EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SELECTED GUIDANCE SERVICES IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE SAGNARIGU MUNICIPALITY-GHANA

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Abstract

The study was carried out in Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality of the Northern region of Ghana. The study examined the extent to which orientation, counselling and information services were implemented and perceived by male and female students. The study adopted the survey research design. Simple random and proportional representation methods were used to select a sample size of 480 students comprising 304 boys and 176 girls who responded to a questionnaire. Three research hypotheses were tested using t-test with an alpha level of 0.05. Results from the descriptive statistics revealed that students strongly agreed that orientation and counselling services were implemented in their respective schools. Regarding the hypotheses, the study found that there was no significant difference in the perception of male and female students towards the implementation of orientation, counselling and information services in the study schools. It is recommended that school authorities, Ghana Education Service and government should provide the needed resources and infrastructure for the effective implementation of the guidance services to address the needs of students. Besides, counsellors, teachers and parents should encourage both male and female students to patronise guidance services since the services could help them acquire good study habits and skills that can enhance their academic performance, among others.

Keywords: Guidance, Senior High School, Students, Sagnarigu Municipality, Ghana.

Introduction

Students in Senior High Schools are in their academic. social. personal, emotional. intellectual growth periods, as most of these students are in the adolescent stage, which is characterized by rapid physical growth, glandular sexual changes, social changes and cognitive changes. According to Wotuka (2002), the changes that occur in the lives of the adolescent causes confusion and restlessness and departure from socially acceptable behaviour to a more disturbing manner of behaviour. Adolescents naturally have a high tendency of rebellious behaviour, emotional instability and antisocial behaviour than any stage in human life. Adolescents thus need extra support during this critical period. This is where guidance services become necessary. Guidance services are designed and offered by schools to address the educational, vocational and socio-personal needs of students. Alemu (2013) states that the rationale for offering guidance to Senior High School students is to help them resolve their physical, emotional, social, understand learning strengths and weaknesses, so as to improve their academic

performance and overall development. School guidance and counseling play an important role in the lives of students and so effective evaluation is vital to the success of the programme. Onyejeiku (1987) underscores the need for the evaluation of guidance services when he states that relevant stakeholders in education should appropriately assess it at regular intervals. It therefore means that, in guidance and counselling, evaluation of its services are necessary as it will help determine the success or otherwise of the programme.

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Policy directives for the establishment of guidance and counselling services in Senior High Schools dates back in the 1970's (Essuman, 2001). According to Essuman (2001), Ghana Education Service issued a directive in 1976 for the introduction of guidance and counselling services in Senior High Schools. Similarly, the 2007 Educational Reforms requires Senior High Schools in Ghana to implement guidance and counselling services to address the needs of their students. In spite of this, some students continue to engage in deviant, immoral and anti-social

behaviours, such as examination malpractices, alcoholism, abuse, truancy substance hooliganism (Ahyia, 2010). Anecdotal evidence gathered through interactions with some stakeholders such as teachers, counsellors and parents in the Sagnarigu Municipal in the Northern Region of Ghana shows that many students find themselves engulfed in personal adjustment problems such as behaviour problems, drugs abuse and alcoholism, low academic achievement, peer influence, loneliness, and conflict with peers, teachers and parents, as well as stress problems which create tensions and anxieties in them. Corroborating the above assertion, Bampo (2001) states that students in Ghanaian schools exhibit unstable disposition and are not able to make rational decisions in their academic and social pursuits. This makes one to wonder whether guidance services are implemented in the Senior High schools as expected. It is against this background that this paper is deemed necessary. The paper thus examined the extent to which orientation, counselling and information services are implemented in the selected Senior High schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality and whether or not differences exist in the perception of male and female students towards implementation of these services. The paper explored the extent to which:

- 1. Orientation services are implemented in Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu District;
- 2. Counselling services are implemented in Senior High schools in the Sagnarigu District;
- 3. Information services are implemented in Senior High schools in the Sagnarigu District.

