their teaching staff and students of the university's guidance and counselling centre during university gatherings.
- ❖ All the counsellors meet their teaching staff and students at guidance and counselling centres for counselling sessions.
- ❖ All the counsellors provided guidance services such as information services, evaluation services, orientation services, and follow-up services to their teaching staff and students.

- ❖ The majority of the counsellors provided online follow-up services and face-to-face interview follow-up services to their teaching staff and students. Most of them also provided discussion follow-up services to their teaching staff and students.
- ❖ All the counsellors act as advocates creating awareness of the guidance and counselling centre, act as a resource person for the community, act as a liaison between the university and the community, and as a counsellor for their teaching staff and students.

Online Counselling

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

Keeping Record of Counselling Sessions

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

Recording of Counselling Sessions

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

5.2.3 Major Findings of Objective 3

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

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

5.2.4 Major Findings of Objective 4

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

5.2.4.1 Perception of the Teaching Staff

Details of Counsellors

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

Use of Time in Guidance and Counselling Centres

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

Services Provided by the Counsellor

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

Online Counselling

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

Keeping Records of Counselling Sessions

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

Social / Personal Guidance and Counselling

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

5.2.4.2 Perception of the Students

Details of Counsellors

- ❖ The average intensity index of 3.53 indicated that the students perception was a favourable towards details of counsellors, which included qualification of counsellors

and experienced counsellors. However, students had an unfavourable perception towards sufficient number of counsellors.

Use of Time in Guidance and Counselling Centres

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

Services Provided by the Counsellor

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

Online Counselling

- ❖ The average intensity index of 2.73 indicated that students perception was neither a favourable nor an unfavourable, it was undecided towards online counselling. However, students had an unfavourable perception, which included effectiveness of online counselling and adequate resources for online counselling. Students also had a favourable perception towards the benefits of online counselling.

Keeping Record of Counselling Sessions

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

Social / Personal Guidance and Counselling

- ❖ The average intensity index of 4.46 indicated that students perception was a favourable towards social/personal guidance and counselling, which included conduct of social/personal counselling, conduct of social/personal guidance, assistance in

social/personal problems, and organisation of relevant orientation programmes on social issues.

Vocational Guidance and Counselling

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

Educational Guidance and Counselling

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

5.3 Discussion of Major Findings

The major findings of this study have been discussed objective-wise.

5.3.1 Available Resources at Guidance and Counselling Centres

The present study studied the guidance and counselling centres of public universities in Ghana, focusing on the availability of the necessary resources essential for their effective functioning. A significant proportion of counsellors (57.1%) in the study held Ph.D. degrees, which underscores the high level of academic qualification among the counselling staff. This aligns with the expectation that counsellors in higher education institutions possess advanced knowledge to provide effective guidance. This may probably be because this has been the minimum requirement for recruiting qualified university staff, including counsellors, in the public universities of Ghana. This finding aligns with Bess & Dee (2007) study that extensive academic background implies a thorough understanding of both theoretical concepts and practical applications, which is necessary to provide comprehensive and effective guidance. Additionally, the fact that 88.1% of counsellors are lecturer counsellors suggests that these professionals often integrate their counselling roles with teaching responsibilities. This dual role may imply a broader scope of influence within the university community, yet it could also present challenges in terms of workload and time management. This may also be because there

are fewer counsellors in public universities in Ghana. According to Bernadetha (2022), lecturer counsellors overload delay their counselling sessions. However, it enables them to combine their intellectual views with practical experience, enhancing their advisory positions with a deeper understanding of educational and career dynamics. The finding that 45.2% of counsellors have between 6-10 years of working experience is indicative of a relatively experienced workforce, suggesting that the centres benefit from counsellors who have honed their skills over several years. This helps counsellors strengthen their ability to handle students' multifaceted difficulties (Bess & Dee, 2007). The specialisation in school and career counselling (90.5%) is also noteworthy, as it highlights the focus of the counselling services on supporting students' academic and career development. This concentration could be beneficial in addressing the specific needs of students within an educational setting, ensuring the counselling services are aligned with the primary goals of student success and career preparation. This finding may probably stem from the Ghanaian university students battling more pressing issues in their academic and future careers.

