

EVALUATION OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF MANHYIA SUB-METROPOLIS, GHANA

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Accepted date: 20-02-2019

Published date: 18-04-2019

To cite this document: Yirenkyi, C. A., Kyere, E. A., & Ofori, K. N. (2019). Evaluation of Guidance and Counselling Practices in Schools: A Case Study of Manhyia Sub-Metropolis, Ghana. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 4(28), 52-63.

Abstract: *The study was conducted to evaluate Guidance and Counselling Services in Manhyia Sub-Metropolis in the Ashanti Region of Ghana and their impact on students. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the state of Guidance and Counselling services and to identify the types of guidance services provided in the schools. In trying to accomplish this study, descriptive survey was used as the design. Two sets of questionnaires were designed for students and school-based Counsellors respectively. Data was gathered from a sample size of 310. The purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques were employed in selecting the respondents respectively. Descriptive statistics were used in analysing the data collected. It was found that 60% of the counsellors were untrained, while about half of the schools (53.3%) did not have counselling offices. The findings also revealed that counselling and orientation were the most guidance services operating in the schools. Recommendations included the reduction of teaching periods for school-based counsellors and provision of offices for counselling sessions.*

Keywords: *Evaluation, Guidance and Counselling, Students, Counsellor, Guidance Services*

Introduction

The first attempt to establish formalized Guidance and Counselling in Ghana was in 1955 when the Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare and Education came together to establish a Youth Employment Department. This was in response to the outcry of Ghanaians for meaningful education for their children, which reflected the manpower needs of the country (Ackumey, 2003). The major aim of Guidance and Counselling is helping pupils to develop suitable behaviour for effective teaching and learning to take place and to develop a good foundation for the future career path as desired. Additionally, students are assisted professionally in the choice of subjects conducive to their future plans or probable job orientations. On the whole then, Guidance and Counselling support the effective management

and administration of schools, achievement of the nation's aims and objectives regarding the purposes of education nationally and internationally.

Parents, Educationalists and Government as well as the entire community expressed concern about the need to introduce Guidance and Counselling in schools. This was a result of increased moral decadence, increased crime wave, infant suicide, sexual abuse and unemployment problems associated with subject combinations. Following this development, the Ghana Education Service (GES) in 1976 issued a policy for Guidance and Counselling to be instituted in Ghana's Second Cycle Schools and Teacher Training Colleges. Their circular letter reference number GES/DG/O40/9A had this to say; "Education is dynamic not static and therefore, must change according to the changing needs of the society. It is therefore no wonder that the Ghana Education Service has decided to establish a systematic Guidance and Counselling programme in all second cycle institutions, Secondary/Technical/Commercial/Vocational schools and Training Colleges" (Ackumey, 2003).

The general view now is that Guidance and Counselling should be an integral part of the school education programme. The fact then remains that Guidance and Counselling practices should be put in place to help solve pupils' problems, to facilitate learning about students' needs, to help them adjust properly to their environment, to know the pupils involved in the smooth running of the school, the subject offered, school regulations among others. Students must be helped to understand and accept themselves and to realize their unique weaknesses and strengths. The school counsellor will have to resolve developmental problems of students. Students also need to be helped to plan realistic goals and to access their potential in obtaining the goals they have set for themselves. Collecting and collating information about students need to be professionally done to ensure valid judgment.

The government of Ghana white paper (2004) on Anamoah Mensah Education Reform Committee has placed Guidance and Counselling as a necessary process in assisting students in making the right choices, decisions and promoting discipline in schools and societies. The Government of Ghana has therefore instituted measures towards giving a new lease of life to Guidance and Counselling in educational institutions and communities. Pecku (1991) contends that people view Guidance and Counselling in primary schools as unimportant because the children are too young to be bothered with these services. He also views that, many people think that the classroom teacher must be an important partner in Guidance and Counselling work, but experience has shown that although, that classroom teacher can be used in Guidance and Counselling, a specialist function better. To him, most primary school teachers do not have the skills for this task. There is, therefore, the possibility of compounding the problems of the students. This notwithstanding, he believes that Guidance and Counselling should be instituted from the primary level to help the development of the students.

