

An evaluation of the counselling and appraisal services in Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the counselling and appraisal services in the Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana. The research design used for the study was the survey approach. Four hundred research participants made up of 317 students, 80 tutors and three counsellors were selected from three Colleges of Education in the Volta Region through stratified and purposive sampling procedures. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the students and tutors while the counsellors were selected purposively. Data were collected with questionnaire and analysed using frequencies and percentages. The results revealed that teacher trainees were not benefiting fully from both the counselling and appraisal services. Some of the recommendations made were that counsellors should intensify guidance activities in the colleges so as to make guidance services, especially the counselling and appraisal services more attractive and accessible to students. In addition, college authorities should play a supervisory role to ensure that counsellors organise guidance activities in the key service areas on periodic bases, just like other co-curricular activities such as sports.

Introduction

The ever increasing call for accountability in education brings with it a renewed focus on counsellor effectiveness and guidance models that are designed to maximise school counselling services (Baker & Gerler Jr., 2004; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). When accountability is demonstrated through measured effectiveness of the delivery in the guidance programme it helps to ensure that students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the general public continue to benefit from quality comprehensive guidance programmes (Gysbers & Henderson, 1994, p. 362).

Already there are new demands and expectations for school counsellors in the 21st century brought about by societal changes, media advancements and technological developments. Shertzer and Stone (1999)

noted that the revolutions taking place in industry, education, medicine and government are profoundly affecting every field of human activity: transportation, communication, merchandising, marketing, health, weather control, the substance and structure of work and home life. These trends make it imperative for school administrators to take a second look at the effectiveness of guidance services across all levels of the educational system.

Guidance programme evaluation is a means or process for assessing the effectiveness of the counsellor's activities. It is essential for the continuous sustenance and effectiveness of the entire guidance programme. Evaluation is the systematic process of judging the worth, desirability, effectiveness or adequacy of something according to definite criteria and purposes. It includes obtaining information (qualitative or quantitative) for use in judging the worth of a programme, product, procedure, subject (course), curriculum or objective, or the potential utility of alternative approaches designed to attain specified objectives (Joshua, 2005). Evaluation is a process for professional improvement, a process in which one gathers objective, performance-oriented data on a systematic and nonbiased basis (Gibson & Mitchell, 1995). It is seen by some as an ethical obligation (LaFleur, 1983; Ohlsen, 1983 and Remer, 1981).

Without evaluation, the school guidance programme can become counterproductive and even grind to a halt. Counsellors need to know the effects that their programmes and strategies have on clients (Ohlsen, 1983). Evaluation is fundamental to the verification and improvement of professional programme performance (Gibson & Mitchell, 1990). Amenyedzi (1997) noted that evaluation is the vehicle for improving guidance practice. In Amenyedzi's view, evaluation provides insights that help counsellors to perform at higher and more efficient levels. Evaluation gives counsellors and administrators direct feedback on the services they provide and insight into what new services they need to offer (Gladding, 1992).

Counselling and appraisal are two of the guidance services that are of direct importance to every student. In view of this, the counselling and appraisal services must be evaluated from time to time so that students can derive maximum benefits from them.

The Counselling Service

The counselling service is considered by many professionals and researchers in the field as the heart or the lifeline of guidance. "Counselling is the most important service offered to students" (Amenyedzi, 1997, p.32), and it is the only guidance service that requires a trained professional (called the

counsellor) to provide. Counselling in the school system is a professional service through which each student is helped to understand himself in relation to his unique and developing world through an opportunity of free expression within a setting of privacy and acceptance. The major focus of the counselling service is to create a positive school or learning environment for the students. As the heart of the school guidance programme, counselling aims at helping individual students to live more productive and self-satisfying lives. The basic aims of counselling include the following:

1. To help students to have an insight into the genesis of emotional disturbances
2. To effect a positive change in maladjusted behaviour
3. To assist students to move in the direction of fulfilling their potential (Ocansey, Forde, Awabil & Otopa, 2005).

School counsellors help students to acquire skills in the personal, social, educational, and career areas through individual and or group counselling. Thus, counselling may take place in group settings or it may be individual in nature.