Regarding financial resources, the study reveals that while all counsellors (100%) received funding from the university administration. This finding may be that the university administration in Ghana is the only funding source for the guidance and counselling centres. It can be seen that the counselling centres only received a small fraction (1-5%) of the overall university budget. This raises concerns about the adequacy of financial support allocated to these centres. This may arise from the central government of Ghana's provision of insufficient funds to public universities in the country, thus affecting fund allocation to the universities' counselling centres. The majority of counsellors (81.0%) reported that the budgetary allocation was insufficient, suggesting that the funding provided may not be enough to meet the growing needs of the centres. This financial constraint may limit the ability of the centres to expand services, hire additional staff, or invest in necessary resources and infrastructure. This finding aligns with earlier claims by Lemesa (2018) and Aidoo (2011), affirming the inadequacy of the budget allotted for guidance and counselling centres in Ghana. Furthermore, the funding provided by the university administration for physical infrastructure was noted to occur on an annual basis, with 54.8% of counsellors confirming this support. While this contribution may provide some relief, it is insufficient to maintain or upgrade the physical infrastructure, such as counsellors' offices and other essential spaces. The frequency of funding provided to the centres in Ghana may lead to insufficient physical infrastructure in the centres. The finances of

Backes (2018) study reinforce that financial support is critical for sustaining and improving the physical infrastructure of the centres.

The findings regarding physical infrastructure reveal a mixed picture. The centres were reported to have adequate physical infrastructure, such as storage facilities. This may be because of budget constraints prioritising other academic needs or physical limitations within university facilities. This finding supports Adanna et al. (2023), Heragu (2018), and Sanders & Lehmann (2019), who found that guidance and counselling centres had insufficient offices for counsellors. It can be seen that the centres had adequate physical infrastructure. This finding agrees with Lin, Catalano, & Dennerlein (2016) study that functional furniture, such as ergonomic chairs and adjustable desks, allows counsellors and students to participate in the counselling process in a comfortable setting. The presence of furniture in the centres can be that the centres specifically allocate funds for essential furnishings to ensure that spaces are functional for counsellors, teaching staff and students. The inconsistent availability of internet connectivity and insufficient ICT equipment further complicate the situation. In today's digital age, the lack of reliable internet and up-to-date technology can severely hinder the centres' ability to provide modern counselling services, particularly in terms of accessing online resources, maintaining electronic records, and conducting virtual sessions with students. The insufficient ICT equipment in the centres may be attributed to the inadequate budget allocation, which limits investment in ICT equipment in the centres. The findings support Vincent et al. (2017) study, which found that guidance and counselling centres lack ICT equipment such as computers, sophisticated software, and other technological instruments that allow counsellors to manage information efficiently. Despite these challenges, it is notable that the centres were equipped with sufficient documents and materials for counselling activities. This suggests that, while there are gaps in technological and office infrastructure, the basic materials necessary for delivering counselling services were generally available. This finding supports the study by Biasi et al. (2017), who found that documents such as employment news, journals and career information manuals in the guidance and counselling centres serve as tangible resources to supplement students' personalised advice they receive during counselling sessions.

Overall, the study reveals that while human resources are relatively strong, there is a pressing need for improved financial support and infrastructural investment to ensure that the centres can provide effective and up-to-date counselling services. Addressing these resource gaps will be crucial in enhancing the overall effectiveness of guidance and counselling services within the university.

5.3.2 Functioning of Guidance and Counselling Centres

The present study found that all counsellors (100%) in the sampled universities were involved in providing vocational guidance and career skills development. This indicates a strong commitment to equipping students with the necessary tools and information to navigate the job market effectively. The findings may be that counsellors not only assist students in understanding various career options in Ghana but also help them develop the necessary skills for success in the workplace. The finding supports Brown & Lent (2008) study, which highlights that career guidance is integral in helping individuals align their career goals with their skills and interests. Moreover, vocational guidance has enhanced self-efficacy and career adaptability, which are critical factors in navigating the evolving job market (Savickas, 2013). This finding also aligns with the findings of Gati & Asher (2001), who emphasised that career counselling programmes should equip students with practical skills to cope with challenges and make informed decisions. It can be seen that all counsellors provide latest and most relevant job information. Offering up-to-date information, counsellors in Ghana can help their students make informed decisions about their career paths in an ever-changing job market. The finding aligns with Betz (2004), who states that accurate and timely career information is crucial for making well-informed vocational decisions, as it helps individuals match their interests and skills with available opportunities. Additionally, Nauta (2004) study suggests that access to relevant job data can improve self-efficacy as students gain confidence in navigating the job market. By ensuring that students know the latest vocational opportunities, counsellors play a key role in facilitating career adaptability, which is vital in today's dynamic employment landscape (Savickas, 2013). It was found that all counsellors organised vocational orientation sessions. Vocational orientation counsellors provided to Ghana students will probably help them get information about various career paths, required skills, and education options, essential for making well-informed career decisions. According to Super (1990), career development is a lifelong process, and providing students with early, targeted vocational guidance helps them make choices that align with their evolving interests and strengths. Additionally, Gati & Asher (2001) found that structured vocational guidance programs significantly reduce career indecision by equipping students with relevant information and coping strategies. Such programmes can also increase self-efficacy and career adaptability, key factors in navigating the uncertainties of the modern job market (Savickas, 2013). Additionally, the fact that a significant number of counsellors (47.6%) organised vocational seminars twice a year reflects a structured and recurring approach to career guidance, further enhancing