In Ghana's pre-tertiary education, the school environment provides the focus of services of Guidance and Counselling but is not taught as a subject. In most cases it is a professional service in which one of the teachers is trained and appointed as the school counsellor (Bauman, Rigby & Hoppa, 2008). The wide acceptance of the benefits associated with Guidance and Counselling continues to be the driving force for the expansion and implementation of the concept. While it is not only Guidance and Counselling alone that determines the students' behaviour and career, the effective use of Guidance and Counselling services help students in putting up good behaviour and choosing a career that would be of

benefit to them and the society at large. The expectations of what Guidance and Counselling services could do to improve education in the sub-Metropolis and Ghana as a whole becomes a serious issue to look at. Guidance is vital for the realization of the goals of education. It is for this reason that the Ghana governments over the years have instituted measures to make the programme succeed in the schools. This requires constant monitoring to ascertain whether Guidance and Counselling services provided in the sub-metropolis conform to the generally accepted standards or is making the desired impact. Specifically, the present study was guided by the following research questions;

- a. What is the state of Guidance and Counselling services in the basic schools in the Manhyia Sub-Metropolis of Ghana?
- b. Which Guidance and Counselling services are in operation in Manhyia Sub-Metropolitan schools of Ghana?
- c. In what ways are Guidance and counselling services achieving the desired impact?
- d. What are the reasons why students do not visit the school counsellor?

Review of Related Literature

Guidance and Counselling Concepts

Every Counsellor, in an attempt to attend to his client, uses a lot of programmes or services to achieve his aim. He or she usually dwell his or her practice on well-known theories like Gestalt Therapy, Behavioural Therapy, Rational Emotive Therapy, Psychoanalysis therapy and many others. No matter the training and setting, Azrude & Lwunden (1995) and Kankam & Onivehu (2000) suggested that every counsellor should evolve his/her own unique counselling style to operate in a particular area.

Both words or terms, guidance and counselling are used interchangeably in certain quarters to indicate that they are two sides of the same coin. But there are differences between the two terms even though in counselling, the guidance counsellor uses both programmes to help the child to achieve his/her goals. Numale (2008) and Rao (2013) concluded that the two terms are different in the way each provides its services though they may have certain things similar, in the way each provides the services though they may have certain things in common. Pecku (1991) and Numale & Awabil (2018) postulated that the basic guidance and counselling programmes or services carried out in schools include individual or appraisal service, information service, referral service, placement service, evaluation service, consultation service and follow-up service. Apart from these services mentioned above, the school also provides individual and group counselling. Kuijpers & Meijers (2012) outlined individual and group guidance and counselling programmes carried out mostly in schools with an emphasis on vocational or career education.

Pecku (1991) in his contribution to the guidance literature also talked about fewer number or smaller size for group counselling in order to minimize any problem that are likely to be encountered when the group is large. In a situation where the group is small, the individuals are able to resolve their problems using inter-relationships among themselves once they almost have the same problems. Oladele (2000) conducted a study in Nigeria. In the study, he singled out vocational educational and personal counselling services as the most essential of all the school guidance and counselling programmes or services. Oladele's view is supported by earlier studies by McMahon & Patton (2002) with their quantitative assessment and found the following types of information useful in counselling. They are Educational, Vocational, Personal-social information. Most of the records available in schools indicated however that

most counsellors in schools do pay attention to vocational and educational counselling judging from the challenges facing the youth today.

Public Perception of the Role of Counsellors in Schools

There are general controversies as to the actual role of Counsellors in schools. A school counsellor's role is to shift from mere problems solving to modern day developmental and preventive counselling. Developmental counselling is an ongoing process that occurs throughout an individual's entire life span (Taylor & Buku, 2006). It focuses on helping clients to achieve positive self and personal growth at any stage of their lives. This issue has received the support of Harvinghurst (1980) cited in Kankam & Onivehu (2000) indicating that developmental counselling helps the individual to learn how to achieve healthy growth in society. Thus, counsellors can through this process aid individuals at all age levels and wholeheartedly in overcoming their developmental tasks. Preventive counselling on the other hand is involved in most cases an elementary school sex programme aimed at alleviating nurture anxieties about sexuality and sexual relationships. Zila & Kiselica (2001) also supported this counselling role and noted that counsellors should work with the youth to help them understand themselves in relation to sexual concerns so that they are better prepared to handle them in the future.

The role of Counsellors primarily suggests as being one helping students to overcome Vocational and Educational problems. Akinade, Sokan & Osareren (1996) made a study using 20% random sample of 6000 boys and girls in Ekiti Baptist High School, Igede-Ekiti (Nigeria) to answer five questions about ways in which counselling was helpful. The answers obtained as postulated by Akinade et al (1996) were that school counsellors received about as many votes for vocational and educational planning as any other areas of life situation. Even though, many people have mixed feelings about the role of the school counsellor, others have researched into their role in schools and have come out to agree on the roles though at times different opinions have been expressed on the roles too. A contribution by User, Kaplan & Roth (2002) put down some of the consultation role of school counsellors. They gave some suggestions on the consultation role with groups such as parents and teachers to provide rationale for understanding the behaviour of the students better.