The hypotheses tested were:

- 1. There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female students towards the implementation of orientation services in Senior High schools in Sagnarigu District;
- 2. There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female students towards the implementation of counselling services in Senior High schools in Sagnarigu District;
- 3. There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female students towards the implementation of information services in Senior High schools in Sagnarigu District.

Theoretical Framework

This study is situated within the framework of the lens environmental theory. The lens environmental theory was propounded by Egon Brunswik in 1956. The lens theory assumes that people learn to perceive and respond differently to stimuli in an environment. According to the theory the environment emits stimulation in a "scatter" formation. The person is the "lens" that focuses on the stimuli by selecting and recombining the scatter. The result of the recombination is perception, which is then tested against reality. The lens theory is relevant to this study in the sense that it provides appropriate explanations to the way students in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality could form their perceptions and respond to orientation, counselling and information services implemented in their respective schools. Students in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality could either perceive the services positively or negatively depending on the kind of environment that exists in their respective schools. If senior high schools in the Municipality have trained counsellors, offices and logistics, among others, it would create a conducive environment for counselling, orientation information services to strive. This could positively influence students perception about the services and enhance their willingness to patronize the services. On the contrary, if the schools do not have counsellors, funds to organise seminars and talks, among others, the environment will not be conducive and students could perceive the services negatively and may not seek them.

Methodology

Study Area

The study covered three (3) senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality in the Northern Region of Ghana. It focused on second year group of students (2016/17 academic year group) in the Tamale Senior High, the Northern School of Business and the Islamic Science Senior High Schools. This group of students were preferred to first year students (2017/18) and final year students (2015/16) in the sense that, the first years had not stayed long enough in the schools and may not have had enough experience and may be handicapped in providing information required for the study. On the part of the final year students, they were busy preparing for their West African Examination Certificate and may not be willing or had time to participate in the study

Tamale Senior High was established in 1951 as a mixed school. The total population of the second years was 700 comprising 456 boys and 244 girls. The school is located in the Education Ridge sharing boundaries with Tamale College of Education, the Bagabaga College of Education and the Northern

Regional Education Office. The school offer programmes in General Arts, Business, Visual Arts, Home Science, Agriculture Science, General Science, and Technical. Northern School of Business was established by a private individual called Mr. D. S. O. Arthur as a commercial school in 1972. It was converted by Government to a secondary school in 1991. It is a mixed school and located about half a kilometer west of the Tamale- Bolgatanga high way close to Modern City Hotel. The student population of the second years was 620 made up of 401 boys and 219 girls. The school runs programmes in Business (Accounting and Secretarial Options), Home Science, General Arts and General Science. Islamic Science Senior High School is a mixed mission school established in 1997 by the Islamic Development Bank. It is situated along the Tamale - Nanton road opposite Hospitality Hotel. Its second year student population was 744 comprising 450 boys and 294 girls. The school offers General Science, General Agric and Home Science programmes.

Table 1: Population and Sample Size of Students

Name of School	Population			Sample (Size)			
	Mae	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Tamale S.H.S	456	244	700	106	56	162	
Northern Sch of Bus. S.H.S	401	219	620	93	51	144	
Islamic Science S.H.S	450	294	744	105	69	174	
Total	1307	757	2064	304	176	480	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Ouestionnaire was the research instrument used for the study. The questionnaire was preferred because of its quick way of collecting data and being economical in terms of money and time. According to Robson (2002), the questionnaire has the advantage of assisting the researcher to cover a wide area within the shortest possible time. Twenty-eight questionnaire items made up of 3 items for bio-data and 25 items for the main study were used. The questionnaire was closed ended and covered orientation, counselling and information services. The questionnaire was rated on a five-point likert type agree" scale ranging from "strongly representing a score of 5, "agree" (A), representing a score of 4, "not sure" (NS) representing a score of 3, "disagree" (D), representing a score of 2 and strongly disagree representing a score of 1. Gray (2004) observed that the most frequently used likert scale is either a five or four point scale. The researcher preferred the five point likert scale because some respondents might not be sure and want to remain

Study Design

The study adopted the survey design. Since this study sought to obtain descriptive and self-reported information from students about guidance services, the survey design was deemed the most appropriate design for the study, hence was used. Coleman and Wampold (2003) corroborate this assertion by indicating that the survey design is an appropriate design for assessing guidance and counselling programmes and services and findings from such studies have made valuable contributions to literature on counselling.