Individual counselling

In individual counselling, the counsellor enters into a face-to-face or one-to-one helping relationship that is highly confidential with an individual client on one-on-one basis. Individual counselling is a helping relationship that is confidential and involves an on-going process that consists of specific phases in which the counsellor spends a considerable amount of his time working with individual students to help them focus on particular concerns of their lives (Schmidt, 1999). The focus of individual counselling, Schmidt explained further, can be developmental, but it most often has a remedial purpose. Individual counselling is aimed at helping the client to arrive at a rational decision which will enable the client to solve his problem (Oladele, 2000; Akinade, Sokan & Osarenren, 2005).

Individual counselling in the school system is therefore designed to take place in confidential settings and is aimed at dealing with the educational, personal, social and occupational issues that confront students. Counselling helps the individual to know and understand himself, accept his superior and limited features and develop himself, trust himself, develop effective interpersonal relationships, become a personally and socially balanced and harmonious individual (Yesilyaprak, 2001).

Group counselling

Group counselling on the other hand is also a face-to-face helping relationship in which the counsellor meets a group of people instead of an individual. The group members are people who either have the same or similar concerns, and agree to share information in a group setting. "Group counselling typically consists of a few students who meet on regular basis in confidential sessions to handle specific concerns or support each other with particular developmental goals" (Schmidt, 1999, pp.82-83). Group counselling in schools is also a process in which one counsellor is involved in a helping relationship with a number of students at the same time (Taylor & Buku (2003); Nayak (2004). The aim is for the group members to work collaboratively to share information that would help each group member to focus on solving his or her own problem.

Areas of School Counselling

Oladele (1987) identified three major counselling services that should be provided in the school system. These are: vocational counselling, academic counselling, and personal counselling. He explained that vocational counselling involves the selection, training for and adjustment to occupations. The aim of vocational counselling is to help students to know their aptitudes, interests, attainments, dispositions, and circumstances in the light of occupational demands. Academic counselling deals with the problems of teaching, learning, and education in general. It aims at helping the student to make the most out of his educational opportunities. Personal counselling helps students to deal with problems that crop up in their relationship with friends, teachers, parents, and others.

In short, the counselling service is the lifeblood of the guidance programme. It is designed to help students to deal with their personal, social, academic and vocational concerns. Without counselling in the school guidance programme, a lot of students are likely to take uninformed decisions, some of which can have dire consequences.

The Appraisal Service

The appraisal service is also known as the pupil inventory service. The appraisal or inventory service refers to when we collect, analyse, and use objective data for the purpose of better understanding the student or client (Makinde, 1987). "Appraisal involves gathering, organising and interpreting information or data about the pupil for the purpose of understanding himself" (Oladele, 1987, p.7).

Appraising helps to highlight the uniqueness of people. It shows how different or similar one person is from the other. The major purpose of the appraisal service is to gather data about students that will help them in understanding themselves and in making meaningful decisions (Shertzer & Stone, 1980). Miller (1978) argued that unless the information gathered is used to facilitate self-understanding, it cannot be regarded as a service.

Generally, appraisal information can be gathered through two basic techniques: test and non-test. The test technique of gathering appraisal data is mainly through psychological tests. A psychological test is a standardised test that elicits a sample of the subject's behaviour, and that can be objectively scored and compared with standards of performance (Oladele, 1987).

An important characteristic of psychological tests is that they are standardised. Standardisation suggests uniformity and objectivity. Standard techniques such as psychological testing are those with a precise format, set of procedures, and method of scoring that enable the instrument to be used for the same purpose in a variety of settings and times (Gibson & Mitchell, 1990).

Several types of psychological tests that can be used to gather appraisal data on students include: mental ability tests, aptitude tests, achievement tests, vocational interest tests, and personality inventories (Shertzer & Stone, 1980). Psychological tests generally provide appraisal information that is objective, exact, numerical and verifiable (Numale, 2003). Apart from the test techniques, appraisal data can also be gathered through non-test techniques such as observation, interviews, rating scales, anecdotal records, self-reports, autobiographies and sociograms (Pecku, 1991).

