

Evaluation of Guidance Services in Senior High Schools in Gomoa West District in the Central Region of Ghana

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Abstract

Guidance services are primarily designed to promote the educational, career and personal-social development of students. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the delivery of guidance services in senior high schools in the Gomoa West District in the Central Region of Ghana based on the views of students. The population of the study comprised senior high students. Three hundred students were randomly selected for the study. Proportional stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used in selecting the sample for the study. The research design for the study was descriptive survey. Questionnaire was used to obtain the data from the students. Frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations and independent samples t-test were used to analyse the data. The results indicated that the appraisal service was effectively implemented while the information, consultation and counselling services were not effectively implemented. The results also revealed that gender is not a significant determinant of students' evaluation of the information, consultation and counselling services. Based on the findings, it was recommended that counsellors should pay great attention to all guidance services in order to effectively promote the personal, social, educational and career development of students.

Keywords: Guidance and counselling; Guidance services; implementation; evaluation; senior high school students

1. Introduction

Guidance and counselling programmes consist of services designed to facilitate the personal-social, educational and career development of students. In Ghana, the establishment of formal guidance and counselling programmes in second cycle institutions became a reality when the Ghana government issued a policy through the Ghana Education Service in 1976. The policy stated that the Ghana Education Service had established a systematic guidance and counselling programme in all second cycle institutions, namely, Secondary/Commercial/Technical/ Vocational Schools and Teacher Training Colleges (Ghana Education Service as cited in Essuman, 1999). The guidance services that are provided in secondary schools include orientation, appraisal, information, consultation, counselling, placement, and evaluation services (Oladele, 2007; Taylor & Buku, 2006). These services are briefly described below:

- Orientation service: It is provided to assist students to get familiar with a new school, its history, its rules and policies and its vast opportunities with the view to making them feel emotionally secured and better adjusted (Oladele, 2007). Chireshe (2006) added the orientation service provides students with study skills and explains to them the school curriculum.
- Appraisal service: This service involves gathering, organizing and interpreting information or data about the student to enable him/her to understand himself or herself (Fafunwa & Akinpelu, 2008). When the student knows and understands his or her aptitudes, abilities, interests, strengths and weaknesses he or she can make reasonable choice from different alternatives at his or her disposal. Information about the student is usually collected through interviews and written reports from parents and teachers and the use of psychological tests. The appraisal is usually concerned with academic, personal and social development of the pupil/student. All the data needed for appraising a pupil are usually kept in the Pupil Cumulative Record Card. This is the record that gives most of the background information about a pupil who needs counselling (Oladele, 2007).
- Information service: This service is designed to provide students with a greater knowledge of educational, vocational, personal-social opportunities so that they may make better, informed and realistic choices and decisions about their educational and vocational plans (Oladele, 2007).
- Consultation service: It is an activity engaged in by a counsellor in order to help a student address a need through a third party such as a teacher or parent (Gibson & Mitchell, 1990). The counsellor serves as a consultant to the third party with the view to equipping him or her with knowledge and skills so that the needs of the student could be met adequately.
- Counselling service: This service is primarily designed to strengthen the individual's ability to solve his or her own problems. A small group of students with similar concerns can also benefit from counselling. Both trained counsellors and paraprofessionals provide counselling services to students in Ghana.
- Placement service: This service enables students to be admitted into a school of their choice. It also

assists school leavers to be employed in jobs they are best fitted for (Anagbogu as cited in Awabil & Kankpog, 2011).

- Evaluation service: It determines the extent to which services such as orientation counselling, consultation and information services are effectively implemented in schools. Essuman (2001) and Chireshe (2006) opined that once guidance services have been offered they need to be evaluated. Makinde (as cited in Awabil & Kankpog, 2011) posited that evaluation is not of direct benefit to students but for the benefit of school officials and the community.