Population and Sample

The target population was 2064. Proportional and simple random methods were used to select a sample size of 480 comprising 304 boys and 176 girls (second year students) from three senior high schools in the Municipality. Proportional representation method allowed schools with a large population to be represented with a large sample size while the simple random allowed respondents equal chance of being selected for the study. See Table 1.

neutral. McMillan and Schumacher (1993) supported the researcher's preference when they stated that a four point likert scale may force respondents to choose one of the options that are not a true reflection of their feeling.

The research was preceded by pre-testing of the questionnaire. Kalponhini Senior High was selected for the pre-testing using 20 second year students. The pre-test helped in validating the questionnaire. During the pre-test, item analysis was done. Items that were deemed to be ambiguous or difficult were either reworded or removed to perfect the questionnaire. This ensured that participants in the main study experienced fewer difficulties in completing the items. Means, standard deviations were used to analyse the research questions while t-test was used to determine the significant level of perception of male and female students towards the implementation of orientation, counselling and information services with an alpha level of a 0.05.

Analysis of Data and Discussion of Results

Data on Sex of Respondents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Sex of Respondents

Name of School	Frequency	Percentage
Male	304	63
Female	176	37
Total	480	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents (304: 63%) were male as compared to 176 (37%) respondents who were females. It shows there is a gender disparity between male and female students in senior high schools in the Municipality. This means parents might prefer sending boys to school than girls, or girls drop out of school due to early marriages or pregnancies. UNICEF 2004 report underscored the

fact that girls' education in Africa is affected negatively by family values and beliefs that do not cherish girls' education. Guidance services are necessary to help bridge gender disparity by encouraging female enrolment into senior high schools.

Data on Ages of Respondents are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

Name of School	Frequency	Percentage
17-18	460	96
19-20	20	4
Total	480	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 3 shows that majority of the students (320) constituting 80% were within the ages of 17-18 years while twenty (20) students representing 4% fell within the ages of 19-20. It is clear from the above that most of the students are in the adolescent stage and may have challenges that require guidance services such as counselling among others.

Corroborating this, Taylor and Buku (2006) state that senior high school students are in transitional period from adolescence to adulthood and require a lot of guidance services to help them make useful decisions. Students' responses on extent to which orientation services are implemented in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: To what extent are orientation services implemented in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	SD
In my school orientation services are organized yearly for new	8	2	2	30	198	4.70	.82
students.							
During orientation programmes teachers and counsellors in my	6	2	-	42	190	4.70	.75
school explain school rules and regulations to new students.							

My school ensures that new entrants/students are taken round and	4	2	4	52	178	4.66	.71
introduced to important school facilities such as the library,							
classroom, dormitories, and administration block, among others.							
In orientation week, my school ensures that important persons such	12	2	6	70	150	4.43	.97
as Headmaster, Assistant Headmaster, among others meet and							
interact with newly admitted students.							
My school establishes friendly atmosphere during orientation for	12	18	42	100	68	3.81	1.1
students to interact and familiarize themselves with their colleagues,							
teaching and non- teaching staff.							
Mean of Means and Standard Deviation						4.46	.87

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Note: Best (1977) Rangers: Strongly Disagree (SD) 1.00-1.80; Disagree (D) 1.81-2.60; Not Sure (NS) 2.61-3.40; Agree (A) 3.41-4.20; Strongly Agree (SA) 4.21-5.0.

