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EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PROGRAMME IN
K.E.E.A. MUNICIPALITY OF GHANA.

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Abstract

Purpose: This study intended to consider the patronage and effectiveness of guidance and counselling programmes offered to Junior High Schools (J.H.S.) students in the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana.

Methodology: The researchers used exploratory research design for the study. The researchers considered all the 105 Junior High Schools (J.H.S.) in the Municipality as the subject for the study. The researchers sampled 50 schools for data collection. They (researchers) administered questionnaire to the headmasters and teachers in-charge of guidance and counselling in the selected 50 Junior High Schools (JHSs) arriving at a total of 100 respondents. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire. Data gathered were analysed in tables and converting them into percentages.

Findings: The findings revealed that, guidance and counselling services were available in the schools with qualified and experienced officers to handle issues as and when they happen. They also offer prompt response to such issues. It further came out that there were not even a single school in the Municipality, which had a place as an office earmarked for guidance and counselling services. There were also some interference from other teachers, parents and headmasters in the affairs of counselling which hampered the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling services. Some teachers too felt reluctant to report identified problems to the notice of the counselling coordinators.

Unique Contribution to Practice and Policy: The researchers suggested that misconceptions that some teachers, parents and other stakeholders have about guidance and counselling services should be expunged from their minds. Finally, recommendations from the researchers were that, to improve the guidance and counselling services for junior high school students in KEEA Municipality there should be regular workshops and orientation for teachers who are mandated to offer guidance and counselling services to students. Teachers should be made to understand that counselling is geared towards cooperation, teamwork and meant for all students and develop well in confidential setting. The researchers suggested that guidance and counselling services should be infused into the schools' timetable like the assembly and worship.

Key words: *Counselling, internship, guidance, evaluation, academic, relationship, behaviours, effectiveness, achievement, development, partnership.*

Introduction

Academic planning has formed an indispensable component of helping students from all levels of education to plan a satisfactory educational programme and to achieve academic excellence. This is due to the fact that education has been the key to success. All categories of students, from the low achievers, average students, the talented, the gifted, the disabled, or handicapped and the diligent are expected to be assisted to plan their educational achievement, progress and programmes. Buku (2016) posits that counselling aims at bringing individual students to his or her capabilities that he or she actually is in all spheres of life that affects him or her. He continued that counselling makes the individual comes to terms with his or her environment and builds acceptable interpersonal relationship with his or her neighbours in order to maintain a harmonious co-existence. Crosser (2012) was of the view that the behaviours consistently exhibited by mothers or fathers may manifest in their children. For example, if the parents are aggressive it is likely that the children may emulate those characters and behave as such. These behaviours require guidance and counselling services to manage them effectively. However, the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services prevails when the programme is effectively evaluated.

School system is made up of students coming from different socio-economic backgrounds with different characteristics and behaviours. Therefore, appropriate co-existence of students requires effective guidance and counselling services. Further, in Junior High Schools (J.H.S.) students are exposed and compelled to the study of many subjects at the same time. How effective students are to study all these subjects usually comes with its accompanying problems. To reduce the stress and anxiety associated with the bookish nature of Junior High School education requires the effective and efficient services of guidance and counselling. In the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E.), the students are expected to memorize all that they learn from the primary school to J.H.S. Without effective counselling, these can create stress and anxiety, which may affect the students' performances and future progress in life.

Also, students are expected to choose programmes and courses of study at the Senior High School (S. H. S.) that may lead to career choices but many parents often choose courses at the detriment of their wards. The choice made will possibly reflect the preference of the parents but not the students. Very often, these choices may or may not bear much fruits to the students. Most children want to please adults (parents), however, sometimes children may become confused about what their parents have chosen for them (Buku 2016). These sometimes may bring along frictions among parents and the children. These call for effective guidance and counselling services if the schools are to play their roles effectively and efficiently. These make the guidance and counselling services very imperative in the school system. In counselling, every individual is accountable to him/herself. When prudent decisions are made at the J.H.S they benefit the client in their future career choice. Ipaye (2000) supported this view by indicating that counselling is meant to assist individual to make some adjustment by relating his or her capabilities, achievements, interests and to adjust to the appropriate decisions he or she has made. Mwangi (2014) confirms that guidance and counselling services are instrumental in academic performance, self-understanding and career choice every individual.

