

# Counselling Needs of Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana: Implications for Inclusive Education in Ghana

**Ocansey, S. K.**

University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Psychology  
Pretoria, South Africa

**Gyimah, E. K.**

University of Cape Coast, College of Distance Education, Department of Education  
Cape Coast, Ghana

## Abstract

In this fast changing world, pupils all over the world have developed severe social and psychological needs that affect their interactions with others and subsequently, the achievement of their life goals. Essentially, the social and psychological needs of school pupils have manifested in diverse mal-adjusted behaviours that hinder their academic performance. The study explored the various counselling needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in one of the regions of Ghana and the specific level at which pupils require guidance and counselling services. The purposive and systematic sampling techniques were employed to select 88 pupils and three staff from three special schools from the region to provide information for the study with the use of questionnaire and interview format. The study revealed that pupils had various counselling needs including social, emotional, career, physical and health. On the basis of the findings, some recommendations were made for intervention.

**Key words:** special educational needs, guidance and counselling, psychological needs, pupils

## Introduction

In recent times, the mode of handling social problems has proved ineffective, culminating in the increased occurrence of youth psycho-social concerns and mal-adaptive behaviours. Accordingly, the once disciplined and respectful African youth have learnt to revolt against authority both in school and society. Respect for the elderly, is currently non-existent in the African society and this has resulted in the rampant incidences of violence, riots and conflicts plaguing Ghanaian schools in particular (Fia, 2008) and the society as a whole. UNESCO (2012) attributes this situation to the inability of the past experiences to 'effectively deal with the challenges of modern times' (p 1). This corroborates Norm Gysbers's report in Nichter and Edmonson (2002) which described the modern day society as a dynamic one with a complex social, economic and legislative system that creates challenges for the school, students, parents and communities.

Some of these challenges are, difficulties in meeting personal needs, challenges in realizing life aspirations, high levels of ignorance, failure in some life endeavours (UNESCO, 2012), psychological stress (Mapfupo, 2001) and socio-economic problems (Madhuku, 2005). In reaction to these frustrations, pupils express withdrawal behaviours, unhappiness, annoyance, anger, anxiety and hyperactivity which tend to have debilitating effects on their relationships with significant others (UNESCO, 2012).

One way of helping pupils to overcome their challenges in school is guidance and counselling programme. In Ghana, the guidance programme was introduced in 1976 by the Ghana Education Service (Essuman, 1999 & 2015; Taylor and Buku, 2006) to address the various personal needs of students and pupils. The programme primarily aims at providing opportunities for each pupil to reach his/her full potential in the educational, vocational, social and emotional areas of their lives. It also teaches pupils decision-making skills and the ability to meaningfully plan their life goals (Lunenburg, 2010). UNESCO (2002) additionally observes that the lack of school guidance services increase dropout rates among academically weak students, while Rotondoki (2000) opines that students who lack concentration, self-confidence and constantly fail in their academic endeavours require guidance and counselling support.

The goals of counselling on the other hand are more specific. It includes assisting pupils to overcome their emotional problems (UNESCO, 2012) and change their maladjusted behaviours. It also helps pupils fulfill their potentials and facilitates their overall adjustment, both in school and society. Counselling further enables pupils

to make optimum use of available opportunities for the successful achievement of their life goals (Lunenburg, 2010).

The need for school guidance and counselling, is highlighted in the report that about twenty percent of pupils in schools today would at a point need some form of extra provision to meet their special educational needs (Stakes & Hornby, 2001; the Warnock Report, 1978). For this reason, Nichter and Edmonson (2002) observe that the role of the school counsellor, in recent years has been modified to include helping to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities have unique characteristics like autistic spectrum disorders, emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems that require extra care. Pupils with speech and language difficulties, hearing impairment, visual impairment and multi-sensory impairment among others also fall within the category of pupils with special educational needs (Greville, 2009). Essentially, the special characteristics of these pupils often create difficulties in respect of their socialization, reading and writing, comprehension, concentration and physical ability. Another problem facing a number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in schools of late is bullying (Hoover & Stenhjem, 2003; Bowman, 2001; Bully B'ware Productions, 2003).

Inclusive education was adopted **in XXX** to enable pupils with special educational needs and disabilities overcome their personal challenges. Inclusive education involves placing special pupils in regular schools with the necessary support services (Gyimah, 2006) to raise their attainment (Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan, 2007) and enhance their access to and participation in education (Walton, Nel, Hugo & Muller, 2009). Ghana has since the early 2003 been piloting inclusive education in about 45 schools located in the Greater Accra, Central and Eastern regions (Vanderpuy, 2013).

