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Perceptions of Effectiveness of Academic Advising: Case of Ghanaian University Students

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Abstract
The study explored students' perceptions of academic advising in the University of Cape Coast (UCC) using the descriptive survey design. Four research questions were formulated to guide the study. The population was all undergraduate students in the University. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 400 students who had prior interactions with their academic advisors for the study. Proportional stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed. The data was analyzed using means, standard deviations. The study revealed that academic advising in the UCC was generally seen to be ineffective. Respondents rated low the three qualities of academic advisors examined in the study. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the Management of the UCC organise regular assessment of academic advising to keep academic advisors in check and, organise workshops and seminars to sharpen their skills and qualities. Again, based on the findings, some counselling implications were outlined.
Keywords: Academic advising, Counselling, Ghanaian, Perceptions, University students
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1. Introduction

The past decade has seen student-lecturer relationship grown and enriched the social environment of the University of Cape Coast. Kwarteng, Boadi-Siaw and Dwarko (2012) have written extensively on the history of the advisory system in the University of Cape Coast. According to Kwarteng, Boadi-Siaw and Dwarko, in the earliest there were formal interaction between students and lecturers in the lecture halls during the teaching and learning process. Tutorial sessions were organised in which various academic challenges were discussed. However, this tutorial system became ineffective due to the sharp increase in student population. The University of Cape Coast in 1987 established a counselling system which among others began to deal with students' academic concerns. Following the establishment of the Counselling Centre, some lecturers from various departments were also appointed as Academic counsellors by the Vice-Chancellor. This trend has continued to date. These Academic Counsellors were assigned to specific academic levels and to post-graduate students. Currently in the University of Cape Coast, lecturers are appointed as Academic Advisors by the Vice-Chancellor upon the recommendation of the Head of Department. They are, therefore, responsible for advising students assigned to their departments. Academic advising is done on programme basis and according to the academic level.

In the early 1800s in the United States of America, academic advising was projected to reduce the growing barrier between students and faculty while also serving to assist students in choosing electives for various semesters (Gordon, Habley & Grites, 2008). While the process of advising students has been present in some shape or form since the beginning of higher education in America, formal academic advising can be traced to 1841, when Kenyon College President David Douglass required students to select a faculty member as an advisor (Harrison, 2009). Harrison posited that in the 1960s, the academic advising concept began to be developed from theories on student development. According to Sharkin (2004), academic advisors help students to plan for completion of their programmes and address concerns about the curriculum or academic schedules. The academic advisor also reviews with the student academic services available at the school and may refer a student to the counselling department for any psychological issues that may impact the student's learning or success. Students who are at risk academically stood to benefit from both academic and psychological counselling.

In recent years, academic advising has become much more visible in college and university campuses and has assumed increased responsibility for the development of students. Hunter and White (2004) stated that academic advising can help students to develop more meaningful learning experiences, thereby encouraging achievement of educational, career, and life goals. Student advising plays a crucial role in development (Pizzolato, 2008; Reinarz & Ehrlich, 2002; Light, 2001) and good advising has continually been associated with students' satisfaction with an institution (Baker & Griffin, 2010; Elliott & Healy, 2001) as well as with students' academic success (Museus & Ravello, 2010; Campbell & Nutt, 2008).

Faculty members have always held an important role in the academic advising process (Harrison, 2009). Nonetheless, Sharkin (2004) stated that most persons researching into academic advising in higher education

generally recognise that members of the teaching faculty or others charged with academic advising responsibilities should not be held totally accountable for the inferior quality typical of academic advising systems. Sharkin (2004) noted that academic advisors frequently complain that many students simply are not interested in accessing their services. The studies of Hossler, Ziskin, and Gross (2009) and Kramer (2003) found out that most of the colleges and universities in the United States do not assess academic advising. Sharkin also noted that on most campuses, academic advising is an activity that yields little or no recognition or incentive for advisors. In the absence of recognition and reward, academic advisors justifiably have difficulty in getting motivated to perform effectively. On many campuses, academic advising responsibilities allocated to the advisors are overlaid on frequently defined duties, rather than being an answerable part of their assigned work.

Wilder (2009) added that a substantial percentage of academic advisors openly express displeasure for the task of advising students. Academic advising is not an activity everyone can or should do and, therefore, advisors should be carefully chosen. According to Habley (2004), advancing the place of academic advising in the university will necessitate inquiry that mixes theory, practice, and research. Habley stated that one area in which an institution can formally implement quality exchanges between students and the academic environment is through the academic advising process.