The Cumulative Record Card/Folder is another important non-test means of collecting appraisal data. Cumulative records are normally found in folders or on cards. The data they contain can be used by the counsellor, the class teacher, the school head, house masters and mistresses or other members of staff for counselling students, giving them testimonials or for helping them to understand themselves. The Cumulative Record Card is a storehouse for data about a pupil or student yielding maximum information in a minimum space (Shertzer & Stone, 1980). The contents of a Cumulative Record Card include:

1. Date of admission into the school
2. Personal data and family background
3. Medical and health information
4. School grades
5. Transcripts from previous schools attended

6. Personality and behaviour trait rating
7. School-wide results
8. School activities
9. Anecdotal records and autobiographies written in class settings (Shertzer & Stone, 1980).

In short, the appraisal service is meant to collect, analyse and interpret useful information about the personality characteristics of the individual student. The information so gathered should help the student to better understand himself in the light of their strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes, and so on. The information gathered through appraisal can also be useful for counsellors, teachers, and parents in taking some important decisions about students.

Although guidance is relatively new to the Ghanaian society (Ackom, 1992), and research on guidance and counselling services at the Colleges of Education level in particular is scanty (Sedofia & Ocansey, 2013), considerable research continues to go on in the area. Some of the studies, notably Sowah (1984), Bedu-Addo (1989), Keteku (1989) and Amenyedzi (1997) have reported the existence of guidance and counselling services in some Senior High Schools in several parts of the country, even though Anyimah (1983) reported that there were no guidance services in three Senior High Schools in the Sefwi District of the Western Region.

Even though guidance services in tertiary institutions are highly needed in view of the fact that the students there are young adults who feel more concerned about their future: getting a job, making a home, or continuing higher education (Amadi, 1991), it seems little is known about how well the guidance services are being provided in the Colleges of Education in Ghana. Mensah (2007) studied the place of guidance and counselling in Colleges of Education in the Eastern Region of Ghana and found that most college of education students did not benefit from the guidance and counselling programmes, and that some Colleges of Education had no laid down systems and structures that promoted guidance and counselling. Indeed Rønning (1997) discovered that the guidance and student advisory functions in colleges and/or universities were less effective and more randomly operated than in high schools.

Meanwhile, evidence that guidance services do produce benefits will increasingly be demanded, but only through research and evaluation can such evidence be secured (Shertzer & Stone, 1980). The main purpose of this study was therefore to evaluate the appraisal and counselling services of the school guidance programme in Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Research Questions

The following research questions directed the study:

1. What evidence is there that college students in the Volta Region are benefiting from the counselling service?
2. How effective is the appraisal service in the Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana?

Method

Design

The research design used for this study was the survey approach. Survey research involves acquiring information about one or more groups of people—perhaps about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or previous experiences—by asking them questions and tabulating their answers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Survey research has the advantage of making available information on aspects of behaviour that are difficult to observe directly. It also makes it relatively easy to collect data on attitudes and opinions from large samples of subjects (Weiten, 2001). Typically, survey research is conducted in natural settings, and it is flexible and adaptable especially at the initial stages of the investigation.

The survey method, however, has some limitations. Firstly, it is costly especially when the survey is done in areas where transportation and postal systems and the designing and printing of questionnaire are expensive (Amedahe, 2002). Secondly, survey methods give room for faking of responses. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) pointed out that people may intentionally misrepresent the facts (at least, the “facts” as they know them) in order to present a favourable impression to the researcher. There is the possibility of non-response or low rate of return.

Notwithstanding the weaknesses, descriptive survey was appropriate for this study mainly because of the nature of the research problem and the purpose of the study. This study set out to evaluate the appraisal and counseling services in the Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana. The focus therefore was to gather evidence that the appraisal and counselling services were effective in the Colleges of Education. The goal was to draw attention to the level of provision of the two guidance services in the colleges. Survey research helps the researcher to pose series of questions to participants; summarise their responses with percentages and frequency counts, and then draw inferences about the population from the responses of the sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The survey approach thus helped the present researchers to achieve the objectives of the study.