The current study reflects Carl Rogers' (1959) Client-centered counselling theory which proposes that people have a natural actualizing tendency to fulfill their potentials and become the best in life. However, this would be impossible without the right therapeutic relationship which enables them to gain insights into their challenges and make meaningful adjustments to progress in life. The therapeutic relationship, according to Rogers, revolves round empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard and genuineness (Gladding, 2000). When others deny clients acceptance and positive regard, clients lose touch with the meaning of their own experiences and thus stifle their innate tendency to grow in a meaningful direction. Pupils with special educational needs thus have a natural tendency to study, grow and self-actualize when given the right and needed support. With a therapeutic relationship from counsellors, teachers, administrators, parents, siblings and even colleague pupils, they would naturally build and actualize themselves.

The theory further emphasizes that the client's self-concept is key, in defining who he or she is and his subsequent behaviour (Child, 1993). These are equally relevant to the current study. Rogers' theory defines the self-concept to comprise two major viewpoints, namely the client's image of him/herself as perceived by others, and secondly, the image of what the client personally desires to be. This implies that the perceptions others have of the client, profoundly influences his/her self-concept and suggests that parents, teachers, administrators and all others play a critical role in influencing the pupil's self-concept. The interaction school staff and colleagues have with pupils with special educational needs and disabilities thus gravely impact on them. With good school guidance and counselling services, staff and pupils will better relate with each other to enhance the development and interaction of pupils in schools.

Apart from representing the client's awareness of him or herself, the self-concept is additionally projected in the Client-centered theory as the major tool by which he/she socially assesses him or herself and further seeks self-actualisation.

### **Statement of the problem**

The exclusive needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities necessitate enhanced school support services. These services significantly assist the pupils in their adjustment to school life and further enhance their psycho-social and educational development. The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (2014) identifies psychological counselling as a key support to the education of pupils with special educational needs. About 25 percent of every school population has also been recorded to require counselling support (Kauffman & Landrum, 2013; Simpson & Mundschenk, 2012). The significance of guidance and psychological counselling in Special schools cannot thus be over emphasized.

For effective and meaningful counselling services, service providers must first identify the client's counselling

needs. However, in Ghana, it is not certain what pupils with special educational needs and disabilities perceive their counselling needs to be, in order to address them. The study thus ascertains what counselling needs exist for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. It further ascertains the stage or level in their education, where they desire guidance and counselling support.

### **Purpose of the study**

The study therefore explores the various counselling needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. It also investigates the specific level at which pupils require guidance and counselling services to enable them progress meaningfully in their studies.

### **Research questions**

To achieve the above-mentioned purposes, the following research questions were posed:

1. What are the counselling needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in the Greater Accra region of Ghana?
2. At which level of education do pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in the Greater Accra region of Ghana require guidance and counselling support?

### **The study population**

The study was conducted in three Special Schools in the Greater Accra region of Ghana namely: the State School for the Deaf at Adjei Kojo near Ashaiman (public), the Dzorwulu Special School at Dzorwulu (public) and the New Horizon School in Cantonments (private). The total population in all the three schools was 508.

There were 54 pupils in the State School for the Deaf comprising 161 primary school pupils and 93 Junior High pupils. The primary pupils were made up of 83 males and 78 females, while the Junior High pupils comprised 52 boys and 41 girls.

In the New Horizon School, the total number of pupils was 115 and this was made up of 71 males and 44 females. While some of the pupils were autistic, others had Down's syndrome.

The Dzorwulu Special School had a total of 139 pupils consisting of 86 males and 53 females.

### **Sample and sampling technique**

The researchers originally intended to use the simple random sampling technique to select 217 pupils out of the population of 508 for the sample size (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007), thereby creating equal opportunity for all pupils in the three schools to participate in the study. However, this became impossible when it was found that most of the pupils at the Dzorwulu and New Horizon Special Schools for the intellectually disabled could hardly express themselves due mainly to communication difficulties. As a result, the purposive sampling technique was used to select 10 pupils from Dzorwulu Special School and 22 from the New Horizon School. In the State School for the Deaf, since most of the pupils had a means of communication (using the finger spelling, sign language and occasional speech), the researchers used the systematic sampling technique to select 56 pupils from the school. In the three Special Schools, two school administrators and one Guidance and Counselling Co-ordinator were purposively selected for interview. The total sample size was therefore 91.

### **Instrument(s)**

Two main data collection instruments used for the study were, a self-designed questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire was validated through a pilot-test in two schools in Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana. Fifteen pupils with special educational needs and disabilities were selected from the Ghana National Basic School in Cape Coast and 10 from the Cape Coast School for the Deaf. In both schools, the teachers and special education resource persons helped administer the questionnaires to the pupils. The reliability coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.67 while the content validity was determined by expert advice and responses provided to the questionnaire items.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The type of data that were to be gathered was found not to pose any psychological harm to the research participants. Hence, prior to collecting the data from the three schools, permission was only sought from their respective Heads. They were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants had the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the study. Where they felt otherwise, they had the chance to opt out of the study.