There is indispensable accountability for educators to appraise and assess students comprehensively on their performance to assist them reach their optimum success and goal in future development. Like all other professions guidance and counselling has become obligatory for all students to ensure they reach their future goal. There has been an increase in demand for counselling programmes to ensure accountability and effective decision-making. This is because decision-making is the heart of all organisational and individual development. In Ghanaian schools and colleges, guidance and counselling services are rendered at all levels of education. In Ghanaian universities, guidance and counselling services are an important component of the student life on campus. All students are assigned academic counsellors but either or not to solicit for their services is voluntary and the choice of the individual. Guidance and counselling is even a compulsory course for all students offering Educational programmes in Ghanaian Universities and Colleges of Education. Guidance and counselling services are meant to prepare students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and growth and the ability to understand and accept the result of their choices (Oladele 2001).

Teachers are confronted with a lot of maladaptive behaviours from their students to help transform them. This is due to the fact that the school has become a melting pot of which all types of pupils are transformed. Teachers are expected to apply all available means to solve these problems. Brown (2013) commented that positive reinforcement approaches effectively improved positive behaviour, which is likely to foster positive communication between teachers and students. This will enhance positive reinforcement and better academic performance of every individual. UNESCO (2003), Pietrofesa, Hoffman & Splete (2002) considered guidance and counselling as an integral part of the school environment designed to promote the development of students and to help them (students) to realise sound and wholesome adjustment and maximum accomplishment to commensurate their potentialities Afande (2015) established that effective guidance and counselling benefit pupils by developing positive skills in decision making, providing services and focusing on the need of pupils. The assertion made by Afande (2015) supports the view that guidance and counselling services are helping services for all students all over the world. Afande (2015) again agrees to the fact that guidance and counselling services are indispensable to ensure that students reach their potentialities.

Buku, Noi-Okwei and Wilson (2012) asserted that some students might complete their courses at the Secondary and Tertiary education without coming into contact with their academic counsellors. Buku, Noi-Okwei and Wilson (2012) defined self-control as the procedures that enable the individual to enhance his own sense of personal freedom by increasing his or her awareness of deterministic influences and thereby giving him the tools and strategies to change his or her life. This assertion made here is that decision making is the heart of guidance and counselling. In guidance and counselling students are expected to make their own decisions independently from their counsellors because when wrong decisions are made counsellors are not to be blamed. Development, how best students can reach their potentiality and decision-making are very paramount in guidance and counselling. Also, this is possible because guidance and counselling strive well on cooperation but not compulsion. Nweze and Okolie (2014) had a study in Nigeria, which revealed that counselling services in schools are instrumental in career decision making. Additionally, their findings indicated that inadequacy of guidance and

counselling resources affects students in career decision making. Nweze and Okolie (2014) argued that the insufficiency and unavailability of counselling resources for teachers hamper career decision making among students. Auni, Jepchirchir and Ong'unya (2014) added that guidance and counselling exhibits effective strategies, which require teachers to help solve them. Many students might have selected programmes of study in the Senior High School (S.H.S.) wrongly which might have affected their progression to the tertiary institutions.

In Ghanaian Colleges of Education, students are made to read a course in "Introduction to Guidance and Counselling" (EPS 302) which helps equip all professional teachers with basic skills in handling guidance and counselling problems. There are counselling officers at both the Regional Education and National Education Offices. These counselling services trickle down to the various schools through the District/Municipal/Metropolitan Education Offices in the basic schools. In every basic school in Ghana, there are always an officer in charge of Guidance and counselling services. The guidance and counselling officer in particular and all teachers in general are expected to offer guidance and counselling services to students. Guidance and counselling is mandatory in all basic schools in Ghana. All these support recommendation made by Dzobo committee's on New Educational Reforms in 1987 that, Guidance and counselling shall be offered to students at the JHS to enable them choose the right programmes to suit their interest and skills.

