



Research Paper

Evaluation of the Guidance and Counseling Services in Tamale Technical University, Tamale in the Northern Region, Ghana.

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Abstract

Tamale Technical University is one of tertiary institution in the Northern Ghana. The study was to evaluate the guidance and counselling services in Tamale Technical University in Sagnarugu District and to investigate how students are accessing the services. Qualitative research approach was used for the study. The study was conducted in Tamale Technical University in Sagnarugu District; the study sampled fifty-two (52) respondents. The breakdown was as follows two (2) guidance and counselling officers and fifty (50) students made up of twenty-nine (29) male and twenty-one (21) female. The views of guidance and counselling officers, and students were all examined. Questionnaire were administrated to students and retrieved by the researchers. Interview guide was use for guidance and counselling officers. Data collected from the study were analysed using statistical package for social science (SPSS). Finding of the study revealed that apart from orientation, students had less knowledge of the other guidance and counselling services.

Keywords: *Guidance, Counseling, Services, Evaluation, Emotional*

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I. Introduction

The evaluation of Guidance and Counselling services is a necessary process for every University. It is required that after establishment of the Guidance and Counselling programme, its effectiveness should be periodically ascertained. This evaluation, according to Essuman (2001), would help to assess how well the services are being administered, the extent to which students are benefiting, the effective running of the service and the reasons for any ineffectiveness.

According to Bedu-Addo (2006), Guidance and Counselling plays a role in every individual's life and it is essential in all aspects of human development. Taylor and Buku (2006) state that, the history of guidance and counselling can be traced to Ancient Egypt, when they were preparing their young men and women for marriage. It should be noted that the early philosophers, priests, and other representatives of religion and traditional worshippers assumed the role and function of advising and offering guidance and counselling to their people. These roles were not refined, systematic and scientific as we have today.

Statement of the Problem

Personal observation and interaction with students in the Tamale Technical University in Sagnarugu Metropolis revealed that in spite of Government's effort through Ministry of Education to appoint guidance and counselling coordinators, students still have emotional and academic challenges. They also have problems relating to sexual harassment, absenteeism, lesbianism, occultism and masturbation. Students are known to

depend on their ill-informed peers for solutions to personal problems instead of seeking help from their professional Guidance and Counselling coordinators.

Objectives of the Study

To identify the types of guidance and counselling services available to students in the Tamale Technical University in Sagnarigu Metropolis and how they are assessing the services.

Abbreviations:

TaTU: Tamale Technical University

II. Review of Related Literature

Educational Guidance

Educational Guidance and Counselling according to World Book Encyclopaedia (2005), is a process of helping students make the best possible decisions about their lives. Educational Guidance and Counselling helps students to understand themselves by focusing attention on their interests, abilities, potentials and needs to help them decide on what courses to study or what curriculum to pursue. Educational Guidance and Counselling also helps students with decision-making abilities to plan their education, choose an occupation and solve personal problems. The World Book Encyclopaedia (2005) also states that Guidance and Counselling in education is the educative process that helps students choose and develop life purposes or goals based on their abilities and interests and personal traits.

Some students find it difficult to choose the right courses because of large variance between their interest and abilities. Assistance is therefore needed for such students to be able to comfortably adjust to their academic difficulties and recognise vocational life goals.

Services

The Dictionary of Marketing Terms (1988) defines service as a term used to describe activity performed by sellers and others which accompany the sale of a product, and aid in its exchange or its utilization. Such services are either pro-sale or post-sale and supplement the product but do not comprise it. If performed during sale, they are considered to be intangible parts of the products. This definition includes offers such as wrapping and delivery because services exist in connection with the sale of a product or another service (Djagbletey, 2011). According to Farese *et al* (1991), services are an intangible product because they cannot be physically touched. Services are perishable, inseparable from the provider and highly variable each time it is delivered. Physical products can be inspected and tried before buying but pure service are intangible (Kumar & Menakshi, 2007, as cited in Djagbletey, 2011).

Menakshi (2007) opines that, a service provider has to carefully audit his resources and competencies, and then conduct market research to locate the segment which it can best serve. Because most customers are very clear about the quality of the service they want, they walk in a premise expecting that level of service: they get disappointed if their expectations are not met, because such expectations are very precise. Services are more intractable than products because they come in various shades and hues cited in Djagbletey, (2011). The following section describes the different services that are involved in guidance and counselling.