A total of 4 weeks was spent on the data collection. It started with phone calls to the Heads of the three schools informing them about the study. Familiarization visits were made to the Schools during which letters of

introduction were presented to the Heads. Convenient dates were also agreed on for the data collection.

The researchers personally collected the data with assistance from two teachers in each of the three schools. The teachers basically provided communication support in the administration of the questionnaire instrument.

In New Horizon School, 22 questionnaires were administered. At the Dzorwulu Special School, 10 questionnaires were given out, while 56 were completed at the State School for the Deaf. At the State School for the Deaf, the questionnaires were administered to pupils in two classrooms as a teacher interpreted the items via sign language. at Dzorwulu and New Horizon schools, the questionnaire administration was one-on-one.

The interview with the three staff, including the Guidance Coordinator was held at their convenience in their respective schools. Permission was sought from the respondents to audio tape the information they supplied and meaningful rapport was established with them.

Some challenges were encountered in the administration of the questionnaire instruments due largely to the nature of the pupils' disabilities, particularly at the Dzorwulu Special School. Teachers sometimes had difficulties explaining the questionnaire items to the pupils. Some pupils had difficulties responding coherently to the questionnaire items. Their responses were sometimes unrelated to the questions asked but other participants also just said nothing.

In spite of the challenges, the return rate was not affected.

### Method of Data Analysis

The quantitative data (questionnaires) were analyzed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. Frequencies, tables and percentages were used for the analyses.

### Results of the study

#### 1. Research question one: What are the counselling needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in the Greater Accra region of Ghana?

In order to identify the counselling needs of the research participants, information was sought from pupils on the challenges they encountered in their interaction with their colleagues, parents, siblings and teachers at school and home.

Their responses revealed three main categories of needs namely: social, emotional and communication needs. Results on the social and emotional needs are depicted on table 1.

**Table 1: The social and emotional needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities**

	Item content	Name of school	Agree		Disagree	
			No.	%	No.	%
Challenges faced in interacting with colleagues	My colleagues like me despite my physical challenges.	State School for the Deaf	22	39.3	34	60.7
		Dzorwulu Special School	9	90.0	1	10.0
		New Horizon	22	100	0	0.0
	I am not respected among my colleagues in school.	State School for the Deaf	44	78.6	12	21.4
		Dzorwulu Special School	2	20.0	8	80.0
		New Horizon	1	4.5	21	81.8
	In class, my colleagues never want to help me with my difficulties.	State School for the Deaf	40	71.4	16	28.6
		Dzorwulu Special School	1	10.0	9	90.0
		New Horizon	0	0.0	22	100
Challenges faced in interacting with teachers	My teachers are mostly willing to help me with my homework.	State School for the Deaf	28	50.0	28	50.0
		Dzorwulu Special School	10	100	0	0.0
		New Horizon	22	100	0	0.0
	The staffs in my school easily scold me whenever I make the least mistake.	State School for the Deaf	30	53.5	26	46.4
		Dzorwulu Special School	1	10.0	9	90.0
		New Horizon	0	0.0	22	100
Emotional challenges faced in interacting with colleagues	My colleagues often tease me at school.	State School for the Deaf	44	78.6	12	21.5
		Dzorwulu Special School	1	10.0	9	90.0
		New Horizon	0	0.0	22	100
	My teachers make fun of me when teaching in class.	State School for the Deaf	40	71.4	16	28.6
		Dzorwulu Special School	1	10.0	9	90.0
		New Horizon	0	0.0	22	100

The results in Table 1 reveal that some of the pupils had social needs. It appeared that pupils with deafness had more social relationship difficulties than their colleagues with intellectual difficulties. For example, whereas 34(60.7%) of the deaf reported not being liked by their colleagues, nine (90.0%) of the pupils in Dzorwulu Special School and 22(100.0%) of those in New Horizon indicated that they were liked. Again, more of the deaf 44(78.6%) agreed that they were not respected, whereas majority of the intellectually disabled in Dzorwulu Special School eight (80.0%) and 21(81.8%) in New Horizon disagreed with the statement.

In the area of pupils receiving help from colleagues to enable them do their class work, more of those with deafness 40(71.4%) hardly received help. However, nine (90.0%) pupils in Dzorwulu and 22(100.0%) in New Horizon indicated they received help. While majority of the deaf 44(78.6%) reported being teased by their colleagues, only one (10.0%) at Dzorwulu and none in New Horizon indicated that they were teased.

The statistics in Table 1 further reveal that majority of the deaf, 40(71.4%), had their teachers making fun of them when they were teaching. In contrast, only one (10.0%) of those in Dzorwulu and none in New Horizon experienced that phenomenon.