In Ghana, not much attention has been paid to academic advising. It appeared to the researcher that no research had been conducted to ascertain students' perceptions of how effective this important service meant for their overall success is. Some evaluative and assessment studies have been conducted over the years in the field of guidance and counselling which is a closely related professional service to academic advising. They include research by Sedofia and Ocansey (2013) and Mensah (2007). Sedofia and Ocansey's work concentrated on colleges of education in Volta Region of Ghana. Mensah (2007) also explored the place of guidance and counselling in training colleges in the Eastern Region of Ghana. These studies did not cover the Central Region neither did they assess academic advising. In addition, these two studies did not look at university students as this current study sought to do.

In the United States of America, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) has supported a holistic approach to academic advising that includes both understanding the institution and the needs of its students (Habley, 2004). Assessing students' perception of academic advising in the University of Cape Coast could help arrive at two types of decisions: decisions about what can be done to improve the advising system in the school and decisions involving selecting the best members of faculty to ensure effective academic advising.

The only known study to the researcher on academic advising in Ghana was a study done by Arhin, Wang'eri and Kigen (2017). Their study, however, focused on only distance education students in the University of Cape Coast and how academic advising impacted on their retention. This current study sought to fill an important gap by focusing on regular undergraduate students from the University of Cape Coast. Empirical data is clearly deficient in this field. It is against this background that this study was conducted to ascertain students' perceptions of effectiveness of academic advising in University of Cape Coast.

2. Purpose of the Study

The objectives of the study were to find out:

1. how UCC students perceive the effectiveness of the institution's academic advising and
2. the extent to which academic advisors possess three the critical qualities thus, being personable and approachable, having mentorship qualities and advisor accessibility.

3. Research Questions

The research questions that guided the study were stated as follows.

1. How do students in UCC perceive the effectiveness of the University's academic advising system?
2. How personable and approachable are academic advisors to UCC students?
3. In what ways do UCC students perceive their academic advisors to be effective mentors?
4. How accessible are academic advisors to UCC students?

4. Method

4.1 Research Design

The quantitative research approach was employed for this study. Aliaga and Gunderson (2005) stated that quantitative research explains phenomenon by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods. The descriptive survey method was used. This was because the current study sought to describe the prevailing status of the academic advising programme at the University of Cape Coast. According to Cohen, Morrison, and Manion (2004), in descriptive survey design, researchers gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared. However, the descriptive survey design has some disadvantages. According to

Cohen, Morrison and Manion (2004), there is the difficulty of ensuring that items in the questionnaire used are clear and not misleading. To minimise this, questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher so that clarification would be given to respondents for any misunderstanding. Nevertheless, the descriptive survey design was found to be most appropriate and applicable for this study since the researcher was interested in knowing and describing the status of academic advising in the University of Cape Coast. It helped in obtaining accurate data on academic advising with respect to the variables underlying the study.

4.2 Population

The population of this study was all regular undergraduate students at UCC. The total number of students was 18,893 who were within the four colleges used in this study. This figure is made up of 12,353 males and 6,540 females (UCC Students Records, 2016).

4.3 Sampling Procedure

Out of the students' population of 18,893 a sample of 400 students, made up 261 males and 139 females participated in the study. Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for sample size estimation was used to determine the sample size. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the minimum figure that could be sampled from a population of 18,893 is 377. The researcher rounded it up to 400 participants to increase the external validity.

A multistage sampling design was employed. Multistage sampling refers to the sampling technique where the sampling is carried out in stages using smaller and smaller sampling units at each stage (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000). The proportional stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used. In the first stage, proportionate number of respondents based on gender was calculated for. Again, proportionate number of respondents based on the academic levels in each college was also calculated for.

In the second stage, the simple random sampling method was used to select one department from each college using the lottery method. Finally, the simple random sampling technique again was used to select the subjects in the selected class.

4.4 Data Collection Instrument

The questionnaire used for this study was an adapted version of the Advisor Assessment Instrument developed by Cuseo (2001) from Marymount College in the United States of America. Some modifications were made to make it reflect the University of Cape Coast's educational setting and to suit the respondents of the study. For instance, to measure the effectiveness of academic advisors in the University of Cape Coast, a sub-scale was created in the modified Cuseo's questionnaire based on the specifically assigned duties of the academic advisors by the Vice-Chancellor of UCC. Again, the scoring of the instrument was revised to align to the Likert-type scale scoring.