To ensure the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services offered in schools and colleges evaluation is very imperative. Evaluation is the process of checking the effectiveness of a programme. Sidhu (2012) writes that evaluation includes both quantitative and qualitative description of pupils' behaviours plus value judgements of those behaviours, which may lead to an attempt to remove limitations and shortcomings. The researchers by this assertion intend to check the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling services that are organised in the basic schools to see its effectiveness and to suggest the next line of action that will make it more efficient. This is because every attempt made in the field of education warrants a positive result. Awabil (cited in the Journal of counselling, Education and Psychology volume 1 issue 1, (2007) stated that effective guidance and counselling depends on accurate and continuous assessment of the programme to find whether it is meeting its target. In some institutions, the process of assessing their students is at times not very reliable and characterised by many flaws. In such situations, the school may not get accurate data about pupils' progress. In such situation teachers and administrators may find it very difficult to make decisions about their students.

In considering the importance of evaluating guidance programme in schools, Gibson and Mitchel (2005) define programme evaluation as a system of data collection and analysis of activities undertaken to determine the value of a programme in order to assist management, programme planning, staff development, public accountability and promotions. It is very appropriate to evaluate a programme to realise its effectiveness and the same is said about guidance and counselling programmes. School counsellors design and deliver school counselling programmes that improve students' outcomes and to help them to make informed choices and decisions. They uphold the ethical and professional standards of counselling and promote the development of the school counselling programme. (Gibson and Mitchel 2005) Essuman (2007) writes that although all the Universities (Tertiary Institutions) in Ghana have counselling centres

and as such render various kinds of services to the students, staff and others. Despite all these some students feel reluctant to see and interact with counsellors. In the Training Colleges (Now Colleges of Education), not much is heard about their guidance and counselling programmes and services that are rendered there. Essuman (2007) wondered what might be happening at the Training Colleges (Colleges of Education). If the guidance and counselling services are said not to be effectively organised in the Colleges of Education how much effective will it be in Junior High Schools? With these reasons, the researchers decided to study the effectiveness of how guidance and counselling services are rendered in Ghanaian Junior High Schools.

Objectives

1. To assess if students in the selected schools access guidance and counselling services.
2. To seek the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services organised in Ghanaian Basic Schools

Research Questions

1. Do students in the sampled schools access guidance and counselling services?
2. To what extent is guidance and counselling services organised effectively in Ghanaian Basic Schools?

Theoretical Framework

The study was grounded in the Lazarus Psychological Stress Theory (Lazarus 1991) that postulates that stress is a relational concept and not defined as a specific kind of external stimulation or a specific pattern of psychological behaviour or subjective reaction. Like Lazarus (1991) the researchers were of the view that academic stress that Lazarus used for his theory is among the conditions that require guidance and counselling services in schools and colleges to help cope with the negative influence on students' academic performance hence the use of the theory. Also, the researchers were of the view that coping and behaviour modification strategies among students in basic schools hinges on effective guidance and counselling services rendered in Ghanaian schools. Problems identified in Lazarus Theory that have negative effects on students' performance include interpersonal, social, work place conflicts, institutional and domestic, that impedes the academic output of students as well as the professional performance. This theory to the researchers fit well into the title of this article because guidance and counselling is aimed at solving the same or similar problems as outlined by Lazarus theory.