In the open-ended items, which solicited for information on what their friends, teachers, siblings and parents did that hurt them or made them happier at school and home, pupils reported some social, physical, emotional, career and communication needs.

#### *Social needs*

Responding to the question on one thing they expect their parents and siblings to do for them at home to make them happy most of the time, pupils at the State School for the Deaf said that they want their parents to be more caring towards them. They were unhappy that their parents asked them to go to bed early every day. One of the pupils at the New Horizon School, who happened to be an only child of his parents, said he wanted to have a brother to play with at home.

#### *The need for social interaction*

The need for social interaction was equally stressed by Respondent C who was interviewed at the New Horizon School. She identified this need as crucial to the holistic development of pupils with special educational needs. She explained that the establishment of the New Horizon School some years back was basically to enrich their social interaction. She said:-

*'With social interaction, the pupils would be able to build self-confidence, assert themselves and make good friends who will facilitate their social development.'*

(Interview transcript)

#### *Need for social acceptance*

At the New Horizon School, some pupils wanted to be given more time to watch television at home. Betty, a 26 year-old pupil in the Rose Class wanted her parents to *'stop asking her to go to bed early'* and be allowed to watch more television. She also wished that the shouting at home would stop. Gabriel also wanted his parents to *'stop scolding him'* and 42 year-old Beatrice said *'they should stop the occasional teasing at home.'* Twenty-one pupils (95.45%), reported that they like their friends, while at Dzorwulu, six (60.00%) of the pupils said that *'I like my friends the way they are'*. (For purposes of anonymity, pseudonyms have been used)

All three interview Respondents incidentally highlighted the need for love, care and acceptance for pupils with special educational needs. Respondent A at the State School for the Deaf for example had this to say:

*'the most critical needs for pupils with special educational needs all over the world are love, care and acceptance from those around them. The pupils require these most to make it in life.'* (Interview transcript)

#### *Academic needs*

There were traces of academic needs. In response to the item on one thing they expected their friends at school to do in order to make them happy and like them more, 31(55.35%) of the pupils at the State School for the Deaf requested for their colleagues to help them learn. None of the pupils in the two other schools said anything about academic need.

#### *Physical and health needs*

Physical and health needs appeared in some of the responses provided by pupils. In answering the question on what they expect their friends at school to do in order to make them happy and like them more, at the

State School for the Deaf, 18(32.14%) of the pupils said that their friends should give them some of their food and snacks. Seven representing 12.50% requested for some pocket money from their friends. On the issue of one thing they would like to be done in their school to make them like school more, 18(81.8%) responded that they need a school bus. Twenty representing 35.7% said they should build us dormitories. Six representing 8.9% of the pupils in this school expressed the need for an infirmary.

#### *Emotional needs*

There was also evidence of some emotional needs especially at the State School for the Deaf where pupils reported being teased, ridiculed, insulted and beaten. On one thing teachers do that hurts them so much, 34(60.7%) of the pupils in the State School for the Deaf reported being beaten, while 22(39.2%) said they were insulted. Respondent A at the State School for the Deaf corroborated the report by saying that:- '*Pupils with hearing impairment teased each other a lot with their individual challenge*' (Interview transcript).

This emotional need however appeared not to be prevalent at New Horizon and Dzorwulu schools. At Dzorwulu, eight (80.0%) and New Horizon, eight (80.0%) reported that they liked their teachers. Only two (20.0%) of the pupils in Dzorwulu indicated that their teachers beat them and two (20.00%) said their friends laughed at them. At New Horizon school four (18.19%) wanted their teachers to stop beating them.

The report that their friends sometimes laughed at them, teased and made fun of them at school and home emphasized the pupils' dislike for this kind of interaction and their subsequent need for counselling in those respects.

#### *Career needs*

Career needs happened to be one of the things the pupils craved for. Answering the question on one thing they would like to be done in their school to make them like school more, five (50%) of pupils from Dzorwulu desired sewing, while 10(45.4%) at New Horizon opted for more computers to enable them play games at school. Two, representing 9.0% of the pupils at New Horizon reported enjoying their 'kente' weaving classes and thus wanted to see more of them done at school.

#### *Communication needs*

Communication needs also appeared in their responses. Twelve representing 21.4% of pupils at the State School for the Deaf indicated that *teachers should learn the sign language*. The same number expressed the need for their parents to do likewise to enable them communicate meaningfully with them.

During the interview at the State School for the Deaf, Respondent A observed that pupils with hearing impairment often experienced '*difficulties in communicating with their parents because many parents could not use the sign language. This created a barrier between them and pupils were mostly unhappy with it*'.

She further added that '*One needed to understand people with hearing impairment before one could live meaningfully with them*' She however recognised that pupils with hearing impairment '*often lacked decent and polite speech due to their hearing disabilities. This often affected their communication, especially with adults who mostly perceived the pupils as rude and impolite.*' (Interview transcript)

From the analysis, it can be concluded that the counselling needs of pupils with special educational needs were many and varied. However, pupils with deafness had more social relationship and emotional problems than their colleagues with intellectual disabilities.