students' readiness for the workforce. The findings may probably be that students in Ghana lack career information that will enable them to make good career choices. According to Brown & Lent (2008), regular exposure to career information enhances students' ability to make informed choices, increasing their self-efficacy and confidence in their future careers. Moreover, Savickas (2013) proposed that career development theory supports the idea that ongoing vocational support helps students adapt to the evolving labour market and refine their career goals over time.

Educational guidance, as observed from the results, is an area in which all counsellors (100%) were highly involved. By providing essential information about scholarships, stipends, and loans, counsellors ensure that students have access to financial resources that could alleviate some of the barriers to their educational success. This may be because Ghanaian students need more information to make informed decisions about funding their education, which can significantly influence their academic and career success. This finding supports Perkins & Neumark (2008) study that providing students with information about financial aid options improves their ability to pursue higher education, especially for those from underprivileged backgrounds. Additionally, financial counselling can alleviate anxiety about educational costs, fostering a more focused and motivated approach to academic goals (Long, 2004). Furthermore, the support provided to students regarding the prescribed curriculum further emphasises the counsellors' role in guiding students towards academic success. Assisting students with curriculum-related guidance, Counsellors in Ghana help their students connect their education with long-term aspirations, ultimately facilitating a more purposeful and fulfilling academic journey. The finding aligns with Nauta (2004) finding that educational counselling helps students make well-informed decisions about their studies, enhancing their academic motivation and performance. Additionally, Super (1990) career development theory suggests that aligning academic choices with career interests and skills is key to educational and career success. The organisation of educational guidance and counselling programmes each year underscores a continuous commitment to student development. This may be because counsellors in Ghana are committed to providing continuous and structured support for student's academic and career development. These annual educational guidance programmes support students in making informed decisions, reducing uncertainty, and improving academic outcomes and career readiness. The finding aligns with Super (1990) findings that providing ongoing guidance is crucial in supporting students' long-term career development and aligning their educational choices with their evolving interests and goals. The frequency of educational

seminars (47.6% organising twice a year) reinforces the importance of ongoing dialogue and information sharing in the academic context. This finding may be that counsellors have seen the need to provide students in Ghana with structured opportunities to gain valuable insights into their educational paths and career options. These seminars will help students to receive timely and updated information about academic requirements. According to Nauta (2004), career and educational guidance programmes can enhance students' self-efficacy and decision-making abilities, as they are equipped with relevant, up-to-date information. Additionally, such seminars can reduce career indecision by exposing students to various options and helping them make more informed, confident decisions about their futures (Gati & Asher, 2001).

Social and personal guidance plays a critical role in fostering the emotional and psychological well-being of students and staff. The results indicated that most counsellors (95.2%) provided guidance on personality development, demonstrating a recognition of the importance of self-awareness and growth in both personal and professional life. This finding supports Goleman (1995) study that emotional intelligence is a key aspect of personality development and is crucial for success in both academic and professional settings. For students, personality development can foster better self-management and interpersonal skills, helping them navigate the social dynamics of school and future workplaces (Schultz & Schultz, 2013). Additionally, personal development programmes for educators have been shown to improve their effectiveness in the classroom by promoting stronger teacher-student relationships and fostering a positive learning environment (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The widespread provision of support in recognising strengths and weaknesses help teaching staff and students to know their strengths and weaknesses Counsellors assisted students and teaching staff in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, which may help students and teachers in Ghana build on their strengths and address areas of improvement. This process will also help them foster personal growth, boost confidence, and promote more effective interactions in both academic and social contexts. According to Goleman (1995), self-awareness is a key component of emotional intelligence and is vital for effective personal development. For students, recognising their strengths and weaknesses can lead to better academic performance and more informed career decisions, as it helps them align their capabilities with their goals (Schunk, 2003). Similarly, for teachers, self-awareness can improve their instructional practices, interpersonal relationships, and ability to manage classroom dynamics, ultimately leading to a more positive educational environment (Pianta et al., 2012). Facilitating effective cooperation with the opposite sex indicates that counsellors aim to promote healthy