Table 4 reveals that the mean of means score for 480 respondents is 4.46 with a standard deviation of 0.87. Using the rangers as indicated above the mean of means score falls within the range of 4.21 - 5.00which is an indication that students strongly agreed that orientation services were implemented in their respective schools. The implications are that students will be more willing to avail themselves or encourage their colleagues and friends to patronise orientation services in their respective schools. If students patronise orientation services they will benefit a lot. For instance, through orientation services newly admitted students could get to know more about the history, geography, social and academic matters in their institutions. This would help them reduce tension and anxieties usually associated with new, unfamiliar, and strange environments or situations. On the contrary, the lack of orientation for students could leads to stress and anxiety. This stress and worry could result in lack of interest in school attendance and poor academic performance.

This finding corroborates the findings of Nyarko-Sampson (2010) and Alale (2015) who in their studies confirm that orientation service is most dominant in school guidance programmes because of its important role in helping new students get acquainted with school rules and regulations, traditions, routines, facilities and personnel. Similarly, Rutondoki (2003) opines that students newly admitted into schools feel socially and psychologically at loss in the new environment and as a result need orientation to help them adjust and familiarise themselves with the new situations in the schools they have joined. Students responses on the extent to which counselling services are implemented in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality are presented in Table 5

Table 5: To what extend are counselling service implemented in Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality.

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	SD
My school has a counsellor who offers counselling services to	20	12	40	76	332	4.43	1.03
students.							
My school counsellor has an office which enables him/her to provide	24	40	36	92	288	4.21	1.19
counselling services.							
My school counsellors collaborate with other members of staff to			68	176	204	4.35	.98
address educational, personal and career concerns of students.							
My school counsellor/teachers assist students to solve their personal,	20	12	20	156	272	4.42	.95
emotional, psychological, social and behavioral problems							
Matters that I discuss with my counsellor/teachers are usually kept	12	20	24	120	306	3.13	.97
private and confidential							
Mean of Means and Standard Deviation						4.31	1.02

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Note: Strongly Disagree (SD) 1.00-1.80; Disagree (D) 1.81-2.60; Not Sure (NS) 2.61-3.40; Agree (A) 3.41-4.20; Strongly Agree (SA) 4.21-5.00.

Table 5 reveals that the mean of means score for 480 respondents for counselling services is 4.31 with a standard deviation of 1.02. Comparing the mean of means score with the ranges above reveals that it falls within the range of 4.21 - 5.00 which is an indication that students strongly agreed that counselling service was implemented. The implementation of counselling services provides opportunity for students who have behaviourial, emotional and psychological problems to be assisted professionally to overcome such Besides, students who patronize problems. counselling services could be assisted to manage and cope with examination anxieties, acquire and develop good study habits and skills that can enhance their academic performance. Additionally, counselling services could assist students develop positive attitude towards education, develop positive self images, develop good social and interpersonal relationships.

Corroborating this finding Yatich (2011) concludes in a study that effective implementation of counselling services helps curb indiscipline issues such as laziness, fighting, theft, lying, cheating in examination. rudeness. truancy, homosexuality/lesbianism displayed by students in schools. Alemu (2013) posits that the benefits of counselling services to students are many fold. He identifies the improvement of study skills and fostering healthy heterosexual relationships to be the most important benefits of school counselling programmes. Abid (2006) observes in a study that counselling services has significant influence in improving and fostering positive study habits and study skills of students which could enhance the academic achievements of students.

Students' responses on the extent to which information services are implemented in Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: To what extent are information services implemented in Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality.