### **Research question 2: At which level of education do pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in the Greater Accra region of Ghana require guidance and counselling services?**

In seeking to ascertain the educational level at which pupils with special educational needs and disabilities required school guidance and counselling, pupils were asked whether they would need the service at the lower or upper primary or Junior High school level. Table 2 shows the results on this issue.

**Table 2: Educational level at which pupils with special educational needs and disabilities require school guidance services**

Item Content	Name of School	Agree		Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%
My personal problems started early in lower primary and I wish I had school guidance services at that time to help avoid some personal difficulties.	State school for the deaf	12	21.4	44	78.5
	Dzorwulu	2	20.0	8	80.0
	New horizon	2	9.0	20	90.9
I started enjoying school guidance and counselling services in Upper Primary before entering the Junior High school and I am glad I did.	State school for the Deaf	48	85.7	8	14.2
	Dzorwulu	5	50.0	5	50.0
	New Horizon	12	54.6	10	45.5
Though I started school late, the guidance services I had at the Upper Primary school has helped me adjust and settle down easily at school.	State school for the deaf	49	89.5	7	12.5
	Dzorwulu	9	90	1	10
	New horizon	21	95.5	1	4.5

From the results of Table 2, majority of the pupils disagreed to the statement that the guidance services they received early in lower primary helped them avoid personal problems. The statistics show that 44(78.5%) of pupils at the State School for the Deaf, 8(80%) from Dzorwulu School and 20(90.9%) from New Horizon disagreed with the statement.

However, majority of the pupils agreed to the statement that they started enjoying school guidance and counselling services in Upper Primary before entering the Junior High school and they are glad they did. The table 2 shows that 48(85.7%) pupils at the State school for the Deaf, five (50%) at Dzorwulu and 12(54.6%) at the New Horizon school agreed. By implication, majority of the pupils in the three schools preferred having guidance services in the upper primary school. Such a finding may imply that pupils at the upper primary were gaining self-awareness and thus could specifically identify their needs, hence their suggestion to have school support services commencing in the Upper primary classes.

Majority of the pupils also agreed to the statement that in spite of starting school late the guidance services they had at the Upper Primary school had helped them adjust and settle down easily at school. From the results depicted in Table 2, 49(89.5%) of the pupils at the State School for the Deaf, nine (90.0%) at Dzorwulu, and 21(95.5%) at New Horizon were in agreement. Finally, majority of the pupils, (46, 82.2%) from the State school for the Deaf, eight (80.0%) from Dzorwulu and 20(90.9%) from the New Horizon school reported being disturbed by their lack of guidance services at the Junior High school.

## Discussion

### **The counselling needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities**

The categories of needs expressed by pupils with special educational needs and disabilities were the social, physical and health, emotional, career, and communication needs. This finding justifies Child's (1993) observation that students are adversely affected by their personal-emotional, social and academic difficulties. The finding further corroborates Unachukwu and Igborgbor's (1991) report that the counselling needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, mostly focused on issues like anger, poor interpersonal relationships, withdrawal, dependency and lack of motivation. The authors note that the pupils often expressed such behaviours in response to their life's frustrations. These reactions were equally highlighted by pupils from the State School for the Deaf in the current study.

### ***The social needs of pupils with special educational needs***

Pupils also highlighted various social needs in their interactions with their colleagues, teachers, parents and siblings. Reports of rejection, denial of academic support and disrespect from colleagues at the State School for the Deaf put the pupils at risk of inferiority complex, low self-esteem and lack of respect. The pupils' further request for their colleagues to help them in their studies, offer them some snacks and even some pocket money further confirmed their dependence on their peers for social development. These results also underscored the social value pupils with special educational needs, in particular, placed on their colleagues. The situation of the studied pupils further highlights a lack of therapeutic environment as reflected by Roger's Client-centred theory. Rogers' (1959) theory was of the view that if people can fulfill their potentials and become the best in life, it will

depend more on the nature of their environment. Without the right therapeutic relationship, this would be impossible. Through such interactions, pupils will gain insights into their challenges and make meaningful adjustments to progress in life. This therapeutic relationship revolves round empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard and genuineness.