Methodology

The research design used for the study was exploratory research design. . Quantitative data was collected based on variables that were measured through numbers and were analysed by using procedures of statistical nature. Scott and Usher (2011) Sidhu (2012) Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012), Leavy (2017) and Creswell and Creswell in (2018) defined quantitative research as a method which involves the processes of collecting, analysing, interpreting and writing the result of the study. Also, commented that quantitative approach to research is centred on achieving objectivity, control and precise measurement that rely on deductive designs that aimed at refuting or building evidence in support of specific theories. These referenced authorities considered quantitative research to the use of numbers or figures and use variables

that are measured. They were of the view that qualitative approaches to research value depth of meaning and people's subjective experiences and their meaning- making processes.

Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

This study comprised a target population of all teachers who are in charge of guidance and counselling, and headmasters of basic Schools in Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (K.E.E.A.) Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana with one hundred and five (105) schools. In each school, the researchers selected two (2) respondents to respond to the questionnaire. A sample size of 50 Lead mentor (Headmasters), and 50 Mentors (teachers) in charge of guidance and counselling were selected as respondents giving a total of 100 respondents. This sample was used because the fifty (50) schools were partnership schools where student teachers from Komenda College of Education are posted for their internship programme. The purpose of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in the basic schools in K.E.E.A. Municipality. Therefore, the researcher used purposive sample technique to pick all teachers who are in charge of guidance and counselling services in the selected schools. Also, because the headmasters are the chief executive officers of the schools and supposed to provide funding and material support for the guidance and counselling programme they were also selected to be among the respondents. The researchers used questionnaire to collect data from these respondents. Questionnaires are set of questions that present predetermined set of stimuli to the teachers and headmasters to respond to Borg & Gall (2003), Wittrock (2005), Weiten (2007) and Castle (2010) see questionnaires as designed set of questions that are disseminated to a sample of research respondents in order that the researcher gathers comprehensible responses to given phenomena, which seems to be straight forward and comparatively pain-free information. They also viewed questionnaire as a series of written questions designed to obtain information about attitudes, opinions and specific aspects of their behaviours administered to respondents for responses. In order to realize large amounts of information from a large sample of people, the researcher used questionnaires to collect data faster and easier. The researcher ensured validity by seeking expert judgement of the questionnaire.

Findings

Table 1: Demographic data of Academic Qualification of Respondent Headmasters

Academic Qualification	Number of Headmasters	Percentage (%)
Diploma	-	-
Degree	42	84
Post-graduate	8	16
Total	50	100

Field Data 2019

Table 1 shows the academic qualification of headmasters of the selected JHS in the Municipality. 42 of them are degree holders while 8 of them are post-graduate holders. This indicates that all of them have taken courses in guidance and counselling and are capable and competent to handle identified behavioural problem with students in JHS.

Table 2: Data of Ages of Respondent Headmasters

Ages	Number	Percentage (%)
30 and below	-	-
31 – 40	12	24
41 – 50	32	64
51 – 60	6	12
Total	50	100

Field data 2019/2020

Table 2 indicates ages of headmasters in the Municipality. All of them are above 30 years and below 60 years.

Table 3: Demographic data of Qualification of Respondent Guidance and Counselling officers

Academic Qualification	Number	Percentage (%)
Diploma	10	20
Degree	26	52
Post-graduate	14	28
Total	50	100

Field data 2019/2020

Table 3 shows the academic qualifications of guidance and counselling officers in the KEEA Municipality. 10 respondents representing 20% of the teachers are holders of Diploma in Basic Education, 26 of them representing 52% are Degree holders in Education while 14 of them representing 28% are Post-graduate degree holders in Education.

Table 4: Data of Ages of Headmasters in KEEA who Responded

Ages	Number	Percentages (%)
30 and Below	-	-
31 – 40	24	48
41 – 50	20	40
51 – 60	6	12
Total	50	100

Field Data 2019/2020

Data from tables I and 3 indicate that the academic qualifications of both headmasters and teachers range from diploma to post-graduate. This indicates that all of them qualify to render guidance and counselling services to the pupils. From tables 2 and 4, the ages of teachers and headmasters are from age 30 to 60 years, matured ages for rendering guidance and counselling.