A number of scholars have highlighted the benefits of evaluating school guidance services. According to Gibson and Mitchell (as cited in Awabil & Kankpog, 2011), evaluation is a process for professional improvement. The process involves the gathering of objective, performance-oriented data on a systematic and non-biased basis. These data are then used as information that leads to constantly improving, upgrading and updating one's professional performance. In addition, evaluation provides information for decision-makers. Data gathered concerning the guidance programme assist decision-makers to determine the worth or otherwise of the programme and whether resources should be provided for the programme or not. Citing Myrick and Baker, Chireshe (2006) indicated that in America, evaluation of guidance services enables counsellors to know whether they are accomplishing their goals so that if not they make necessary adjustments. Related to the above is that evaluation can provide a means of communicating to stakeholders such as parents, teachers and school administrators what a counsellor does. Thus, it helps counsellors define more clearly their role in the schools.

Despite the relevance of evaluation, very few studies have been conducted in the Central Region of Ghana to ascertain the extent to which guidance services are effectively implemented. The studies that are known to the current researchers were carried out in senior secondary schools by Ketteku (1989) in Cape Coast and Winneba Districts, Ocansey (1992) in Cape Coast District and Bondah (1996) in Assin District. However, these researches did not cover senior high schools (formerly called senior secondary schools) in the Gomoa West District. Moreover, these studies are outdated and this serves as a justifiable basis for carrying out evaluation of school guidance services in the Region. Besides, these earlier researchers have heavily relied on guidance service providers (e.g. counsellors and teachers) to evaluate their own work without adequate input from students. Students are the primary consumers of guidance services and will definitely be in position to provide useful comments that can be used in improving the delivery of the services in schools. It was against this background that students' opinions were sought regarding the implementation of guidance services in senior high schools in Gomoa West District. This view is in line with the assertion made by Schmidt (as cited in Awabil, Obadofin, Asamoah-Gyimah & Kankpog, 2011) that all people who participate in or are served by the school guidance and counselling programme should be involved in the evaluation process. This study was, therefore, aimed at evaluating the appraisal, consultation, information and counselling services in senior high schools in Gomoa West District based on the views of students.

2. Research Questions

The research questions that guided the study were as follows:

1. To what extent is the appraisal service effectively implemented in senior high schools in Gomoa West District?
2. To what extent is the information service effectively offered in senior high schools in Gomoa West District?
3. To what extent is the consultation service effectively offered in senior high schools in Gomoa West District?
4. To what extent is the counselling service effectively implemented in senior high schools in Gomoa West District?

3. Research Hypotheses

H_0 : There is no significant difference in the views of male and female students regarding the implementation of guidance services in Gomoa West District.

H_1 : There is significant difference in the views of male and female students regarding the implementation of guidance services in Gomoa West District.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990), descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. They are directed towards determining the nature of a situation, as it exists at the time of the study. The justification for the use of the design was that it would provide detailed evaluation of the guidance services in senior high schools in Gomoa West District of Ghana.

4.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study was made up of all third (final) year students in the three senior high schools in Gomoa West District. The three senior high schools are the Apam Senior High School, Dewuramong Senior High School and the Mozano Senior High School. The estimated population was 1,216. Final year students were used for the study because the researchers believed that these students had benefited from guidance and counselling for three years and would, therefore, have better ideas about the delivery of guidance services in their schools.

4.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The researchers used the proportional stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques to select the sample for the research. Respondents were stratified according to school and gender. The simple random sampling technique was then used to select 300 students (168 male and 132 female students). The sample size of 300 was determined based on the table provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) regarding sample size determination for various populations. The sample determination table indicates that population figures of 1,200 and 1,300 require sample sizes of 291 and 297 respectively. As stated earlier, the population of the current study was 1,216 and this meant that the sample size of 300 was adequate for the research. Ethical issues observed during the study included informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

4.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument for the study was a questionnaire. There were four items for each of the guidance services for the study, namely, appraisal service, information service, consultation service and counselling service. The questionnaire was content-validated by two experts in the field of guidance and counselling in the Department of Psychology and Education at the University of Education, Winneba in Ghana. The items on each guidance service were structured along a four point Likert-type, scale ranging from 4 (Strongly Agree, SA), 3 (Agree, A), 2 (Disagree, D) to 1 (Strongly Disagree, SD). The questionnaire was administered to 30 students (15 males and 15 females) in the Tamale Senior High School in the Northern Region of Ghana which did not form part of the population of the study. These students share similar characteristics with the students who were used for the study. The Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire was 0.81. This meant that the questionnaire was reliable and could be used for research purposes.