Again, the element of peer teaching could be inferred from the pupils' request for their colleagues to help them in their studies. Child (1993), reports that friendship ensures learning efficiency among both young and older pupils. Peer teaching in effect could be used in special and inclusive schools to enhance studies among pupils with special educational needs, and also help pupils overcome their communication and social difficulties. This is because peer teaching facilitates interaction among peers. The pupils' request for their colleagues' support thus highlights the significance of peer teaching among pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Additionally, the finding that teachers scolded, beat and insulted pupils in some of the studied schools leaves much to be desired. Cohn and Cantor (2003) and the Council on Scientific Affairs, American Medical Association (2002) confirm the existence of verbal abuse (insults) in Elementary, Middle and High schools. Cohn and Cantor specifically report that as many as twenty-five percent teachers perceived bullying as normal in schools and would thus not intervene when they saw any such incident taking place. Hoover and Stenhjem (2003), on the other hand, blamed teachers for their indulgence in such unloving acts in schools. Reports of caning emphasized many severe damaging and long-term psychological effects on its victims. The effects include guilt feelings, shame, anxiety and poor social relationships in pupils (Child, 1993; Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003). Suicidal attempts have also been linked to such teacher mistreatments (the Hindu Special Correspondent, 2014; the Times of India, 2014). All these effects of caning, create a crippling psychological environment for the development of pupils, as emphasized by the client-centred theory.

Insults and ridicules from teachers, as found by the study also debunks reports by Walton, Nel, Hugo and Muller (2009) who project teachers as the direct providers of learner support in inclusive schools. The teacher mistreatment of pupils as found by the current study can adversely affect the relationship pupils have with their teachers in schools. It can also trigger negative academic behaviours like truancy, absenteeism and dropout (Agaba, 2014). The current study finding thus portrays a contrary picture of teachers and it would be useful to eradicate the unacceptable teacher behaviours through the provision of teacher support in inclusive schools (Burden, 2000; Hall, 2000).

In their interaction with their parents and siblings at home, some pupils at the New Horizon school also wanted to have more time to watch television, less noise and shouting at home as well as same sex siblings to play with. All these requests have implications for the social development of the pupils with special educational needs. Lessons should thus be drawn from the findings to make provision and facilitate the social development of pupils with special needs in inclusive and special schools.

#### ***The emotional needs of pupils with special educational needs***

Emotional challenges like teasing, rejection, lack of advice and comfort as reported by pupils from the State School for the Deaf have also been confirmed by Heward (2013), Hoover and Stenhjem (2003) and Cohn and Cantor (2003). Heward, for instance, observes that children with hearing loss often reported feeling isolated, without friends and unhappy in school.

Study findings on pupils' emotional needs generally have implications for their personal development and self-actualization, according to Abraham Maslow's Needs Achievement theory (1969). In this theory, the need for love, care and a sense of belonging significantly enhances the individual's personal growth (Coon, 2006). The pupils' lack of love, care and belonging thus exposes them to low self-esteem, timidity and delayed self-actualization. Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, Vohs (2003) and Coon (2006) describe low self-esteem for instance as the root cause of all social vices and these findings do not augur well for special needs pupils.

However, the warm collaboration between parents and teachers at the New Horizon school as found by the study deserves commendation. Personal observations by researchers and the interviews reports from the school guidance officer and administrators also confirmed these cordial relations. Fredrickson and Cline (2002) in fact, identify such positive relations as a major contributory factor in the overall development of pupils with special educational needs. It is thus not surprising that pupils at New Horizon were found to have fewer counselling needs, as compared to their colleagues in the other studied schools.

Generally, the counselling needs of pupils at the State School for the Deaf highlights the impact of their



disability on their social and emotional lives. It is thus imperative for social institutions like the school, church, home and work places to urgently assist in meeting the unique needs of special needs pupils. This would enhance their adjustment in society.

#### ***The communication needs of pupils with special educational needs***

Communication needs were also found to create challenges for pupils, especially in their interaction with adults. Without meaningful and effective communication, pupils' studies is impeded. Communication is the only means for humans to control their social environment (Heward, 2013). Heward (2013) and Mangal (2007) project communication as key to every human's social success. A successful implementation of Inclusive Education thus depends on the extent to which members of the regular school are ready to interact with each other. It will therefore imply that measures are put in place, while teachers and parents heed to the call of pupils at the State school for the Deaf to learn the sign language and communicate better with the pupils with hearing impairment.

#### **Level at which pupils with special needs received school support services**

The study further showed that many pupils with special educational needs received guidance services at the Upper Primary level. This discovery was found to be reassuring and timely as pupils mostly confirmed their need for the service at the Upper Primary level. They further confirmed the significance of the service in helping them adjust well at school. The Primary school years are considered the pivot for the future personality development of the child (Egbo, 2015). Guidance and counselling is accordingly employed as a 'prolific tool' to promote talent discovery, the identification of abilities, potentials and weaknesses at the premature stages of the child's development (Egbo, 2015). The service also addresses the vocational and socio-personal needs of the children and it is essential to provide guidance and counselling support, early at the Primary school, for the enhanced development of pupils (Egbo, 2015:p. 1).