The adapted instrument consists of three sections. Section A focused on respondents' background information such as age-range, gender, level, and college. Section B consists of a scale of 15 items on the responsibilities of academic advisors measured on a four-point Likert-type scale format. The response options are 4= Highly Effective, 3= Effective, 2= Fairly Effective and 1= Not Effective. Section C has three scales of 17 items on the qualities of academic advisors measured on a four-point Likert-Type scale format. The response options for Section C are: 4= Strongly Agree, 3= Agree, 2= Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagree. According to Amedahe (2002), Likert-type scale questionnaires have high return rates and are more advantageous than open-ended questionnaires.

The face validity and content validity of the instrument were determined by experts in the field of guidance and counselling. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was done to improve the validity and the reliability of the instrument. An overall coefficient reliability of 0.92 was obtained after the pre-testing. There was 100% return rate of the questionnaires. This became possible because the researcher personally administered the questionnaires and sub-sample sizes for the various groups were relatively small and spread across the gender, colleges and all the academic levels making data collection very easy. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of UCC. Ethical principles such as voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality of responses regarding research were strictly adhered to.

4.5 Data Processing and Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used in the analyses of the data. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to analyse the responses to each of the four research questions.

5. Results

The results of the main data have been presented according to the research questions formulated for the study.

Research question 1: How do students in UCC perceive the effectiveness of the University's academic advising system?

Table 1- *Students' Perception of the Effectiveness of the University's Academic Advising System (N=400)*

Statement	Mean	SD
Preparing for examinations	1.78	0.93
Examination malpractices	2.02	1.02
Selecting elective courses	1.67	0.93
Exploring my academic majors/minors	1.68	0.93
Information on change of programmes	1.59	0.89
Information on change of courses	1.61	0.87
Deferment issue	1.67	0.94
Information on when I can re-sit a paper	1.56	0.84
Health-related issues which can affect my academic life	1.72	0.94
Relevance of my programme to my future work	1.99	1.11
How to find employment after school	1.76	0.99
Types of work I can do after graduation	1.79	1.03
Teaches me effective study habits	1.95	1.05
Information on minimum/maximum credit load	1.79	0.98
Information on how to resolve incomplete issues/records	1.69	0.96

From Table 1, it was noted that for all the 15 items, the mean scores were below 2.5. This implies that students in the University of Cape Coast rated academic advising not effective. This is obvious since students did not agree that their academic advisors helped them in selecting elective courses (M=1.67, SD=0.93). Students did not also agree that their academic advisors gave them information on change of courses (M= 1.61, SD= 0.87). Again, students did not agree that their academic advisors helped them to know more about circumstances under which deferment of a programme was allowed (M=1.67, SD=0.94). The duty of academic advisors giving information to students on when they can re-sit a paper had the lowest score among all the items in the scale (M=1.56, SD=0.84). However, the duty of giving information to students on what constituted examination malpractice had the highest score (M=2.02, SD=1.02) although it was still below the criterion mean.

Research Question 2: How personable and approachable are academic advisors to UCC students?

Table 2- *Students' Rating of the Personable and Approachableness Quality of Academic Advisors (N=400)*

Statement	Mean	SD
Encourages me to express my thoughts and feeling	1.99	1.05
Is a good listener	2.09	1.05
Speaks very respectfully to me	2.21	1.10
Is not emotionally withdrawn from me	2.01	1.02
Knows me by name	1.76	0.99
Makes me feel comfortable going near him/her	1.99	1.05

Table 2 shows that for all the six items, the mean scores were below 2.5. Students did not agree that academic advisors speak very respectfully to them although it had the highest mean score of 2.21 with a standard deviation of 1.10. The table shows that the item 'knows me by name' had the lowest mean of 1.76 with a standard deviation of 0.99.

Research Question 3: In what ways do UCC students perceive their academic advisors to be effective mentors?

Table 3- *Student Perception of their Academic Advisors as Effective Mentors (N=400)*

Statement	Mean	SD
Considers my personal abilities, talents, and interests	1.88	0.99
Has a positive impact on my academic work.	2.00	1.02
Motivates me to achieve my goals.	2.04	1.07
Motivates me to model his/her life.	1.90	1.01
Goes beyond my academic life and discusses other important issues (e.g. career) with me.	1.97	1.05

Table 3 shows that for all the 5 items, the mean scores were below 2.5. However, the item 'motivates me to achieve my goals' had the highest mean of 2.04 with a standard deviation of 1.07. The statement 'considers my personal abilities, talents and interests when advising me about courses or programme of study' had the lowest mean score of 1.88 and standard deviation of 0.99.