Guidance Services

According to Coyle and Dunne (2008), guidance services are an affective delivery of interventions to meet the personal, social, educational and career need of students' demands. They clearly define the guidance and counselling services as a professional service delivered by one or more qualified person or persons. Shertzer and Stone (1976) as cited in Kankam & Onivehu, (2000) posit that Guidance services are the formative action taken by the school guidance and counselling coordinator to make guidance operational and available to students. Guidance as a helping relationship dwells on these services to assist the students to take care of their educational experience.

Guidance service is a professional aid to the individual and small group in dealing with commonly recurring problem. They are often classified according to the area of life in which the problem occurs. The service prepares students to assume increasing responsibility for their decision and growth in the ability to understand and accept the result of their choices (Olandede, 1987 as cited in Taylor & Buku, 2006).

According to Lunenburg (2010), some of the major guidance and counselling services are Assessment, Information, Placement, Follow-up, and Counselling which plays a very important role in the development of students.

1. Information Service

Guidance as a profession cannot be complete without the services. The service gives a clear focus of the kind of help the counsellor is providing and how it will be done to benefit all students in the school.

The information service provides appropriate and relevant data to students on educational, vocational, personal and social opportunities. Information is important in decision making of an individual. Without information, it is difficult for any individual to make any meaningful decision of his or her life (Kokro 2015).

The introduction of Information Technology has made it easier for all to access information. It is important that students seek for information relevant to them as far as their decision making is concerned. Zunker (1993) emphasises on the importance of information to provide appropriate and significant data to students on academic, occupational and social opportunities. Information stimulates thinking and reasoning in a way that helps students to make meaningful decisions. Taylor and Buku (2006) refer to information service as a cooperate effort of teachers, counsellors and librarians. Students must be made to understand that failure in life stems from lack of knowledge and knowledge comes from information that leads to good decision making.

2. Follow-Up Service

As the name implies, follow up service is the continued effort made by the guidance and counselling coordinator to find out how students are doing after school or within their new placement. Follow-up questions help the guidance and counselling coordinator to know what happens after new placement and how students are picking up with growth and development. It is also supposed to give the guidance and counselling coordinator information on students' academic work and offer assistance where needed. Guidance and counselling may start in an office or anywhere but will continue as a relationship between the counsellor and the client. This effort keeps students informed that someone cares Taylor & Buku, (2006).

3. Evaluation Service

Evaluation service is to assess guidance and counselling services in the school with the aim of improving on it where necessary. According to Kokro (2015), it may involve research and data collection on the benefits of the services to students, teachers and administrators. The evaluation must cover all guidance and counselling services offered in the school.

The evaluation should be continuous and constant but must be done in a scientific and systematic way which should involve all functionaries in the school with students as the focal point. When school authorities offer financial support to guidance and counselling coordinators for guidance programmes, there is the need to report back to the authorities. Kankam and Onivehu (2000) have suggest that the entire school guidance and counselling programme should be evaluated after every two years to take care of the changing times and consequent changing needs of students.

4. Counselling Service

The counselling service is designed to facilitate self-understanding and development through dyadic or small group relationships. The aims of such relationships tend to be personal development and decision making that is based on self-understanding and knowledge of the environment. The counsellor assists the student to understand and accept his or herself thereby clarifying his ideas, perceptions, attitudes and goals. The counsellors also assist students with personal and environmental information regarding their plans, choices or problems and seek to develop in the students the ability to cope with and solve problems and increase competencies in making decision and plans for the future (Lunenburg, 2010).

Taylor and Buku (2006) have described counselling service as helping students to solve all types of problems which could hinder students' school work. The service provides students with opportunity to resolve these problems and at the same time plan their educational and vocational goals. Counselling service also helps students in self-understanding and decision making; this is the major engine of growth of the guidance services. It can be offered to individual or groups. It is clear that the guidance and counselling coordinator should have all the skills needed to function in that capacity to be able to provide the help students need. This, the guidance and counselling coordinator would do by giving students information to enable them take meaningful decision for better future.