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	SD
My school counsellors and teachers provide materials containing	52	72	80	172	104	3.42	1.28
information on career to assist students make choice that match							
with their potentials and talents.							
Counsellors and teachers in my school provide relevant information	24	52	124	168	112	3.61	1.11
about personal development, social development and opportunities							
for future education for students'.							
In my school teachers and counsellors collect and disseminate to	60	68	136	156	60	3.18	1.20
students and their parents' information concerning universities,							
polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Nursing Colleges, among							
others to assist students to determine where to go after completing							
their Senior High Schools.							
Teachers and counsellors in my school provide information to	24	32	68	220	136	3.86	1.06
equip students with effective study skills, such as time management							
skills, note taking skills, examination anxiety management							
techniques with the aim of improving students' academic							
performance.		54					
Teachers and counsellors in my school provide information that			56	170	186	3.97	1.09
help students develop healthy interpersonal relationships and							
interact positively with roommates, classmates' senior students,							
teachers and non-teaching staff.							
Mean of Means and Standard Deviation						3.61	1.15

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Note: Strongly Disagree (SD) 1.00-1.80; Disagree (D) 1.81-2.60; Not Sure (NS) 2.61-3.40; Agree (A) 3.41-4.20; Strongly Agree (SA) 4.21-5.00.

Table 6 indicates that the mean of means scores on information service for 480 respondents is 3.61 with a standard deviation of 1.15. Comparing the mean of means to Best rangers, the mean of means, score falls with the range of 3.41 - 4.20, which is an indication that students agreed that information services were implemented in their schools. The role of information services in school guidance cannot be overemphasized. It is laudable for students in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality to agree that information services are implemented in their respective schools. This means such students have high chance of seeking, patronizing and utilizing information services than their counterparts who either do not know or agree that such services are available in their schools. Information services consist of accumulation and dissemination of information about the different guidance activities, vocational opportunities, and educational information to assist students make decision and choices. Through information services students could be assisted to understand their choices and the possible consequences and sequences of such choices. Also, appropriately designed informational services would enable students realize their potentialities by

becoming aware of the opportunities and help in making meaningful choices regarding their educational, career and personal-social matters. Lack of information about students self-development could lead to failure, frustration, rejection, depression and defeat whereas knowledge of one's self-development lead to positive images and encourage individuality and vocational congruence.

Corroborating this finding Akinade, Sokan and Osarenren, (2005) posit that information services provide students with basic facts and data that will enable them make realistic choices. Similarly, Kankam and Onivehu (2000) indicate that information services provide students with basic knowledge needed to think through important personal issues like the extent of education, choice of occupation and maintenance of individuality.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: (H_0) : Statistically, significant differences do not exist in the perception of male and female students towards the implementation of orientation services in Senior High schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality.

Table 7: Group Statistics and Independent Samples T- test of Perception of Male and Female Students on Orientation Services

Gender	Number	Mean	Standard Dev.	Df.	T. cal. (t_{cal})
Male	304	21. 711	3.479		
Female	176	22. 648	2.784	478	-2.158

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Note: At an alpha level of 0.05, T-critical value(t_{crit}) is 1.660

Table 7 shows that the calculated value of the t-test (t_{cal}) is -2.158 and the critical value of the t-test (t_{crit}) with a degree of freedom of 478 and at an alpha level (α) of 0.05 is 1.660. Since the calculated t-value (-2.158) is less than the critical t-value (1.660), we accept the null hypothesis which states that statistically, significant differences do not exist in the perception of male and female students towards orientation services in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality. It is logical for both male and female students in senior high school in the Sagnarigu Municipality to have the same level of perception about orientation services. This means that both male and female students will patronise orientation

services when such services are organised in their respective schools. Sstudents who receive orientation services are able to adjust and cope better and are not overwhelmed by new teachers, peers, new subjects, among others.

Corroborating this finding, Smith and Brackin (1994) remark that whether male or female, orientation programmes serve as a foundation for their success in school. Similarly, Akos and Galassi (2004) conclude that both male and female new entrants (students) require orientation services to reduce stress and worries that could result in poor self-image, absenteeism and poor academic performance.

Hypothesis 2: (H_0) Statistically, significant differences do not exist in the perception of male and female students towards the implementation of

counselling services in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality.