4.5 Data Collection Procedure

Permission was sought from the headmasters in the three schools used for the study. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents to allay their fears, as far as giving information about the effectiveness of guidance services in their schools was concerned. The counsellors in the schools helped the researchers to distribute the questionnaire to the students. The respondents answered and returned all the questionnaires. The return rate was, therefore, hundred percent.

4.6 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical tools, namely, frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were used to answer research questions 1 to 4. Independent samples t-test, on the other hand, was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The criterion for judging the effectiveness or otherwise of a service was that a mean of means score of 2.50 or higher shows the service is effectively implemented while a score less than 2.50 indicates that the service is not effectively implemented or offered.

5. Results and Discussion

Research question 1: To what extent is the appraisal service effectively implemented in senior high schools in Gomoa West District?

This research question sought to find out whether the appraisal service is effectively implemented. The results are captured in Table 1.

Table 1: Implementation of the Appraisal Service

Statement	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	\bar{x}	SD
The counsellor encourages students to discuss their career interest with him/her.	30(10.0)	189(63.0)	68(22.7)	13(4.3)	2.79	.68
Students are made aware of their abilities, interests and values with regard to job opportunities.	57(19.0)	186(62.0)	50(16.7)	7(2.3)	2.98	.67
Students have access to their cumulative record cards	54(18.0)	193(64.3)	48(16.0)	5(1.7)	2.99	.64
The school counsellor uses tests to assist me to understand myself.	61(20.3)	179(59.7)	45(15.0)	15(5.0)	2.95	.74
Mean of means 2.93	Standard deviation .68					

Table 1 shows that the mean of means score of the appraisal service is 2.93. This figure is higher than 2.50 and this depicts that the appraisal service is effectively implemented in the schools. This suggests that students are helped to know and understand their strengths and weaknesses, abilities, aptitudes, values and interests so as to facilitate their personal-social, educational and career development. The finding is consistent with the finding obtained by Awabil and Kankpog (2011) that the appraisal service was effectively implemented in junior high schools (formerly referred to as junior secondary schools) in the Jirapa-Lambussie District of Ghana. The current finding is, however, contrary to the finding obtained by Sedofia and Ocansey (2013a) that the appraisal service was not effectively provided in the colleges of education in the Volta Region of Ghana. The inconsistency is not surprising. This is because college counsellors in Ghana do not regard the appraisal service as a distinct service deserving separate attention; it is imbedded in the counselling service. Appraisal data about adult students are usually gathered when the need for counselling arises. In contrast, adolescent students require appraisal service to be implemented as a separate service to enable them to achieve greater self-knowledge which is a prerequisite for sound, effective decision-making with regard to their education and career. This could, therefore, explain why the appraisal service is given special attention at the junior and senior high school levels in Ghana.

Research Question 2: To what extent is the information service effectively offered in senior high schools in Gomoa West District?

The purpose of this research question was to determine whether the information service is effectively offered to students. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Implementation of the Information Service

Statement	SA F (%)	A F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	\bar{x}	SD
Students are informed about tertiary institutions and their mode of entry, entry requirements, programmes etc.	21(7.0)	75(25.0)	185(61.7)	19(6.3)	2.33	.69
The school counsellor assists students to develop their social skills by the use of newspapers, magazines, brochures etc.	17(5.7)	54(18.0)	180(60.0)	49(16.3)	2.13	.74
Employers, professionals and some public officials are invited by the school to give talks to students about their jobs.	13(4.3)	53(17.7)	173(57.7)	61(20.3)	2.06	.74
Students have access to newspapers, magazines, and other reading materials to enable them be aware of the world of work	14(4.7)	50(16.7)	150(50.0)	86(28.7)	1.97	.80
Mean of means 2.12	Standard deviation .74					

From Table 2, it can be seen that the mean of means score of the information service is below 2.50 and this indicates that the service is not effectively implemented. This finding agrees with the finding of an earlier study conducted by Ketteku (as cited in Essuman, 2001) and Sedofia and Ocansey (2013b) who revealed that the information service was ineffectively provided in secondary schools and colleges of education respectively. The current finding implies that students may be missing a lot because without adequate and useful information they will not be able to make appropriate career choices and decisions. Perhaps, the information service is not effectively run in the schools in Gomoa West District because of lack of funds and time. School counsellors need money to buy newspapers and magazines and to organize career talks for students with the view to exposing them to the world of work and the educational opportunities that are open to them. Apart from finance, the effective provision of the information service requires that time is adequately allocated for it in schools. This view tallies with the observation made by Chireshe (2006) that the lack of resources has contributed to the

ineffective implementation of guidance services in Zimbabweans secondary schools. Similarly, Essuman (2001) and Awabil (2002) have found that guidance services in Ghanaian schools were not effective due to lack of professional counsellors, office accommodation and funds.