#### **Implications of the study findings to inclusive education in Ghana**

A number of study findings have implications for inclusive education in Ghana. One key means of meeting the counselling needs of pupils with special educational needs is by institutionalizing an effective and professional counselling service centres in inclusive schools. According to Walton, Nel, Hugo and Muller (2009), counselling services are necessary in inclusive schools due to the diverse learning needs of pupils in inclusive classrooms. Kourkoutas and Giovazolias (2015) also observe that about 25% of enrolled pupils need counselling in schools, while teachers also require specialized or professional help in their daily interactions with pupils having problematic behaviours (p. 138).

Equally important is the finding that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities desire counselling services at the Upper Primary level. Essentially, pupils at the Upper Primary classes are considered more matured to take advantage of available school resources to meet their personal needs. Apart from enhancing their lives, providing more support for the pupils would eventually create a more responsive counselling service in the schools to better meet the individual personal needs of pupils.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study has revealed some important counselling needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Findings from the study draw the attention of educators to some relevant factors that create healthy environments and supportive schools to improve the academic achievement of pupils.

On the whole, the study has been beneficial in unearthing some hindrances that affect schooling for pupils with special educational needs. With the various counselling needs of special needs pupils identified, stakeholders must be poised to plan and address the critical needs of pupils countrywide. It is hoped that the study findings will be considered with all urgency to enable pupils with special educational needs in Ghana to enjoy schooling.

#### **Recommendations**

From the above study findings, the following were recommended:

In view of the adverse effects of caning on pupils with special educational needs and disabilities it is recommended that the Ghana Education Service should reinforce the ban on the use of the cane in special schools countrywide. Milder and more productive forms of punishments like the writing of lines, sweeping the classrooms or school compound, dusting classroom furniture or the arrangement of books in the cupboard could be adopted to correct their unacceptable behaviours.

Additionally, the Regional Guidance and Counselling Units at the Ghana Education Service offices should

collaborate with appropriate stakeholders within the various regions to organize annual sensitization workshops for staff in special schools and some family members of special needs pupils in Ghana. These workshops should mostly involve simulation exercises and role plays on building positive relationships with special needs pupils, to prepare the staff better interactions in special schools.

The Ghana Education Service should collaborate with the Special Education Division to establish Guidance and Counselling Units in all inclusive and special schools countrywide. Once established the units should be adequately resourced to enable the counsellors execute their role effectively.

To avoid work overload on these counsellors, the services of a School Psychologist and a team of para-professionals should be employed. This would establish a therapeutic environment as highlighted by Roger's Client-centred theory, in the schools to facilitate the pupils' development. Termly reports on the activities of the counselling centres must be presented to the Special Education Units at the Regional Education Service offices. Personnel from these Regional Special Education Units should also monitor the activities of these centres, at least once a term to ensure that work is going on efficiently.

## REFERENCES

- Agaba, V. (2014). Constant teasing at school forces disabled boy to quit. Retrieved on February 03, 2015 from <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/662830-constant-teasing-at-school>.
- Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, D. J., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4, 1 - 44.
- Bowman, D. H. (2001). At school, a cruel culture. *Education Week*, 20(7), 1-17. Retrieved On March 13, 2003, from [http://www.edweek.org/ew/ew\\_printstory.cfm?slug=27taunts.h20](http://www.edweek.org/ew/ew_printstory.cfm?slug=27taunts.h20)
- Bully B'ware Productions, (2003). *Bullying and teasing of youth with disabilities: creating positive school environments for effective inclusion*. Retrieved on March, 13, 2003 from <http://www.bullybeware.com/moreinfo.html>
- Burden, A. (2000). Inclusive education: Back to the future with commitment and common sense — case studies. *Educare*, 29, 28-39.
- Child, D. (1993). *Psychology and the teacher* (5th ed.). London: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Cohn, A., & Cantor, A. (2003). *Bullying: What schools and parents can do?* Retrieved April 17, 2003, from [http://www.naspcenter.org/factsheets/bullying\\_fs.html](http://www.naspcenter.org/factsheets/bullying_fs.html)
- Coon, D. (2006). *Psychology: A modular approach to mind and behaviour* (10th ed.). Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth Inc.
- Council on Scientific Affairs, (2002). *Bullying behaviors among children and adolescents. Report 1 of the Council on Scientific Affairs (A-02)*. Retrieved on March 15, 2003, from <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/article/2036-6398.html>
- Egbo, J. O. E. (2015). Need for Guidance and counselling at the Primary school level: Early intervention strategies for school children. *The British Journal of Education*. 3(6), 1- 8.
- Essuman, J.K. (1999). The History of Guidance and Counselling in Ghana. *Ife Psychologia*, 7(2), 22-41.
- Essuman, J. K. (2015). *Proceedings of the First National Conference of Guidance and Counselling in Ghana*. Cape Coast, Ghana, University of Cape Coast Press.
- Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (2014). *Supporting children with special educational needs*. Retrieved on February 03, 2014 from <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?1510027>
- Fia, D. S. (2008). *An evaluation of counselling service as an intervention for school indiscipline in the Ho Municipality*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Education, Winneba.
- Frederickson, N., & Cline, T. (2002). *Special educational needs inclusion and diversity: A textbook*. Buckingham Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Gladding, S. T. (2000). *Counselling, a comprehensive profession* (4th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Greville, E. (2009). Including pupils with special educational needs in schools in Ireland.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Ireland, *CELE Exchange 2009/1*. Retrieved on February 10, 2016 from [www.oecd.org/publishing/corrigenda](http://www.oecd.org/publishing/corrigenda)
- Gyimah, E.K. (2006). *Teachers' attitudes to inclusion in Ghana*. Unpublished PhD Thesis University of Leeds, England.
- Hall, R. (2002). Implementing inclusive educational practices through partnerships. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 16, 31-37.
- Heward, W. L. (2013). *Exceptional children: an introduction to special education* (10th ed.). Boston: Pearson