Table 8: Group Statistics and Independent Samples t- test of Perception of Male and Female Students on Counselling Services

Gender Number	r Mean	Standard Dev.	Df.	T. cal. (t_{cal})
Male 304	21. 145	4.107		
Female 176	21. 943	3.511	478	1.528

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Note: At an alpha level of 0.05, T-critical value(t_{crit}) is 1.660

Table 8 shows that the calculated value of the t-test (t_{cal}) is -1.528 and the critical value of the t-test (t_{crit}) with a degree of freedom of 478 and at an alpha level (α) of 0.05 is 1.660. Since the calculated t-value (-1.528) is less than the critical t-value (1.660), the null hypothesis is accepted. This means statistical significant differences do not exist in the perception of male and female students towards counselling services. This means both male and female students have the same positive level of perception about counselling services in their respective schools. By this, both sexes will be willing to seek and access counselling services to their benefit. Counselling services would be useful to both sexes by assisting them make informed decision about their education, career and personal social matters. Besides, both male and female needs counselling services to acquire good study skills, effectively manage their behaviourial, emotional and psychological problems.

This finding is line with a number of studies. Corroborating this study, Maina (2009) found that students perceptions towards counselling service did not differ on the basis of gender in Kenyan secondary schools. Similarly, Agi (2014) found in a study that there was no significant difference between the perception of males and females towards counselling services in secondary schools in Cross River State of Nigeria. In another breadth Alale (2015) concludes in a study that there was no significant difference in the perception of male female students in colleges of education in Northern Ghana.

Hypothesis 3: (H_0) Statistically, significant differences do not exist between the perception of male and female students towards the implementation of information services in Senior High schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality.

Table 9: Group Statistics and Independent Samples t- test of Perception of Male and Female Students on Information Services

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Gender	Number	Mean	Standard Dev.	Df.	T. cal. (t_{cal})	_			
Male	304	17.612	4.432			_			
Female	176	18.614	3.989	478	-1.749				

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Note: At an alpha level of 0.05, T-critical value(t_{crit}) is 1.660

Table 9 reveals that the calculated value of the t-test (t_{cal}) is -1.749 and the critical value of the t-test (t_{crit}) with a degree of freedom of 478 and at an alpha level (α) of 0.05 is 1.660. Since the calculated t-value (-1.749) is less than the critical t-value (1.660), we accept the null hypothesis which states that statistically, significant differences do not exist in the perception of male and female students towards information services in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality. The implications of The

provision of information services means students could enhance their knowledge about the type of school to attend the kind of course to pursue and the kind of jobs available to be engaged in than their counterparts who do not get access to guidance information services. Corroborating this finding, Maina (2009) confirms in a study that students' perception did not differ across gender in Kenyan secondary schools with regards to the information they receive from their counsellors and teachers.

Conclusion

First, the study established that students strongly agree that orientation and counselling services were implemented in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality. The provision of orientation services could help new entrants (students) to better adjust and acquaint themselves with their school environment, school teachers, peers, policies, traditions, rules, among others. On the part of counselling services, its implementation could help students manage and cope with examination anxieties.

Finally, the study revealed that significant differences do not exist in the perceptions of male and female students towards orientation, counselling and information services. This means both male and female students could be aided to feel emotionally secure and stable in unfamiliar environment. Besides through counselling and information services students could be assisted acquire good study habits and skills that can enhance their academic performance.

Recommendations

- 1. The fact that students strongly agree that orientations and counselling services are implemented means they will be more willing to patrronise the services. This should inspire school authorities, government and Ghana Education Service to provide the needed resources and infrastructure for the effective delivery of the services to address the needs of students.
- 2. Since the study revealed that there is no significant differences in the perception of male female students regarding orientation, counselling and information services, counsellors, teachers and parents should encourage both male and female students to patronise the services as this could help them acquire good study habits and skills that can enhance their academic performance, among others.

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