As a consultant at the school, the Counsellor's consulting functions are either advisory or dealing with problems in the school. He/she consults with teachers, administrators and parents. The consulting function involves an outreach programme. He/she is expected to provide information through the information services like school brochure, newspapers and magazines and so on about facilities in school, opportunities for further education and career training opportunities. He/she uses the orientation, referral, follow up, information, placement and appraisal services together with other services already mentioned to help the child address his/her problem through a painstaking collection of relevant information and the use of records (cumulative records) and other consultation approaches to help his/her clients. Whatever the case, the Counsellor is responsible for coordinating guidance and counselling programmes and all other school programmes which help develop and see to the growth of the student in relation to the needs.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted for the study was the descriptive survey design. The design is concerned with studying conditions or relationships that exist. It also allows the researchers

to obtain the opinions of the representative sample of the target population in order to infer the perception of the entire population. According to Ofori, Tordzro, Asamoah & Achiaa (2018) citing Leedy & Ormood (2005), survey design is the process that enables respondents' characteristics, attitudes and experiences to be gathered through questioning. The descriptive design was adopted because the aim of the study was to provide a meaningful picture of guidance and counselling as it is practiced in schools.

Population

The total number of Junior High Schools (JHS) in the Manhyia sub-metropolis for the 2016/2017 academic year was forty-four (44), made up of twenty-four (24) public and twenty (20) private JHS. The total number of Senior High Schools (SHS) was eight (8), made up of three private and five (5) public SHS. There are also two Colleges of Education in the Sub-Metropolis. The target population for the study, which was made up of students and school counsellors was fifteen thousand six hundred and fifty-four (15,654).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study was three hundred and ten (310), made up of two hundred and ninety-five (295) students and fifteen (15) school-based counsellors from fifteen (15) schools. The stratified sampling technique was used to group the schools into single sex and mixed schools. This was done to make sure that there would be respondents from both single sex and mixed sex schools. In choosing the students, the simple random sampling technique was used. Here, 'yes' and 'no' were written on pieces of papers which were folded and put in a container. The container was raised above the head level and students were made to pick. Those who picked the papers with the 'yes' were used for the study. This was done to give each student an equal chance to be part of the study.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. This was because of its effectiveness in the collection of information about practices and conditions and for inquiring into the opinions and attitudes of the subjects. The questions were made up of open-ended and close-ended items. The respondents were expected to make their own responses while in the close ended; they were required to pick an answer from a number of alternatives. The items on the questionnaire centred on the background characteristics of the schools, guidance and counselling practices, students' needs, reasons students do not pay visits to the counsellor and the benefits derived from guidance and counselling services. The questionnaires were prepared by the researchers and given to two lectures in Guidance and Counselling at the University of Education, Winneba to examine the appropriateness.

Validity and Reliability

To determine the validity and reliability of the instrument, a pre-test was undertaken before using them for the actual study. Franekel & Wallen (2000) indicated that;

"A pre-test of the questionnaire can reveal ambiguities, poorly worded questions, questions that are not well understood, and unclear choices and can also indicate whether the instructions of the respondent are clear" (p: 44).

The researcher therefore selected thirty (30) students from Okomfo Anokye Senior High School and Rockange Junior High School and their respective school counsellors for the pre-test. The schools were selected because the schools have similar characteristics as the schools selected for the main study. After the pre-testing of the instrument, the Cronback Alpha method was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaire. With the Statistical Package

for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, a reliability co-efficient of 0.78 alpha was obtained. Again, as a result of the pre-test, the statements or items that seem ambiguous or misleading were reviewed for clarity.

Data Analysis Procedure

Descriptive statistics were primarily used for the analysis. The data obtained was computed, processed and analysed using percentages and frequencies. The data analysed was aided by the use of SPSS data analysis programme. In the analysis of data, the responses given by respondents were tallied, frequencies noted, and the frequency distribution table prepared with the responses obtained. The frequencies of the responses for each item and or options were converted into percentages in order to determine the different responses given by specific proportions of the study sample.