interpersonal relationships and emotional intelligence. This finding may probably be that Ghanaian students lack collaboration with friends of the opposite sex, which will enable them to foster healthy, respectful, and cooperative interpersonal relationships across genders. The finding supports Gilligan (1982), who states that understanding and respecting gender differences in communication styles and emotional expression is essential for building strong interpersonal relationships. Additionally, Johnson & Johnson (1999) found that cooperative learning environments, encouraging positive interactions between students of different genders, lead to improved social skills, higher academic achievement, and greater emotional intelligence. Furthermore, fostering respectful interactions between genders can reduce the likelihood of conflicts and contribute to a more harmonious and productive educational environment (Halpern, 2004). The frequency of social/personal seminars (66.7% organised twice a year) is also indicative of a proactive approach to addressing the social and personal challenges that students and staff might face. This finding may be that students and teaching staff in Ghanaian public universities have challenges related to social/personal issues such as interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, stress, anxiety, and teamwork, for which they need consistent support. The findings support Goleman (1995) study, which emphasises the importance of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness and social skills, for personal and professional success. Regular seminars provide a platform for reinforcing these skills and offering practical strategies to handle social challenges effectively. Furthermore, Johnson & Johnson (1999) found that cooperative learning environments, supported by social/personal guidance, promote better interpersonal interactions and improve educational outcomes.

The operational hours of the guidance and counselling centres (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., five days a week) reflect a structured and consistent approach to providing counselling services. The fact that most counsellors spend an average of 45 minutes per session with students and teaching staff suggests that the centres are dedicated to providing quality, individualised attention. These time allocations are indicative of a well-organised structure in which counsellors aim to maximise their impact within the time constraints. The finding aligns with Sahito & Vaisanen (2017) finding and reinforces the importance of time consciousness in the university guidance and counselling centres, promoting efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity.

The findings on counselling tools and techniques reveal that counsellors primarily rely on personality tests and interview techniques for data collection. This approach allows counsellors to gain a comprehensive understanding of their clients' needs and tailor their interventions

accordingly. The use of both verbal and non-verbal communication during counselling processes emphasises the importance of effective communication in building rapport and understanding clients' concerns. The prevalence of cognitive and rational emotive behavioural theory, along with direct counselling techniques, indicates that counsellors employ evidence-based approaches to facilitate meaningful change and development among students and teaching staff. Daghfous, Belkhodja & Angell (2013) and Kha (2019) studies advocate for supporting, strengthening, and effective use of verbal and non-verbal communication to address teaching staff and students' fundamental issues and concerns and enhance the efficacy of guidance and counselling centres.

The services provided by counsellors extend beyond individual sessions. The widespread dissemination of information about counselling centres during orientation programmes for new students is crucial for creating awareness and promoting accessibility to services. This may be because it is the only opportunity for counsellors to meet a large number of fresh students in the universities. This finding aligns with the study of Lasode et al. (2017), which states that students get to know the guidance and counselling centres during orientation programmes for fresh students. Furthermore, the provision of services such as evaluation, orientation, and follow-up shows a holistic approach to supporting students throughout their university journey. The finding is compatible with Oteng (2020) and Anna & Bojuwoye (2019) studies, reinforcing the significance of various guidance services provided by university counselling centres. Counsellors also take on advocacy roles, such as acting as liaisons between the university and the community and serving as resource persons. These roles contribute to building a strong network of support that extends beyond individual counselling sessions. This aligns with Nkechi et al. (2016) findings on the multifaceted services a counsellor provides within the guidance and counselling centres. The inadequate number of counsellors may be attributed to the above causes in the universities guidance and counselling centres. According to the American Counseling Association (ACA)' 2014), a referral may occur if the counsellor is incapable of helping or lacks the knowledge or skills necessary to support the teaching staff or the student.