Table 5: Do students in the sampled schools access guidance and counselling services

Indicators of G & C Evaluation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1).all teacher collaborate with the service	10 (%)	20 (20%)	30 (30%)	40 (40%)
2).deviant students are referred for counselling	15(15%)	25 (25)	35 (35%)	25 (25%)
3). There are office reserved for guidance & Counselling	-	-	45 (45%)	55 (55%)
4).Students are counselled at the assembly grounds	35 (35%)	25 (25%)	15 (15%)	25 (25%)
5). Students are counselled in the classrooms	45(45%)	35(35%)	16 (16%)	4 (4%)
6). A day is set aside for guidance & counselling	-	-	46 (46%)	54 (54%)
7).Guidance & counselling is done through teaching	54(54%)	46 (46%)	-	-
8).A day is set aside for guidance & counselling	-	-	58 (58%)	42 (42%)
9). Students feel free to access guidance & counselling services	10 (10%)	34 (34%)	44 (44%)	12 (12%)
10). Some teachers try to solve identified problems without referral	30 (30%)	46(46%)	14(14%)	10 (10%)

11). There are appropriate facilities for storing data	10(10%)	15(15%)	46(46%)	29(29%)
12).Municipal G & C officer is always available for assistance	10(10%)	25(25%)	35(35%)	30(30%)
13). Frequent workshop for G & C officers	-	5(5%)	55(55%)	40(40%)
14).Inadequate orientation on G & C practices	37(37%)	38(38%)	15(15%)	10(10%)
15) Poor inter-personal relationship between teachers	34(34%)	45(45%)	11(11%)	10(10%)
16). Work load on G & C officers are too much	45(45%)	48(48%)	7(7%)	-
17). Difficult to manage exceptional cases	15(15%)	25(25%)	30(30%)	30(30%)
18). Interferences from other teachers	35(35%)	28(28%)	20(20%)	17(17%)
19). Misconception of the parents about G & C services	45(45%)	25(25%)	16(16%)	14(14%)
20). Misconception of G & C from teachers	24(24%)	26(26%)	25(25%)	25(25%)

Field data 2020

Data from table 5 indicates that, teachers' collaboration with guidance and counselling services and referral of deviant students for counselling, 70 and 60 respondents disagreed with 63 indicating interference of other stakeholders in the services. This indicates there are some teachers who are not contributing to effective organisation of the service in the schools. Also, all the respondents commented that there are no frequent workshops and no specific offices earmarked for guidance and counselling therefore guidance and counselling services are organised on the assembly grounds, and classrooms. It came out that there are no days set aside for guidance and counselling. Further 66 respondents asserted that students feel reluctant to assess guidance and counselling services. Moreover, as many as 76 responded that teachers try to solve deviant problems on their own without referring such problems to the headmasters or the guidance and counselling officers with 75 indicating that there are no facilities to store information on guidance and counselling while 65 respondents were of the view that Municipal guidance and counselling officers are not regular to their schools. Further, 95 remarked that there were not appropriate workshops for guidance and counselling and orientation for guidance and counselling too was not appropriate. Furthermore, 79 responded that there were poor inter-personal relationships among teachers in basic schools in KEEA Municipality. Teachers' in-charge of guidance and counselling in JHS in KEEA Municipality perform their normal duties as teachers alongside guidance and counselling. Therefore, as many as 93 responded agreed that work-load for teachers in-charge of guidance and counselling was too much for them while 60 responded that they do not encounter difficulties to manage exceptional cases. Finally, 70 respondents stated that some parents have misconception about their work.

Findings

1. There were no offices for guidance and counselling services.
2. Lack of orientation and workshops for teachers on guidance and counselling services.
3. Students feel reluctant to access guidance and counselling services.
4. The workload on teachers in charge of guidance and counselling services were too much for them.
5. Guidance and counselling services are organised in classrooms, staff common rooms and during teaching.
6. Some teachers and parents have misconceptions about the service and were not referring students for guidance and counselling.
7. Municipal Officers in charge of guidance and counselling were not regular to their schools.
8. There was inadequate funding and inappropriate equipment for storing information and stationery for the service.
9. The headmasters and guidance officers were all matured and experienced for the job assigned them; they have all taught for more than five years.
10. There were no days or specific periods set aside for guidance and counselling services.
11. Some teachers do not collaborate with guidance and counselling officers but try to solve guidance problems on their own.
12. Some teachers and parents do not refer students for counselling.
13. Some parents select Secondary Schools for the wards.