Population

There were seven Colleges of Education in the Volta Region. The academic staff and students of these colleges constituted the population for the study. The accessible population was college counsellors, tutors, and students (levels 100, 200 and 300) in the St. Francis' College of Education (FRANCO), Hohoe; E.P. College of Education (AMECO), Amedzofe; and Peki College of Education (GOVCO). The three colleges, which constituted 42% of the colleges in the Volta Region, were selected randomly as follows: first the seven colleges were listed in an alphabetical order and numbered. Then seven pieces of paper (each corresponding to a college) were obtained, numbered and placed in a container. The papers were mixed well and the first one was drawn. The number on the first drawn paper was traced to the corresponding college and that college was written down. The first paper was returned into the container. The process continued until the three colleges were selected. The total population for the study was 1881. Table 1 sums up the distribution of the population as follows:

Table 1: Distribution of Population by College

College	Students	Tutors	Counsellors	Total
FRANCO	654	42	1	697
AMECO	598	30	1	629
GOVCO	524	30	1	555
TOTAL	1776	102	3	1881

Source: Tutor and Student registers of FRANCO, AMECO and GOVCO for the 2010/2011 academic year.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used to select a total sample of 400 respondents for the study. Stratified sampling technique was employed to select 317 students (224 males and 93 females) out of the total student population of 1776, and 80 tutors (66 males and 14 females) out of the total tutor population of 102. The student and tutor samples were selected based on Krejcie and Morgan's table of *Sample Sizes (S) Required for Given Population Sizes (N)* (as cited in Sarantakos, 2005).

First, the population was stratified into students (1776), tutors (102) and counsellors (3). Another stratification was done based on college (AMECO, FRANCO and GOVCO). This was done to get the number of students and tutors to be selected from each college. For example, to get the number of students to be selected from AMECO, 598 (AMECO student population) was divided by 1776 (total student population) and the result

multiplied by 317 (student sample). The number of tutors for each college was determined in a similar approach by dividing the tutor population of the college by the total tutor population of the three colleges and multiplying the result by 80 (the tutor sample). This worked up to 107 students, 24 tutors for AMECO; 117 students, 32 tutors for FRANCO; and 93 students, 24 tutors for GOVCO.

A further stratification was done, to determine the number of students to be selected from each grade level for each of the three colleges. To get the figure for Level 100 students of AMECO for instance, 200 (Level 100 population) was divided by 598 (AMECO student population) and the result was multiplied by 107 (AMECO student sample). The result was: AMECO= 36 first year, 36 second year, and 35 third year students; FRANCO= 41 first year, 39 second year, and 37 third year students; and GOVCO= 31 first year, 31 second year, and 31 third year students. After determining the strata and the number of subjects to be selected from each, the subjects were selected randomly. The sub-samples were then merged to give the final sample. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the three counsellors, two males and one female.

Table two summarises the distribution of the student and tutor samples.

Table 2: Distribution of Student and Tutor Samples by College

COLLEGE	TUTORS		STUDENTS	
	Pop.	Sample	Pop.	Sample
AMECO	30	24	598	107
GOVCO	30	24	524	93
FRANCO	42	32	654	117
TOTAL	102	80	1776	317

Instruments

Questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect data. The questionnaire was adapted from Keteku (1989) and Amenyedzi (1997), and Starr and Gysbers' (1997) "Sample Guidance Programme Evaluation Surveys". There were three sets of questionnaire; one set for the guidance coordinators, the second for the tutors and the third for the students. The three categories were used for purposes of triangulation. According to O'Donoghue and Punch (2003), triangulation is a method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data. Triangulation corroborates evidence from different sources or individuals since the information is not drawn from one single source, individual or process of data collection (Creswell, 2002).

The questionnaire was divided into seven sections; A-G for each category of respondents. Section A consisted of four items that sought personal information from respondents while sections B to G solicited the views of respondents on the counselling and appraisal services. There were a total of 48 questions on both the students' and counsellors' questionnaire while that of tutors consisted of 47 items.

Content-related evidence of validity was used to ensure validity of the instrument. The content of the instrument was discussed with the supervisors and three experts in the field of guidance and counselling for scrutiny, review and judgement of its appropriateness. Reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha. The reliability coefficient of the students' questionnaire was calculated at .92 while that of tutors was .97.