Despite the benefits of online counselling, the study found that most counsellors did not engage in this modality, with a lack of reliable internet facilities being a key challenge. This limitation highlights a barrier to expanding the reach of counselling services, particularly in a digital age where online platforms can increase accessibility and flexibility for both students and teaching

staff. Nonetheless, the fact that counsellors who did provide online counselling noted its benefits indicates the potential for incorporating this medium more widely, especially if infrastructural challenges are addressed. However, counsellors prefer face-to-face to online counselling. The findings align with Tannous (2017) and Aidoo (2011) findings regarding the benefits of online counselling and counsellors' preference for face-to-face counselling. Although counsellors prefer face-to-face counselling to online counselling because of inconsistent internet problems but, due to the distances from one campus to another in the same university. However, it has been made necessary for counsellors to conduct online counselling for their teaching staff and students. Counsellors have shown growing support and interest in providing online counselling services through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Virtual Reality (VR) methods (Lustgarten & Colbow, 2017). Counselling through computers, telephone, webcam, video conferencing, teleconferencing, instant messaging, and chat rooms, for instance, enables communication, simulations, creation of virtual realities and interaction between counsellors and teaching staff and students at a distance (Dawson, et al., 2011).

The maintenance of counselling records and progress notes is an important practice that ensures continuity and accountability in the counselling process. The findings suggest that most counsellors kept records of their sessions, and university authorities regularly checked these records. This practice not only supports the monitoring of students' progress but also ensures that counsellors can provide informed and consistent support over time. Bell (2013) found in his study that counsellors keep teaching staff and students' records, protecting teaching staff and students' confidentiality and adhering to legal and ethical standards. Documentation and record-keeping are crucial ethical factors in counselling, pushing the boundaries of privacy and secrecy (Estabrook et al., 2010). Countries and state laws and statutes require counsellors to keep their records in a safe, secure format (such as computer-encrypted files) (ACA, 2014).

The occasional recording of counselling sessions, with a preference for audio recording using smartphones, suggests that counsellors may be adopting modern technologies to aid in documentation and analysis. However, the fact that these recordings were not conducted routinely raises questions about consistency in documentation and whether this practice could be further developed to enhance the quality of counselling services. This may be because counsellors in the centres are used to smartphones rather than other devices, and it is easy for them to keep teaching staff and students confidential.

5.3.3 Problems Faced by Guidance and Counselling Centres

The study found that the majority of guidance and counselling centres in the public universities of Ghana had an inadequate number of counsellors. This may be because there are a limited number of trained counsellors in Ghana or because of financial constraints, which prevent the university administration from recruiting more counsellors. This inadequacy of trained counsellors within university guidance and counselling centres services is a pressing and recurrent challenge, consistently underscored by researchers in the field (Bobga, 2016; Arfasa & Weldmeskel, 2020; Nkala, 2014). The inadequate number of counsellors may probably due to insufficient fund the universities received from the government. This inadequate of qualified counsellors significantly hampers the efficient and effective operation of guidance and counselling centres within educational institutions. The inadequate number of trained counsellors in universities guidance and counselling services can adversely affect the quantity and quality of guidance and counselling available to teaching staff and students. This inadequacy often leads to prolonged waiting times for teaching staff and students seeking counselling, hindering their timely access to crucial mental health and academic support. Additionally, the existing counsellors may become overburdened, limiting the attention and care they can provide each teaching staff and student. Consequently, the effectiveness and impact of counselling sessions may be compromised, diminishing the intended benefits for the teaching staff and students. To address the problem of the lack of counsellors in the guidance and counselling centres, the Ghana Education Service has approved guidance and counselling subjects among the study leave with pay subjects list (Isaac, 2023). The aim is to give teachers who want to pursue further study in the field of guidance and counselling the opportunity to enrol in tertiary institutions within the country to pursue guidance and counselling while receiving monthly pay every month. This initiative will help increase the number of counsellors in the country to fill in the lack of counsellors in the guidance and counselling centres.

The findings revealed insufficient funding for university guidance and counselling centres. The allocation of budget to align education by the government of Ghana may be less due to their developing economy. This insufficient funding, as highlighted by Bobga (2016) and Aidoo (2011), significantly hampers the regular organisation of vital seminars and programmes essential for teaching staff and students holistic growth and development. The impact of this financial constraint is multifaceted and extends to both the teaching staff and students as well

as the overall effectiveness of the educational institution. First and foremost, inadequate funding limits the scope and frequency of essential seminars and programmes designed to enhance teaching staff and students' well-being and mental health. These events often provide a platform for teaching staff and students to openly discuss their concerns, seek advice, and learn crucial life skills. Inadequacy of funding obstructs the scheduling of such events, which are instrumental in fostering a supportive and nurturing conducive environment to academic success and personal growth. Moreover, the scarcity of funds affects the hiring and retaining qualified and experienced counsellors. Skilled professionals are imperative for providing adequate guidance to teaching staff and students with various academic, personal, and emotional challenges.