Discussions

The study revealed that students in the basic schools in KEEA feel reluctant to access guidance and counselling services. This finding confirms what Essuman (2007) indicated he wondered what might be happening at the Training Colleges (Colleges of Education in terms of guidance and counselling services. Essuman (2007) was of the view that even in the Universities and Colleges students are feeling reluctant to patronise guidance and counselling services. The study further revealed that there were no offices and logistic support for guidance and counselling services in JHS in KEEA schools. To the researchers this was not very surprising and conforms with the assertions made by Nweze and Okolie (2014) in their study in Nigeria. Their findings indicated that inadequacy of guidance and counselling resources affects students in career decision making. Nweze and Okolie (2014) further argued that the insufficiency and unavailability of counselling resources for teachers hamper career decision making among students. Similar situations were identified in the J.H.S. in the KEEA Municipality. Resources were woefully not there and those who have were inappropriate.

Also, the study revealed the importance of guidance services to students' performance and be able to reach their potentialities this is in line with Afande (2015) who established that effective guidance and counselling services benefit pupils by developing positive skills in decision making, providing services and focusing on the need of pupils

Recommendations

To improve upon the Guidance and Counselling programmes the researchers suggest that the following measures should be taken:

1. There should be regular in-service training for Junior High School teachers/headmaster to acquire the needed skills and knowledge on Guidance and Counselling so as to function effectively.
2. More awareness should be created for students to realise that guidance and counselling is very important for all of them to cope with their developmental and adjustment problems.
3. Workload for the school counsellors must be reduced to enable them concentrate fully on the guidance and counselling programme. If possible, the guidance and counselling officer should not teach any other subject except the counselling services.
4. The school counsellors should be assign specific office accommodation where confidential issues will be discussed.
5. The counsellors should be given appropriate materials and facilities to store gathered information.
6. Parents should be educated on the importance of guidance and counselling services to the process of their wards during Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) and School Management Committee (SMC) meetings.
7. During staff meeting teachers should be briefed on the service goal could be achieved through collaborative effort and therefore all teachers should be responsible for the total upbringing of the students.
8. There should be a period set aside for guidance and counselling services as that of the school assembly and worship.
9. The interview revealed that the schools lack adequate funding for guidance and counselling
10. The researchers recommend guidance and counselling should be given a broader look to involve all stakeholder on board to accrue all the guidance and counselling benefits to all students.
11. Peer counsellors should be trained and encouraged to help themselves reach their developmental goal.
12. The School and colleges should be resourced with both material and financial resources to enable them execute their assigned duties with sense of decorum and humour.
13. Guidance and counselling shall be offered to students at the JHS to enable them choose the right programmes to suit their interest and skills. This is because some parents are seen to at times interfere with choices that their children make.
14. There should be frequent in-service trainings and workshops for all serving teachers to equip them with the requisite skills for guidance and counselling.
15. Students should be taking through crisis counselling to be able to withstand stress and depression issues that confront students all over the world.

16. Guidance and counselling services should be infused into the schools timetable like the assembly and worship.

Conclusion

The study was carried out at K.E.E.A. Municipality in Ghana to check if students in the sampled schools access guidance and counselling services and also to evaluate the extent to which guidance and counselling services are organised effectively in Ghanaian Basic Schools. The study revealed that there were adequately qualified and competent guidance and counselling officers in the schools to handle guidance and counselling issues that crop up in Ghanaian basic schools. The workload on teachers in charge of guidance and counselling services were too much for them.

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