Procedure

The researchers visited the colleges and personally administered the questionnaire. The questionnaires for students were hand-delivered by the researcher. The selected students were assembled in a lecture hall and the purpose of the study was explained to them before they were asked to fill them. The tutors and counsellors also filled their questionnaire and returned them the same day. Three hundred and eleven students filled and returned their questionnaire. This represented 98% questionnaire. The return rate for the tutors' questionnaire was 93% while that of the counsellors was 100%.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (means) and frequency counts from the Statistical Package for Service Solution, (SPSS). Frequency and percentage tables were used to organise the data from the questionnaire. The means of the percentages of the responses were computed and used to determine the extent to which the counselling and appraisal services were being provided.

To be able to determine the extent to which counselling and appraisal services were being provided in the colleges, the mean scores of the percentage of responses for "Yes", "No" and "Unsure" were computed. A scale was developed and used to interpret the responses that were "Yes": a range of 70% - 100% mean indicated that the service was being provided to a large extent, 40% - 69.9% mean suggested that the service was being provided to some extent and 39.9% and below showed that the service was being provided only minimally.

Results

Research question one. What evidence is there that the Counselling Service in Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana is effective? Tables 3, 4 and 5 drew responses from teacher trainees, college tutors and counsellors respectively to answer research question one.

Table 3 shows the views of students on the counselling service.

Table 3: College Students' Views on the Counselling Service

Item	Responses in Percentages		
	Yes	No	Unsure
The counsellor:			
Discusses students' personal goals.	8.7	90.7	0.6
Discusses students' relationship issues.	8.0	91.3	0.6
Assists students to make good decisions.	19.6	78.5	1.9
Helps students to accept consequences of their decisions	15.8	81.7	2.6
Helps students to plan their education.	23.2	75.2	1.6
Helps students to deal with behaviour problems.	13.2	86.2	0.6
Helps students in group sessions.	18.3	77.8	3.9
Mean (in percentages)	15.3	83.1	1.7

Table 3 shows that a small number of the students (Mean= 15.3%) answered "Yes" to each of the seven items. This indicates that the students believed that the counselling service not being provided. The mean of 83.1% indicates that a large number of the teacher trainees said that their college counsellor did not provide the stated counselling activities. Table 4 presents the views of tutors on the counselling service.

Table 4: College Tutors' Views on the Counselling Service

Item	Responses in Percentages		
	Yes	No	Unsure
The counsellor:			
Discusses students' personal goals.	50.0	2.7	47.3
Discusses students' relationship issues.	55.4	2.7	41.9
Assists students to make good decisions.	60.8	2.7	36.5
Helps students to accept consequences of their decisions	39.2	5.4	55.4
Helps students to plan their education.	50.0	6.8	43.2
Helps students to deal with behaviour problems.	51.4	4.1	44.6
Helps students in group sessions.	39.2	12.2	48.6
Mean (in percentages)	49.4	5.2	45.4

The data in Table 4 shows that more of the tutors (Mean= 49.4%) said the counsellors engaged students in the counselling activities specified. However, a considerable number of them (Mean= 45.4%) reported that they were unsure if the counsellors did carry out those specified counselling activities.

Table 5 shows the counselling service from the viewpoint of the counsellors.

Table 5: Views of College Counsellors on the Counselling Service

Item The counsellor:	Responses in Percentages		
	Yes	No	Unsure
Discusses students' personal goals.	66.7	33.3	-
Discusses students' relationship issues.	66.7	33.3	-
Assists students to make good decisions.	100	-	-
Helps students to accept consequences of their decisions.	100	-	-
Helps students to plan their education.	100	-	-
Helps students to deal with behaviour problems.	100	-	-
Helps students in group sessions.	100	-	-
Mean (in percentages)	90.5	9.5	0

Table 5 shows that contrary to the views expressed by the students, a majority of the counsellors (Mean= 90.5%) said that they engaged in each of the seven activities in the counselling service to help students. Thus, only a small number of them (Mean=9.5 %) indicated that they did not carry out the activities specified in the counselling service.

Research question two. How effective is the Appraisal Service in Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana? Tables 6, 7 and 8 solicited responses from participants to answer research question two.

Table 6 shows the appraisal service as it was seen by the students.

Table 6: College Students' Views on the Appraisal Service

Item The counsellor:	Responses in Percentages		
	Yes	No	Unsure
Has a cumulative record card for each student.	24.1	52.4	23.5
Uses data from cumulative cards to address issues concerning students.	1.6	89.4	9.0
Helps students to know their interests, skills and values.	8.7	87.8	3.5
Helps students to relate jobs to their interests	9.0	88.4	2.6

and skills.