5. Consultation Services

Consultation is seeking for information from another person, and to use that information in helping the students. Taylor and Buku (2006) see consultation service as the aspect of guidance in which the school counsellor works together with teachers, parents and other agencies to resolve the problems of students. It means seeking the help of an individual or a small group together to provide useful information and suggestions to aid decision making. It may also help teachers and parents in understanding students' developmental challenges and how to handle them. This may also give some hidden information about students unknown to any of the functionaries within the school.

6. Appraisal Service

According to Kankam and Onivehu (2000), the major purpose of the appraisal service is to gather information about students that will aid them in understanding themselves in making important decisions. In present times when there is so much educated youth unemployment, most students do not know what they can do, how good they are or what to think of and how to look for external sources for direction in other matters. Taylor and Buku (2006) equally state that, appraisal service can be referred to as the individual inventory. It is also one of the

activities the school counsellor engages in. The school counsellor collects data that will highlight the individuality and uniqueness of each pupil or student. This will give the guidance and counselling coordinator a fair idea of who the student is and what he or she can achieve at any particular time. Measures adopted for data collection is the prerogative of the guidance and counselling coordinator. However, the first document to assess during the period is always the cumulative record.

7. Orientation Service

Orientation service consists of activities provided to students in helping them adjust to school environment and experience in a more comprehensive manner Kokro, (2015). Kankam and Onivehu (2000) describe orientation services as a mutual process of learning on the part of new students, the faculty, the student body of institution whereby each group become well acquainted with others and each participates in an ongoing process which will help the new student become an effective functioning part. Orientation gives students information of how things are done within the new setting and where to go for what. This also allows students to ask questions although they may have fore knowledge of how things are done. It is through orientation service that they can confirm what they have in mind.

8. Placement Service

Placement service is a method designed to help students to plan and determine their interests, skills, aptitudes and physical activities suitable to them. The services create awareness for students with regard to opportunities available for them in and out of school as well as help them to function effectively (Shertzer & Stone, 1981 as cited in Taylor & Buku, 2006). Placements are usually vocational, educational and social and in most cases recommended by guidance and counselling coordinators with the client or student's interest and abilities taken into consideration Kokro (2015).

9. Referral Service

Referral service as the name implies refer students for assistance or help. It is an already established fact that counselling has its limitations, so also do guidance and counselling coordinators. Due to the unique nature of some of the challenges students bring up during counselling, it is the responsibility of the guidance and counselling coordinator to do referrals. Some of these problems may be psychological, medical, spiritual or mental. After interaction with the students, the counsellor in consultation with students and parent may have to refer student to the appropriate place for help (Kankam & Onivehu, 2000).

III. Research Design

The design for the study was qualitative method. Alasuutari (1995) argues that qualitative research is where the observation (texts, sounds, behaviour, images) usually favours the researcher's preconception of a social phenomenon which does not determine the research result, to some extent as in quantitative research. Qualitative research is thus often used for the study of social processes or for the study of human behaviour. Qualitative research uses naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context of specific setting. The research does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest. Qualitative research uses the underlying philosophical nature and has its own paradigm, enjoying detailed interviewing and focuses on the apparent compatibility of the research method "enjoying the rewards of both numbers and words" (Clesne & Peshkin, 1992, as cited in Golafshani, 2003).

Ritchie and Lewis (2003) indicate that most texts on qualitative research begin with some attempt to define what is meant by the term either theoretically or practically or both. However, providing a precise definition of qualitative research is not easy. This reflects the fact that the term is used as an overarching category, covering a wide range of approaches and methods found within different research disciplines. It consists of a set of interpretive material practice that makes the world visible. These practices turn the world into series of representations and include field notes, interviews, conversation, photographs, recording and memos. This means that qualitative research studies things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

Discussions of Findings from Questionnaires and Interviews

The study has revealed to a large extent, the knowledge and attitude of students in Tamale Technical University towards the available guidance and counselling services. The University have guidance and counselling officers who are professionals, but they plan their programme of services to help the students adjust and cope with difficulties in their academic pursuit. The present conditions under which guidance and counselling services are provided is not the best of practice.

Awareness of Guidance and Counselling Services in TaTU

Question 1a: Have you heard of guidance and counselling since you reported in TaTU?

This question sought responses on whether the selected students had heard of guidance and counselling since they reported in TaTU. From the questionnaire, responses showed that all the 50 (100%) respondents in TaTU

had heard about guidance and counselling. This shows clearly that majority of the students in TaTU had heard about guidance and counselling.