As Crewell (2003) stated, open items cannot be easily coded, hence similar responses to the items on the open-ended questions were grouped together according to common ideas expressed by respondents. The established category of responses obtained from common ideas was coded and fed into the computer for processing, interpretation and description.

Results

The state of Guidance and Counselling services in the schools

One aspect of evaluating guidance and counselling practices is to determine its state as it has been implemented in the schools. To this end, it became necessary to know the number of trained counsellors, the years it has existed in the schools, whether the schools had counselling offices and also the means students use to access the services. The results are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: The State of Guidance and Counselling in Selected Schools

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Variables			
<i>Number of Trained Counsellors</i>	Trained	6	40.0
	Untrained	9	60.0
<i>Years of Existence of G & C in School</i>	1-3 years	4	26.7
	4-6 years	6	40.0
	7-9 years	3	20.0
	10 and above	2	13.3
<i>Counselling Office</i>	Yes	7	46.7
	No	8	53.3
<i>Means of Accessing G & C Services by Students</i>	Invitation	2	13.3
	Voluntary	10	66.7
	Referral	3	20.0

Table 1 shows that the majority of the school counsellors were untrained (60%). More than two-third of the schools (70%) had instituted guidance and counselling practices for more than four years. This is a clear indication that the practice of guidance and counselling was an old practice in the study area. Another discovery was that more than half of the schools (53.3%) did not have counselling offices. On ways students' accessed guidance and counselling services, it was significant that most of them (66.7%) were by voluntary means.

Guidance Services in Operation in the Schools

This question sought to identify the various guidance services in operation in schools at Manhyia sub-metropolis of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Answers to the research question were gathered from school-based counsellors. The responses to the questionnaire are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Guidance Services

Guidance Services	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Information services	2	13.3
Orientation services	10	66.7
Appraisal services	0	0.0
Counselling services	12	80.0
Referral services	2	13.3
Placement services	3	20.0
Follow-up services	0	0.0
Evaluation service	2	13.3

In line with Table 2, the most prevalent guidance service in the schools was counselling service 12 (80%) followed by orientation service 10 (66.7%). However, the respondents indicated that the appraisal and follow-up services were not used in the schools.

Impact Of Guidance And Counselling Services

Research question 4 elicited the students and counsellors views on the impact guidance and counselling was making in the schools. This was to ascertain whether the services were beneficial to the students and therefore made an impact. The results are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Impact of Guidance and Counselling Services in the Schools

Impact of Guidance and Counselling	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	248	80.0
No	62	20.0
Total	310	100

As shown in Table 3, the majority of the respondents (80%) indicated that Guidance and Counselling services had great impact in their schools.

Table 4: Benefit from School Guidance and Counselling Programmes

Benefits	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Solving academic problems	127	41.2
Having access to information about jobs	34	11.0
Solving personal problems	78	25.0
Overcoming examination anxiety	71	22.8
Total	310	100

Table 4 indicates that the major benefits students gained from the schools' guidance programmes was to solve academic problems 127 (41.2%) and followed by solving personal problems (25.0%). However, having access to information about jobs 34 (11%) was the least benefit derived.

Reasons Students Do Not Visit The School Counsellor

This question was to find out why the students do not visit the school counsellor to present their personal problems. The responses from the students are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Students' Reasons for not Visiting the School Counsellor

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Counselling is only for deviant students	12	4.2
Can solve my own problems	12	4.2
No office space to meet counsellor	105	35.4
Have no problem	30	10.4
Have no trust in the counsellor	25	8.3
Feels more comfortable discussing problem with parents/other teachers	61	20.8
Feel shy	25	8.3
Do not like sharing my problems	19	6.3
Counsellor always busy teaching	6	2.1
Total	295	100

From table 5, it could be seen that the lack of office space to meet the counsellor, students feeling more comfortable to discuss problems with parents/ teachers or peers and the claim that they had no problems were the most reasons given by the respondents for not visiting the school counsellor. It is indicated by 35.4%, 20.8% and 10.4% respectively.

Discussion

It was established from this study that about two-thirds of the school counsellors were untrained. This confirms Akinde, Sokan & Osarenren (1996) findings that one of the problems in guidance and counselling is lack of trained personnel to run courses for interested teachers in guidance and counselling. School counsellors should be professional who have received graduate level training in the field of counselling. Such specialists are

knowledgeable in human development, counselling techniques, theories of learning and motivation. They are also able to construct, administer and analyse psychological tests (Makinde 1991). One can therefore conclude that the current state of affairs makes it difficult for students to get the professional assistance needed since most of the counsellors are not skilled enough to help the students reach solutions to their various types of personal difficulties.