Uses tests to help students know themselves.	11.9	85.5	2.6
Uses tests to help students know themselves and this is helpful to students.	9.6	2.3	0.3
Discusses students' test and examination results with them.	18.6	76.2	5.1
Mean (in percentages)	11.9	68.6	6.7

The responses in Table 6 indicate that most of the students (Mean= 68.6%) reported that their counsellors did not engage in the appraisal activities. This implies that the level of provision of the appraisal service in the colleges of education was generally very low.

Table 7 gives the views of the tutors on the appraisal service.

Table 7: College Tutors' Views on the Appraisal Service

Item	Responses in Percentages		
	Yes	No	Unsure
The counsellor:			
Has a cumulative record card for each student.	16.2	25.7	58.2
Uses data from cumulative cards to address issues concerning students.	27.0	23.0	50.0
Helps students to know their interests, skills and values.	32.5	10.8	56.8
Helps students to relate jobs to their interests and skills.	35.1	13.5	51.4
Uses tests to help students know themselves.	37.8	14.9	47.3
Uses tests to help students know themselves and this is helpful to students.	37.8	33.8	28.4
Discusses students' test and examination results with them.	36.5	25.7	37.8
Mean (in percentages)	39.8	21.1	47.1

Table 7 shows that a larger proportion of the tutors (Mean= 47.1%) reported that they were unsure if the counsellors undertook appraisal activities in the colleges. The mean score of those who reported that the counsellors carried out their appraisal duties was 39.8, an indication that the appraisal service was provided to a lesser extent.

Table 8 presents the counsellors' views on the appraisal service.

Table 8: College Counsellors' Views on the Appraisal Service

Item	Responses in Percentages		
	Yes	Unsure	No
The counsellor:			
Has a cumulative record card for each student.	66.7	33.3	-
Uses data from cumulative cards to address issues concerning students.	33.3	33.3	33.3
The counsellor helps students to know their interests, skills and values.	100	-	-
Helps students to relate jobs to their interests and skills.	100	-	-
Uses tests to help students know themselves.	100	-	-
Uses tests to help students know themselves and this is helpful to students.	100	-	-
Discusses students' test and examination results with them.	100	-	-
Mean (in percentages)	85.7	9.5	4.8

In Table 8, a greater percentage of the counsellors reported that they did engage in appraisal activities. The mean score of the responses that were "Yes" was 85.7%. Some of the counsellors (Mean=9.5%), however, said that they did not carry out the appraisal activities.

Discussion

The Counselling Service

The results in Table 3 show that the students believed that the counselling service was inadequately provided in the colleges. This finding on the counselling service supports Mensah's (2007) study which found that some Colleges of Education in the Eastern Region had no laid down systems and structures that promote guidance and counselling. It is therefore, possible that effective counselling did not take place in the colleges in the Volta Region because the systems and structures that promote it were non-existent. Counselling is an activity that requires a very high degree of confidentiality. The absence of the requisite systems and structures is therefore likely to pose a great challenge to the provision of the service.

The finding on the counselling service further gives credence to Rønning (1997) conclusion that guidance and counselling in colleges was

not as effective as what pertained in high schools. It also supports Amenyedzi's (1997) report which listed counselling among the guidance services that needed to be improved considerably.

In addition, the present study found that the counsellors in the colleges of education in this study were not discharging their duties in offering individual and group counselling services to college students. When asked whether the counsellor ever helped them in group sessions to deal with any problem, 242 students (representing 77.8%) said "No". This finding is partially inconsistent with Paisley and Mc Mahon's (2001) study which found that school counsellors generally fulfilled their primal aid activities of individual and group counselling, consultation, coordination and evaluation.

The report by the tutors in Table 4 however shows that counselling services were provided to some extent. Similarly, the counsellors reported overwhelmingly in Table 3 that they did carry out each of the seven counselling activities. These reports are obviously contrary to what was reported by the students in Table 3, and give credence to Paisley and Mc Mahon's (2001) study. But the tutors' report fails to support Rønning's (1997) and Amenyedzi's (1997) findings.