The findings found inadequate offices for counsellors. This may be because of budget constraints prioritising other academic needs or physical limitations within university facilities. This finding supports Adanna et al. (2023), Heragu (2018), and Sanders & Lehmann (2019), who found that guidance and counselling centres had insufficient offices for counsellors.

The study revealed that all the guidance and counselling centres had inactive internet networks for online counselling. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Alale (2019) in colleges of education in Northern Ghana, highlighting a pressing issue about inactive internet network systems affecting guidance and counselling centres. The inactive internet networks in guidance and counselling centres in Ghana may be due to budgetary constraints that restrict investment in reliable internet services and a lack of technical support and maintenance, leading to ongoing connectivity problems. University administrations' limited focus on digital resources may also contribute to the neglect of internet infrastructure. The increasing demand for internet access from various departments may strain existing resources, leading to inconsistent connectivity in counselling centres. Internet connectivity is a crucial component for guidance and counselling centres' functionality. Inactive internet network issues pose challenges for facilities for online counselling.

5.3.4 The Perception of the Teaching Staff towards the Functioning of Guidance and Counselling Centres

The findings clearly showed that the teaching staff had a favourable perception towards toward the details of counsellors, which included qualification of counsellors and experience of counsellors. This is consistent with the findings of Doshi et al. (2019), Atta-Frimpong (2013),

and Taylor & Buku (2006), who stress the need for the qualification of counsellors to assist in creating trust and confidence in teaching staff. However, teaching staff had an unfavourable perception towards the adequate number of available counsellors. This inadequacy of trained counsellors within university guidance and counselling centres services is a pressing and recurrent challenge, consistently underscored by researchers in the field (Arfasa & Weldmeskel, 2020). This scarcity of qualified number of counsellors significantly hampers the efficient and effective operation of guidance and counselling centres within educational institutions. The findings revealed that teaching staff had a favourable perception towards the use of time in guidance and counselling centres, which included regularity of counsellors and adequate time given to the teaching staff during guidance and counselling sessions, respectively. This sufficient time allocated to counselling sessions, perceived by the teaching staff, aligns with Sahito & Vaisanen (2017) findings, emphasising the necessity of adequate time allocation, which improves workplace efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity.

It was found that teaching staff had a favourable perception towards the services provided by a counsellor, which included referring teaching staff to other agencies, use of appropriate counselling techniques, counsellor confidentiality, liaison between the university and the community, use of the latest psychological tests, relationship with teaching staff and effective counselling to teaching staff. This is consistent with the findings of Doshi et al. (2019) and Nkechi et al. (2016), studies which highlighted the multifaceted duties of a counsellor in the guidance and counselling setting. Counsellors have a moral and legal duty to maintain teaching staff confidentiality, requiring them to withhold information about their teaching staff care (Crespi, 2009). This involves not conversing with coworkers (Lambie, Ieva, Mullen & Hayes, 2011). Since confidentiality fosters trust, it is essential to the counselling relationship's efficacy. Because counsellors promise their teaching staff not to disclose confidential information to third parties, teaching staff feel comfortable sharing it (Lambie et al., 2011). According to Estabrook et al. (2010), confidentiality should be respected, encouraged, and implemented for all information shared, records kept, and communications sent over phones and fax machines (such as disclosures, diagnoses, and treatments).

It was found that teaching staff perception was neither a favourable nor an unfavourable, it was undecided towards online counselling. However, teaching staff had an unfavourable perception, which included the effectiveness of online counselling and adequate resources for online counselling. This finding does not support Dinçyürek & Uygurer (2012) study that

guidance and counselling centres conduct effective online counselling. The teaching staff also had a favourable perception, towards the benefits of online counselling. This finding is compatible with FiKankam & Adinkrah (2023) and Tannous (2017) studies on the benefits of online counselling.