Question 1b. Do you know the guidance and counselling officers in your school?

From the respondents answers to whether they knew their guidance and counselling coordinator, it was revealed that 40 (80%) of the 50 respondents in TaTU knew their school guidance and counselling officers. This gives a clear indication that majority of the students in TaTU knew their guidance and counselling officers.

Table 1: Respondents’ answer to whether they knew the officers by their names

Tamale Technical University	Frequency	Yes	No	Total	Percentage		Total 100
	50	40	10	50	Yes 80	No 20	

If yes, what is his or her name?

Table 2 indicates that 40 (80%) of the 50 respondents from TaTU knew the name of their school guidance and counselling officers whiles 10 (20%) of the 50 respondents from TaTU also respondents that they don’t know their names.

Question 1c: Has the guidance and counselling officers told you about the guidance services?

Responses to whether the guidance and counselling officers had told students about guidance services

Table 2 : Knowledge of Guidance Services

Tamale Technical University	Frequency	Yes	No	Total	Percentage		Total 100
	50	21	29	50	Yes 42	No 58	

Table 2 indicates the number of students who had been told about their guidance services by the school guidance and counselling officers. The data revealed that 21 (42%) of the respondents had been told about the guidance services in TaTU whiles 29 (58%) of the respondents indicated they had not been told about the guidance services in TaTU. This means that minority of the students in TaTU had heard or been told about the guidance services by their guidance and counselling officers.

Question 1d: If yes which services have, they told you about?

The responses indicate students’ knowledge about the guidance services within TaTU. The data reveals that 42 (84%) of the students were aware of orientation, 2 (4%) were aware of placement, 2 (4%) were aware of counselling and 2 (4%) was aware of all the services provided in Tamale Technical University. This clearly shows that majority of the students were aware of orientation but had less knowledge of the other services guidance and counselling offers. The details are shown graphically in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Guidance Services

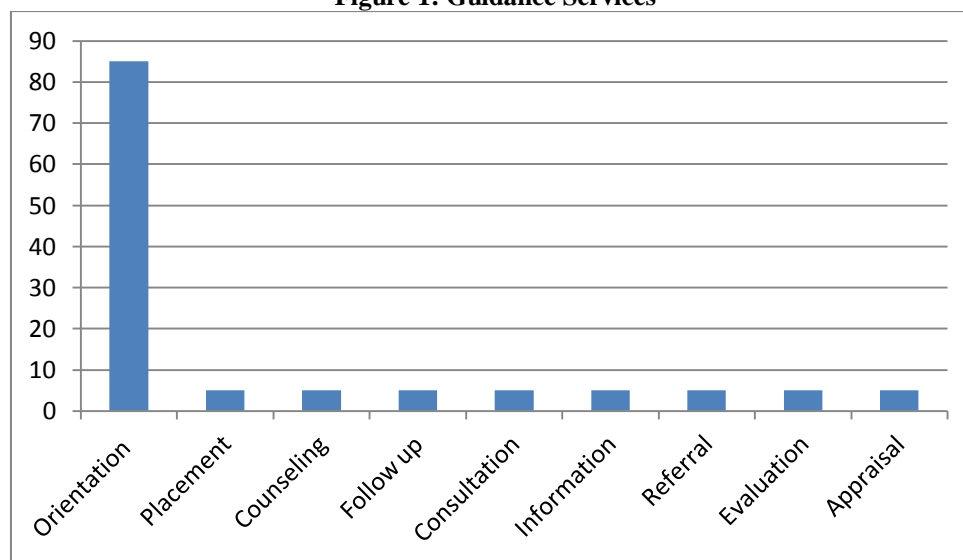


Figure 2: Guidance Services

Summary of findings

More than 84% of the sampled students are aware of orientation but have little idea of the other services such as placement, follow-up, information, evaluation, counselling, consultation, appraisal and referral.

IV. Conclusions

The study revealed that guidance services play important roles in guiding student to deal with personal and education problems. The study noted that majority of students' sample were aware of orientation but have less knowledge of the other guidance services.

The study also revealed that most of the students were not accessing the guidance and services. Measures needed to be taken to make guidance and counselling services more appealing and attractive to students in Tamale Technical University.

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