Research Question 4: How accessible are academic advisors to the UCC students?

Table 4- *Accessibility of Academic Advisors to Students (N=400)*

Statements	Mean	SD
Is easy to get in touch with.	1.80	0.99
Gives me as much time as I need when we meet.	1.89	0.99
Encourages me to come by for help.	2.02	1.07
Interacts with me even after class hours.	1.81	0.97
Reschedules appointments he/she is not able to honour.	1.84	0.99
Communicates with me regularly and casually.	1.77	0.95

Table 4 shows that for all the 6 items, the mean scores were below 2.5. However, the item 'communicates with me regularly and casually' recorded the lowest mean of 1.77 and a standard deviation of 0.95. This was followed by the statement 'is easy to get in touch with' with mean of 1.80 and a standard deviation of 0.99. The statement 'encourages me to come by for help' had the highest mean score of 2.02 and a standard deviation of 1.07.

6. Discussion

With respect to the research question one on how students in UCC perceive the effectiveness of the University's academic advising system, it was observed that students in the University of Cape Coast rated academic advising as not effective. This finding corroborates the finding of Arhin, Wangeri and Kigen (2017) who found that students from the College of Distance Education in the University of Cape had negative perception about the academic advising service provided. The current finding also agrees with a study conducted by Hossler, Ziskin and Gross (2009) among college and university students. They concluded that although colleges and universities often indicate a commitment to academic advising, it was evident that academic advising was often uneven in quality and eventually ineffective. The current finding corroborates with Habley's (1993) study which indicated that there is a lack of clarity about the academic advising programme mission and goals and concluded that advising was not seen to be a bona fide programme with an educational mission hence very ineffective.

According to Creamer and Scott (2000), the purpose statement for an academic advising programme should serve as a catalyst that drives and directs the progress of an effective evaluation plan. If the college or university does not take time to develop a carefully constructed statement that clearly captures the indispensable purpose and priorities of its academic advising programme, then individual academic advisors may have different conceptions and philosophies about what academic advising should be, and their individual academic advising practices may differ in nature and quality, contingent on what specific advising idea they hold. Research shows that there is equally high consistency between academic advisors' stated philosophy of advising and their actual advising behaviours or practices (Creamer & Scott, 2000).

The current findings do not agree with the findings of Tinto (2004) which found that academic advisors were seen to be generally effective since they focused on the needs of undecided students, students who decided to change their major and first-generation students who did not have the knowledge of how to successfully navigate higher education. The current finding is also in contrast with the finding from a cross-sectional survey by Shamsdin and Doroudchi (2012) in an Iranian medical school which revealed that although there was a lack of systematic planning, skills, and resources for the academic advising process, 48 (56%) of the respondents were satisfied with the academic advising process and termed the programme as effective.

This finding may be accounted for by the fact that the UCC had not developed a carefully constructed mission statement that clearly captures the indispensable purpose and priorities of its academic advising programme, therefore, individual academic advisors might have had different conceptions and philosophies about what academic advising is. This may cause their academic advising practices to differ in nature and quality, depending on the specific advising idea they hold.

Another possible reason could be that there is a heavy workload on academic advisors in the University of Cape Coast since they teach students and attend to other important academic issues. This could make it difficult for them to perform their responsibilities as academic advisors very well. Another possible cause that can be assigned to this finding may be due to the lack of office space for academic advisors. Academic advising is done in offices that are usually shared with other lecturers making the whole process difficult. It can also be speculated that the number of incentives or allowance given to academic advisors for this extra responsibility is not reinforcing enough to motivate academic advisors.

Research question two sought to find out how personable and approachable academic advisors are to UCC students. The current study revealed that students in the University of Cape Coast did not rate the personable and approachability quality of their academic advisors high. The current finding was in sharp contrast with the study of Levitz (2009) who conducted a national student satisfaction and priorities survey and found that the four-year public and private colleges and universities and the career schools rated personable and approachableness as the major strength of their academic advisors. Buttner (2004) a similar indicated that the respondents rated their

professors as approachable since they listened to students' concerns and always empathised with them. This was confirmed by Benson, Cohen and Buskist's (2005) study with first-year STEM students in the United States which revealed that students had contact with their professors more frequently when they perceive that their professors cared about them.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) recognised that an open interaction by academic advisors, and the level of comfort that students perceived to have when going to their academic advisors, was a substantial contributor to identifying departing and persisting students. Brown and McIntyre (1993) took a different approach by studying academic advisors as sources of behaviours that negatively influenced student satisfaction from the students' perspectives. It was found that students rated academic advisors to be personable and approachable since they created relaxed, enjoyable, and safe classroom atmospheres. Academic advisors also retained control of the classrooms, provided interesting and motivating work and made clear their expectations for their students. It further revealed that academic advisors helped students who encountered difficulties and had high expectations for their students.