Research Question 3: To what extent is the consultation service effectively offered in senior high schools in Gomoa West District?

The objective of this research question was to ascertain whether the consultation service is effectively implemented. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Implementation of the Consultation Service

Statement	SA F(%)	A F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)	\bar{x}	SD
The school counsellor and parents exchange ideas when assisting their children to make a decision	10(3.3)	51(17.0)	157(52.3)	82(27.3)	1.96	.76
Parents and teachers exchange ideas for the benefit of students	11(3.7)	51(17.0)	153(51.0)	85(28.3)	1.96	.78
The school counsellor meets teachers to find ways of improving the learning skills of students who are academically weak	13(4.3)	49(16.3)	160(53.3)	78(26.0)	1.99	.77
The school counsellor meets with parents for ideas when assisting students to minimize their emotional problems	10(3.3)	55(18.3)	163(54.3)	72(24.0)	2.01	.75
Mean of means	1.98		Standard deviation .75			

In Table 3, the mean of means score of the consultation service is 1.98 and this shows that the service was not effectively implemented in senior high schools in Gomoa West District. This finding is consistent with the finding of Amenyedzi (as cited in Essuman, 2001) and Sedofia and Ocansey (2013b) that the consultation service was not effectively implemented in senior high schools and some colleges of education in Ghana respectively. This finding suggests that counsellors do not adequately collaborate with parents and teachers so as to promote the welfare of students. Maybe, counsellors are unable to effectively consult with parents and teachers because of heavy workload and lack of office accommodation. In many parts of the developing world such as Ghana, school counsellors combine guidance and counselling duties with teaching and this prevents them from providing effective consultation services for parents and teachers. Besides, in many schools and colleges in Ghana, counsellors do not have office accommodation for the provision of counselling, consultation and other guidance services.

Research question 4: To what extent is the counselling service effectively implemented in senior high schools in Gomoa West District?

The purpose of this research question was to determine whether the counselling service is effectively offered to students. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Implementation of the Counselling Service

Statement	SA F(%)	A F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)	\bar{x}	SD
The school counsellor assists students to develop effective learning skills	7(2.3)	35(11.7)	202(67.3)	56(18.7)	1.98	.63
The school counsellor helps students to get over their personal problems	10(3.3)	39(13.0)	184(61.3)	67(22.3)	1.97	.69
Students are assisted by the school counsellor to resolve their emotional difficulties	9(3.0)	43(14.3)	197(65.7)	51(17.0)	2.03	.65
Students are assisted by the counsellor to develop good relationship skills and sense of responsibility	17(15.7)	42(14.0)	185(61.7)	56(18.7)	2.07	.74
Mean of means	2.01		Standard deviation .68			

In Table 4 the mean of means score of the counselling service is 2.01. This figure is less than 2.50 and this indicates that the service was not effectively implemented. This finding supports the findings of earlier researchers (e.g. Awabil & Kankpog, 2011; Sedofia & Ocansey, 2013a) who discovered that students perceived that the counselling service was ineffectively carried out in schools and colleges in some parts of Ghana. The current finding suggests that students are not being sufficiently helped to develop the capacity to solve their own problems as well as make informed choices. Probably, the schools are not well-resourced to implement the

counselling service. Counselling is not effectively implemented in many senior high schools and colleges of education in Ghana because of lack trained counsellors and office accommodation. This perspective agrees with the view expressed by UNESCO (2000) that lack of the necessary resources in Botswana has negatively affected the provision of guidance services in secondary schools. The current researchers' view is also supported by the research findings of Essuman (2001) and Awabil (2002) which showed that guidance services existed in Ghanaian schools but were not effectively offered due to lack of trained counsellors, office accommodation and funds.