The findings found that the students had a favourable perception towards keeping of records, which included having appropriate ethics in keeping of records and keeping updated records. The findings support Bell (2013) finding that updating teaching staff records is critical for maintaining confidentiality and conforming to legal and ethical standards. It emphasises the necessity of this practice in upholding confidentiality and ethical standards. It was found that teaching staff had a favourable perception towards social/personal guidance and counselling, which included conduct of social/personal counselling, conduct of social/personal guidance, assistance in personal/social problems, and organisation of relevant orientation programmes on social issues. Ansah et al. (2019), Atta-Frimpong (2013), and Bell (2013) contribute significantly to these findings through their research and findings. Taylor & Buku (2006) emphasise the importance of these services in assisting people to navigate and manage their social/personal issues efficiently.

5.3.5 The Perception of the Students towards the Functioning of Guidance and Counselling Centres

The present study found that the students had a favourable perception towards the details of counsellors, which included the qualification of counsellors and experience of counsellors. This aligns with the findings of Doshi et al. (2019), Atta-Frimpong (2013), and Taylor & Buku (2006) who emphasise on the need for qualification of counsellors to help build trust and confidence in students. However, students had an unfavourable perception towards the adequate number of available counsellors. This aligns with Bobga (2016) study, which noted that inadequacy of trained counsellors within university guidance and counselling centres services is a recurrent and pressing challenge. This lack of qualified number of counsellors significantly hampers the effective and efficient operation of guidance and counselling centres within educational institutions. The findings of the study found that the students had a favourable perception towards the services provided by a counsellor, which included the act as referring students to other agencies, use of appropriate counselling techniques, counsellor confidentiality, liaison between the university and the community, use of the latest psychological tests, relationship with students and effective counselling to students. This

finding is compatible with Sahito & Vaisanen (2017) study, which emphasises the importance of adequate time allocation, which enhances workplace efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity. The findings also align with the findings of Nkechi et al. (2016), who emphasised the multifaceted roles of a counsellor within the guidance and counselling environment. According to Doshi et al. (2019) and Estabrook et al. (2010), confidentiality should be respected, promoted, and implemented for all information shared, records kept, and phone and fax conversations (including disclosures, diagnoses, and treatments). Counsellors have a moral and legal obligation to protect student confidentiality, which requires them to withhold information concerning their students' care (Crespi, 2009). This includes not conversing with other coworkers at work (Lambie, Ieva, Mullen, & Hayes, 2011). Confidentiality builds trust, which is necessary for the counselling relationship to be effective. Counsellors guarantee that their students' sensitive information will not be exposed to third parties, so students feel safe sharing it (Lambie et al., 2011). It was found that students perception was neither a favourable nor an unfavourable, it was undecided perception towards online counselling. However, students had an unfavourable perception, which included the effectiveness of online counselling and adequate resources for online counselling. This finding does not align with Dinçyürek & Uygaraer (2012) study that guidance and counselling centres conduct effective online counselling. Students also had a favourable perception, towards the benefits of online counselling. This finding is compatible with FiKankam & Adinkrah (2023) and Tannous (2017) studies on the benefits of online counselling

The findings found that the students had a favourable perception towards keeping of records, which included having appropriate ethics in keeping of records and keeping updated records. The findings are compatible with Bell (2013) finding that updating teaching staff records is critical for maintaining confidentiality and conforming to legal and ethical standards. It reinforces the importance of practice for maintaining confidentiality and ethical standards. It was found that the students had a favourable perception towards social/personal guidance and counselling, which included conduct of social/personal counselling, conduct of social/personal guidance, assistance in personal/social problems, and organisation of relevant orientation programmes on social issues. Taylor & Buku (2006) highlight the significance of these services in enabling individuals to navigate and resolve their social/ personal problems effectively.

The findings found that the students had a favourable perception towards vocational guidance and counselling, which included conduct of vocational guidance services, conduct of

vocational counselling services, assistance given in relevant job information and assistance given in developing career skills. The findings support Atta-Frimpong (2013) and Taylor & Buku (2006) studies found that students had a favourable perception towards vocational guidance and counselling service delivery in guidance and counselling centres.

It was found that students had a favourable perception towards educational guidance and counselling, which included the conduct of educational guidance programmes, conduct of educational counselling programmes, assistance given in the prescribed curriculum and help given in relevant study skills. The findings align with the study conducted by Atta-Frimpong (2013) and Dinçyürek & Uygarer (2012) pertaining to the benefits of educational guidance and counselling to students.