According to Bloom, Huston and He (2008) when students came for their appointments, academic advisors disarmed them by walking to the waiting area and warmly greeted them, shaking hands, and welcoming them to the office. This introduction gave academic advisors the chance to involve in some small talk with students on the walk back to their office, helping to put the students at ease. Rocca (2007) stated that non-verbal and verbal immediacy behaviours that academic advisors use can make them personable and approachable. Rocca added that non-verbal behaviours such as smiling, head nodding, maintaining appropriate eye contact, removing distractions (such as cell phones and computers), and showing suitable welcoming signals help students to open. Some verbal immediacy behaviours include calling students by the correct name, giving feedback to them, and using inclusive pronouns.

Perhaps, the UCC students did not rate high the personable and approachability quality because academic advisors do not observe the disarm phase of appreciative advising. Another reason could be that academic advisors are appointed based on the recommendation of a Head of Department and not on any special characteristics they have or are required. Therefore, it is possible they do not know how to conduct themselves as academic advisors which is separated from being a lecturer.

Regarding research question three which looked at ways in which the UCC students perceived their academic advisors to be effective mentors, it was revealed that students in UCC did not rate high the mentor quality of academic advisors. This finding contradicted findings from previous studies. In a study undertaken by the National Science Foundation (2008) in California, on students' perceptions of the value and need for mentors as they progress through academic studies in engineering and science, it emerged that 98% of respondents reported that having a mentor was important to them and that academic advisors possessed and exhibited good mentoring qualities in their dealings with students. Hollingsworth and Fassinger (2002) found that academic advisors were effective mentors hence contributing to students' development of research skills and their mentoring quality acts as a predictor of student productivity.

Zalaquett and Lopez (2006) made use of the narrative stories of 13 academically successful Latino students who were bilingual and had shown the need for financial support. They found a significant impact of effective college mentoring by academic advisors on most of the participants. Santos and Reigadas (2002) conducted a survey to assess students' perceived adjustment to college and their perception of faculty mentors and the faculty mentors programme (FMP). Their findings indicated that these students reported clearer academic goals and a greater sense of self-efficacy in their ability to succeed in college because of the effectiveness of the mentoring qualities of their academic advisors. According to Bloom, Hutson and He (2008), academic advisors serve as important role models and mentors by continuing to read, refining their skills, and demonstrating an unquenchable thirst for new knowledge, demonstrating a spirit of continually seeking to better themselves.

The possible reason for the current finding could be that academic advisors may not be guided by the "do not settle" phase of the appreciative advising framework developed by Bloom, Hutson and He (2008). Another possible reason may be that mentorship relationship is not very much encouraged in the UCC especially at the undergraduate level where students see their lecturers to be far removed from them unlike the other studies which were conducted in European countries where faculty mentor programmes have been properly instituted.

With respect to the fourth research question which sought to find out how accessible academic advisors are to the UCC students, the current study revealed that students in the UCC did not rate accessibility quality of their academic advisors high. The current finding confirms findings from Buttner (2004) study which showed that academic advisors were not available during office hours and failed to respond to questions asked by students in class or via email. The current finding corroborates that of Hawks and Lyons (2008) who also reported that academic advisors often missed meetings with students and such behaviour made students feel unimportant. The current finding also agrees with Holland's (1998) findings which reported that academic advisors were inaccessible to respondents. Its respondents described their overall relationship with their advisors as formal, business-like, and non-developmental.

The current finding, however, contradicts with the finding obtained by Fairchild (2005), in which the respondents indicated that their academic advisors were accessible. Academic advisors communicated this by having an open-door policy, allowing students to contact them at home, and attending to questions or concerns within 24 hours. It also revealed that being punctual for meetings, showing courtesy and communicating respect in their interaction with students, and encouraging students to drop by their office for informal conversations were demonstrated by academic advisors. The current finding also contradicts with the result obtained by Barnes, Williams and Archer (2010) from their study on doctoral students' perceptions of positive and negative advisor attributes, which revealed that being accessible was the most frequently mentioned positive attribute that the students stated about their academic advisors. In another study by Filson (2012) 51.7% of undergraduate students in the Ohio State University agreed that advisors in the college or department were available when students needed to see them. Approximately 30% of students strongly agreed that advisors within the college or department were available when students needed to see them. However, 13.3% of students disagreed and 5.9% of students strongly disagreed that advisors were available in the college or department when students needed to see them.