The findings revealing that majority of the schools did not have counselling offices is not surprising since office space is a major problem in most developing countries including Ghana. This confirms the statements by Essuman (2007) and Ofori (2018) that inadequate facilities like lack of offices are problems responsible for the inefficient running of guidance programmes in schools. This implies that counselling work will be difficult for those without offices since they would have to operate in places that may affect the issue of confidentiality. The results further proved that the practices of guidance and counselling have existed in the schools for some time while most of the students accessed these services voluntarily. This development shows the cooperation from school administration and students, which is needed for a good working relationship. This is consistent with the guiding principles of teamwork and cooperation as emphasized by Kankam & Onivehu (2000) citing Shertzer & Stone (1976).

From table 2, it is clear that counselling service is the most common of the services used in schools. The findings agree with Awabil (1996) and Poku (1996) who reported that counselling service was mostly provided in secondary schools. The findings are also inconsistent with Gibson & Mitchel (1990); Sheritzer & and Stone (1976), when they said that the purpose of counselling is assisting students to understand themselves and become self-realizing individuals. It reveals that the councils were not making use of appraisal and follow-up services was not surprising. This may be due to the fact that the majority of the respondents were untrained counsellors. This runs counter to Akinde, Sokan and Oserenren's (1996) view that stated that the counsellors should not regard the end of the therapy session an end in itself but a means to an end. The counsellor has to monitor client as a follow-up and out-of-therapy basis. At the termination of the therapy, there is still the need for follow-up and appraisal with the aim of re-evaluating the effectiveness of the therapy.

The revelation from the study that 80% of respondents indicating that counselling in the schools is making a great impact is in agreement with the government of Ghana white paper on the Anamuah-Mensah Ghana's Education Reform Committee (2007) which underscores the importance placed on guidance and counselling as a necessary process in assisting pupils and students in making the right choices, plans and decisions, and in promoting discipline in schools and the society. It is not surprising that students benefitted in solving their academic problems. This confirms Oweini & Abdo (2000) who discovered that secondary school students needed educational information. It is also supported by Rana & Kausar (2011) that study habit was one of the chief concerns of the students. The students' greater desire for academic work could be due to the fact they want to improve upon their academic performance and to pass their examinations as well. Adain, career information was also a major concern of students. This finding is consistent with the assertions of Petrofesa et al (1984), Okoye et al. (1990) and Ghana National Population Council (2000) that career information is one of the greatest needs of adolescent students.

The results are stated that students did not visit the counsellor because they had no problems contradicts the view of Taylor and Buku (2006) that counselling sessions is not held

exclusively for problem solving. To them there are other purpose for which counselling is held. They maintained that there are situation where counselling can be used to enable the individual make a choice out of many good alternatives available. It was also found that the counsellor was at times not available. The findings are supported by Essuman (2007) that tight teaching schedules for school counsellors is, among other problems responsible for the ineffective running of guidance programmes in schools. This is also supported by Onumah (1992) that one of the major problems of school guidance and counselling work is their heavy teaching schedules. This finding also portrays that student do not visit the counsellor because of lack of confidentiality.

This confirms Richards & Vigano (2013) when they stated that confidentiality is an essential and unique feature of the counselling relationship which is meant to ensure safely and privacy. To them, it is precisely the knowledge that a counsellor's professional and ethical standards protect individual rights that make it easier for the client to confide personal secrets. It was again discovered that 6.3% of the respondents did not visit the school counsellor because they could not trust the counsellor. Eriksson & Nilson (2008) see this development of trust in a counselling relationship as crucial to productive work. They see the counsellor's primary responsibility as offering interpersonal conditions to the client that are likely to result in trust.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that Guidance and Counselling practices are encouraging and beneficial in the schools since it helped students to solve their academic and personal problems. Teachers, school counsellors and students appreciate the services and students mostly avail themselves. However, some of the services are not being adequately provided to be the objectives of the programme due to lack of counselling offices, inadequate trained counsellors, and other facilities in some of the schools. In light of the findings and for the improvement of guidance and counselling services in schools, the government and school administrators should put serious efforts to get more people trained and also provide at least fairly finished offices for guidance and counselling purposes. It is also recommended that directors of education and heads of schools should re-examine the issue of heavy teaching schedules of school counsellors so that their workload could be reduced for them to be able to function in an effective way.

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