It was hypothesized that there was no significant difference in the views of male and female students on the implementation of guidance services in Gomoa West District. The independent samples t-test was deemed appropriate for the analysis. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Independent Samples t-test of the Views on the Implementation of Guidance Services with regard to Gender

Services	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)
Appraisal	Male	168	12.06	1.94	3.287*	298	.002
	Female	132	11.23	2.44			
Information	Male	168	8.31	2.29	-1.466	298	.169
	Female	132	8.72	2.55			
Consultation	Male	168	7.88	2.90	-1.014	298	.103
	Female	132	8.21	2.65			
Counselling	Male	168	10.58	5.71	-.843	298	.085
	Female	132	11.08	4.15			

The result in Table 5 showed that for appraisal service, there was significant difference in the opinions of male and female students regarding its implementation ($t= 3.287$, $df=298$, $p= .002$). In contrast, it can be observed that there was no significant difference in the opinions of male and female students with regard to the implementation of the information service ($t= -1.466$, $df=298$, $p=.169$). Similarly, Table 5 indicated that there was no significant difference in male and female students' views on the implementation of the consultation service ($t= -1.014$, $df= 298$, $p=.103$). Furthermore, Table 5 revealed that there was no significant difference in the opinions of male and female students on the implementation of the counselling service ($t= -.843$, $df=298$, $p=.085$). The present findings showed that male and female students do not differ significantly in their opinions in terms of the implementation of the information, consultation and counselling services. It can, therefore, be concluded that gender is not a significant determinant of students' evaluation of the information, consultation and counselling services.

The current finding tallies with the research findings of Amenyedzi (as cited in Essuman, 2001) who found that there was significant difference in the perceptions of male and female students regarding the implementation of the appraisal service in senior high schools in the Volta Region of Ghana. The current results are also consistent with the findings of Fafunwa and Akinpelu (2008) who revealed that there was no significant difference in the opinions of male and female students in the implementation of the information and counselling services in senior secondary schools in Nigeria. Again, the current findings confirm the earlier research findings of Bondah (as cited in Essuman, 2001) who found that there was no significant difference in male and female students' opinion with regard to the implementation of the consultation service in senior high schools in the Assin District in the Central Region of Ghana. The reason for the current findings could be due to the fact that both male and female students had similar level of awareness about the extent to which the information, consultation and counselling services were implemented in their schools.

6. Conclusion

The results of the study have indicated the appraisal service was effectively offered while the consultation, counselling and information services were not effectively implemented. Thus, it can be concluded that students are not benefitting much from three guidance services in their schools. It can also be concluded that gender is not a significant determinant of students' evaluation of the information, consultation and counselling services.

7. Implications for Counselling Practice

From the findings and conclusion, counsellors need to pay more attention to the consultation, counselling and

information services provided in schools. To make consultation effective, counsellors can make use of avenues such as parent-teacher association meetings and open day ceremonies to interact with parents with the view to identifying ways to meet the needs of their wards more effectively. Teachers are likely to be more knowledgeable about the concerns of students. Counsellors should, therefore, endeavour to consult with teachers through periodic meetings on how the problems of students can best be addressed. With respect to the counselling service, the critical need areas of students are related to study skills, interpersonal skills and problem solving skills. Counsellors should provide individual and group counselling for students to enable them acquire these essential skills so as to facilitate their academic success and psychosocial adjustment. Information service can be improved through strategies such as talks, seminars and provision of brochures on course offerings and admission requirements of post-secondary institutions in order to facilitate the career development of students.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, a number of recommendations are hereby made.

1. Counsellors should pay great attention to all guidance services in order to effectively promote the personal, social, educational and career development of students.
2. Since gender is not a major determinant of students' views regarding the implementation of guidance services, the evaluation of guidance services by students can be done without gender considerations.
3. The Ministry of Education and its agency, the Ghana Education Service should ensure that guidance services are effectively offered by providing the necessary human and material resources for the delivery of the services, since the lack of resources has been identified by scholars as the major factor militating against the effective provision of guidance services in schools.
4. Headmasters/mistresses of senior high schools should encourage Parent-Teacher Associations to provide funds for the effective delivery of guidance services in senior high schools.

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