The current finding also contrasts that of Pascarella and Terenzini (1978) who found that high-interacting freshman tend to rank academic advisors as highly accessible and as a source of positive influence on their intellectual and personal development. Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) concluded that specific background characteristics such as advisor accessibility made interactions even easier for at-risk students based on their first-generational status, low aspiration, and poor socioeconomic factors. Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh and Whitt (2010) concentrated solely on institutions that had both higher-than-predicted student engagement, and graduation proportions and noted that the advisor-student relationships at these high engagement institutions were exceptional which is to say that academic advisors were accessible to students both inside and outside the classroom, showed interest in students' educational needs and career interests, and showed interest in helping students be autonomous thinkers and problem-solvers. O'Bryan, Severtis and Wasson (2014) also conducted a survey in the Indiana University Southeast Survey concerning the assessment of academic advising in the school. The study concluded that out of the 348 respondents, 212 representing 60.9% indicated that academic advisors were accessible.

The possible reason for the finding of the current study may be since academic advisors in the UCC are loaded with heavy load of academic work and other University assignments. The high student-academic advisor ratio of may also be a possible reason why most of the students indicated that academic advisors were not accessible. This is because in the UCC, an academic advisor takes care of all students in a particular academic level of that Department.

7. Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was that the instrument for data collection was questionnaire and response biases could not be ruled out completely. The questions were carefully worded and explained to respondents. Questionnaires do not provide the opportunity to collect additional information through probing, prompting and clarification of questions while they are being completed. This is to say the issues may not be well explained as expected. To minimise this, the researcher explained to the participants the way to answer the questions which were not clear to them.

Again, the study was conducted in one public university in Ghana. This was the University of Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana. This makes generalization of the findings to other public universities very difficult. Researchers should therefore be cautious when making inferences from the study results.

The descriptive survey design which was employed in the research may also limit the findings of the study. That is the phenomenon under study could change over a period and this can affect the internal validity of the research. To minimise this phenomenon, the study was carried out within the stipulated time so that the findings reflect what pertained on the ground.

8. Conclusion

Academic advising has the potency to assist the UCC students excel in their academic, career and social development. However, findings from this current study have revealed that although the academic advising system exists in the UCC, students are not benefiting from it. This was clear as students rated the effectiveness of their academic advisors as low. Students also did not rate their academic advisors high on qualities such as personable and approachable, mentorship and accessibility. The study has provided vital information concerning the current status of academic advising in the UCC. It can, therefore, be stated that students in the UCC face their academic issues mostly independent of academic advisors. This study has exposed to stakeholders, the broad picture of the perceptions of students of the academic advising system in the UCC for the necessary actions to be taken.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Management of the University of Cape Coast should organise regular assessment of academic advising to ensure that the academic advising system delivers and impacts students positively.
2. Management of the University of Cape Coast should develop training programmes in the form of workshops and seminars for academic advisors to sharpen their skills and qualities.
3. Incentives given by University Management to academic advisors for their work should be made more attractive to increase the motivation of academic advisors towards their work.
4. The Directorate of Academic Affairs needs to establish a well-structured academic advising programme indicating its vision, mission, and the organisational model to be employed in delivering this service.

10. Implications for Academic Advising and Counselling

1. University academic advisors and counsellors should be a mentor and role model for the attitudes, beliefs, and habits they wish to foster in the students. Exhibiting the quality of an effective mentor speaks a lot to one's clients.
2. University academic advisors and counsellors should exhibit the quality of personable and approachableness. Students feel comfortable and welcomed to share their problems with only advisors and counsellors who are open.
3. University academic advisors and counsellors should be accessible all the time to extend helping hands to their clients whenever they need them. Advisors' inaccessibility must not be an added problem for their clients.
4. University academic advisors and counsellors should maintain the highest standard of professionalism when discharging their duties. Clients are satisfied with advisors and counsellors who perform their duties with professional efficiency.

Data availability statement

The data of this study are available on request from the corresponding author**.**

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Conflict of Interest

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