There might be no doubt about the report of the tutors and the counsellors but one cannot rule out an instance of social desirability. That is, it may be the case that the tutors and counsellors gave socially acceptable responses so as to present a favourable impression about the counselling service.

As it is, students are the primary, and for that matter, direct beneficiaries of the guidance services. One would therefore expect them to be able to say whether or not a given service in the guidance programme is being provided to benefit them. The counsellors on the other hand are the service providers and so can also say whether they are providing those services or not. It is thus difficult to tell which of the reports actually represents the realities on the ground. However, if the report by the students about the counselling service is anything to go by, then there is the urgent need to make counselling services more vibrant in the Colleges of Education in the Volta Region so as to help students develop their full potential.

The Appraisal Service

The data in Table 6 pointed to the fact that the appraisal service was not adequately rendered in the colleges. For example, only 5 of the students (representing 1.6%) said that the counsellor used data from their cumulative record cards to address issues that concerned them while only 27 of them

(8.7%) said the counsellor helped them to know their interests, skills, values and aptitudes.

This finding on the appraisal service is corroborated by the results of a number of empirical studies. Notable among them are the researches of Anyimah (1983), Essuman (2007), Boafo (2010) and Braimah (2010). For the most part, these studies found that the appraisal service was among the guidance services that were rarely or not at all provided in the Ghanaian schools studied.

One worrying revelation about the appraisal service in the present study is that 163 (52.4%), 19 (25.7%) and 1 (33.3%) of the students, tutors and counsellors respectively reported that the counsellors did not have cumulative record cards for each student. This situation is difficult to understand and explain because certainly some of the respondents affirmed that the cards were available. The question therefore is how come some students have the cards but the others do not? The cumulative record card is a storehouse for data about a student (Shertzer & Stone, 1980). Pecku (1991) stated that all the necessary information needed for appraising a student are kept in the cumulative record card. Cumulative records therefore play an essential role in the appraisal of students. One can thus assume that the absence of the records for some teacher trainees may have contributed to the low level of provision of the appraisal service in the colleges.

Table 7 showed that most of the tutors were not sure if the counsellors undertook appraisal activities in the colleges. It is difficult to explain this uncertainty. But given the low percentage of the tutors who said that the counsellors carried out the appraisal activities, one interpretation that is possible is that the appraisal service was not rendered very effectively. This conclusion is supported by the report of the students on the appraisal service and is further corroborated by the findings made by Anyimah (1983), Essuman (2007), Boafo (2010) and Braimah (2010) that the appraisal service was rarely or not at all provided in some schools around the country.

The data in Table 8, on the contrary, showed that in the perspective of the counsellors, the appraisal service was provided to a large extent. This report by the counsellors, however, fails to tally with the opinions of the students and tutors on the appraisal service.

As Shertzer and Stone (1980) noted, appraisal is to help students to better understand themselves so as to be able to make more meaningful decisions. Quite apart from this, appraisal helps students in their academic, personal and social development (Oladele, 2000). The low level of provision of the appraisal service in the Colleges of Education surveyed in the present study therefore implies that the college students would not derive the benefits that Shertzer and Stone, and Oladele talked about above. The low

provision of the appraisal service in the colleges may thus affect the overall development of the students qualitatively. This is because most of them would lack knowledge about their strengths, weaknesses, interests, values and aptitudes.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study and the discussion that followed, it can be concluded that:

1. Teacher trainees were not benefiting fully from both the counselling and appraisal services as the students would have wished. It could be that the two services were not very well provided or that the students themselves did not utilise those services.
2. Since the present study did not ask respondents to provide reasons for their responses, further or separate research is required to assign reasons for the low provision of the two guidance services in the colleges surveyed.

Implications for Guidance and Counselling

Since the study found that college students were not deriving full benefits from the counselling and appraisal services, it is recommended that:

1. Counsellors should publicise the guidance programme very well so that students would constantly be reminded that such services exist in the colleges.
2. In addition, college authorities should play a supervisory role to ensure that counsellors organise guidance activities in the key service areas on periodic bases, just like other co-curricular activities such as sports are organised.
3. Also, counsellors should explore and employ all strategies including persuasive invitation to get students to access all guidance services in general, particularly the counselling and appraisal services.

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