- Education Inc.
- Hoover, J., & Stenhjem, P. (2003). *Examining current challenges in secondary education and transition: Bullying and teasing of youth with disabilities, creating positive school environments for effective inclusion. Issue Brief, 2*(3), pages 1 – 6
- Kalambouka, A., Farrell, P. Dyson, A & Kaplan, I. (2007). The impact of placing pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools on the achievement of their peers. *Educational Research* 49, 4, 365-382
- Kauffman, J. M., & Landrum, T. J. (2013). *Characteristics of emotional and behavioral disorders of children and youth* (10<sup>th</sup> rev. ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson/Merrill.
- Kourkoutas, E. & Giovazolias, T. (2014). School-based counselling work with teachers: An integrative model. *The European Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 3 (2), 137 -158
- Lunenburg, F. C. (2010). School Guidance and Counselling Services (Electronic Version). *Schooling, 1*. Retrieved June 24, 2012, from <http://www.nationalforum.com>
- Madhuku, E. (2005). *High school students' guidance and counselling concerns and preference for expert guidance*. BSc. Counselling Dissertation: Zimbabwe Open University
- Mangal, S. K. (2007). *Education exceptional children an introduction to special education*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited.
- Mapfumo, J. S. (2001). Guidance and counselling in education. Post graduate Diploma in Education, Module PGDE 012. Harare: Zimbabwe Open University.
- Mukhopadhyay, S. Nenty, J. H. & Abosi, O. (2012). Inclusive education for learners with disabilities in Botswana primary schools. Sage Open. Retrieved from <http://sgo.sagepub> on 04/02/16
- Nichter, N., & Edmonson, F. (2002). *Special educational needs inclusion and diversity: A textbook*. Retrieved September 25, 2012, from <http://www.UNESCO.org/education/meban/module 2.pdf>
- Rutondoki, E. N. (2002). *Guidance and Counselling*. Makerere University, Institute of Adult and Continuing Education.
- Stakes, R., & Hornby, G. (2001). *Meeting special needs in mainstream schools; A practical guide for teachers* (2nd ed.). Britain: David Fulton Publishers.
- Simpson, R., & Mundschenk, N. A. (2012). Inclusion and students with emotional and behavioral disorders. In Bakken, J. P., F. E. Obiakor, F. F. & Rotatori, A. F. (Eds.), *Behavioral disorders: Practice concerns and students with EBD* (pp. 1-22). Bingley, United Kingdom: Emerald.
- Taylor & Buku (2006). *Basics in Guidance and Counselling* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Department of Psychology & Education, University of Education, Winneba.
- The Hindu Special Correspondent. (2014). *Student commits suicide after teacher's scolding*. Retrieved December 10, 2014, from <http://www.thehindu.com>cities>Kolkata>
- The Times of India (2014). *Scolded by teacher for talking to boys, schoolgirl tries to kill herself*. Retrieved December 10, 2014, from [www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com>city](http://www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com>city)
- The Warnock report (1978). *Special educational needs*. London, Her Majesty's Stationery office. <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/warnock>
- Unachukwu, G. C., & Igborgbor, G. C. (Eds). (1991). *Guidance and counselling: a realistic counselling approach*. Owerri: International University Press.
- UNESCO (2012). *Guidance and counselling for school-aged girls in Africa (Module 2)*. Retrieved April 24, 2013, from [www.nzd.org/gsdllmod](http://www.nzd.org/gsdllmod)
- Vanderpuye, I. (2013). *Piloting inclusive education in Ghana: Parental perceptions, expectations and involvement*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, Leeds.
- Walton, E. Nel, N., Hugo, A. & Muller, H. (2009). The extent and practice of inclusion in independent schools in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, EASA, 29, 105-12.