



## **Counselling Needs Assessment of Students of WA Polytechnic in The Upper West Region, Ghana**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Individuals may seek counselling for various reasons, however, whatever the reason may be, clients seek counselling in order to be able to address certain issues they may be faced in their lives. The study is about the counselling needs of students in the Polytechnic in the Wa Municipality. The data was analysed using both descriptive (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (Independent t-test and One-Way ANOVA). The findings revealed that, there were significant differences in age concerning students' ratings and needs for guidance and counselling in services. The study revealed that, students needed guidance and counselling as there were challenged in terms of time allocation problems, inability to discuss with lecturers about their problems, coping with workload issues as well as struggling to meet deadlines. Due to the absence of guidance and counselling services, the results of the study led the researchers to the conclusion that students attending Wa Polytechnic were facing a number of challenges that need answers in order to be resolved. Based on the findings and conclusion drawn from the study is recommended that the defunct guidance and counselling unit should be revived and properly resourced for students to benefit from it.

**Keywords:** Counselling, needs, assessment, polytechnic, WA

## INTRODUCTION

Ghamari and Gendavani (2013) were of the view that contemporary philosophy of education is based on the development of all aspects of an individual personality. This means that, to develop and deliver creative and beneficial human society in line with the development of cognitive and scientific aspect, their physical and emotional aspects should be developed as well. According to Pourebad (2005), the school is a second home of the child, which has a central position in education has crucial and important task.

In today's circumstances, social systems, family set ups and personal values have been varying continually, and these have subsequently led to a stressful state of affairs (Seeja & Rinu, 2015; Adangabe & Boateng, 2022). These problems (Social System, personal values and family set up) usually affect students' personal, social, and academic developments which are the significant variables that have a greater effect on the development and efficiency. To assist children to confidently confront the challenges and realities they may face in the ever-changing environments, understand themselves, realize their potential and thereby identify the available opportunities in today's world, proper guidance is inevitable.

According to Seeja and Rinu (2015), guidance refers to the help, assistance, and suggestions for progress and showing the way. In that dimension guidance is a lifelong process. Man needs guidance throughout his life. He needs it even at infancy. When a child is born, the world for him is big, buzzing, blooming confusion and he knows nothing. He learns everything from the society. The society guides the individual to learn and adjust oneself to the physical and social environment. To sum up it is possible to say that guidance is a personal help rendered by the society to the individual so as to enable him to adjust to the physical and social environment and to solve the problems of life. Guidance is an integral part of education and is centered directly on this function. Guidance and counseling services prepare students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and grow in their ability to understand and accept the results of their choices. The ability to make such intelligent choices is not innate but, like other abilities, must be developed.

British Association of Counselling (as cited in Ansah, 2015) defines counselling as an interaction in which the counsellor offers another person the time, attention, and respect necessary to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more resourcefully, and to his or her greater well-being. Additionally, counselling has been defined by the European Association of Counselling (as cited

in Ansah, 2015) as an integrated client beneficial relationship set up to approach a client's issues. These issues can be social, cultural and or emotional and the Counsellor will approach them in a holistic way. A client can be a person, or a family group or even an institution (Ansah, 2015).

According to Atta-Frimpong (2013), Guidance and Counselling is an indispensable aspect of any school curriculum in this modern complex world. A society or school system that ignores this reality faces an unprecedented wave of educational wastage and chaos in her educational system and society. Human beings are always beset with problems. Some of these problems are minor and others are grave. Human beings react to such problems in different ways, some with satisfaction to themselves and the society and others with dissatisfaction to themselves and the society. In the case of the latter, the reactions constitute a threat to them and to the society. In such situations people require help to resolve their problems. Guidance and counselling therefore offer help to people who are unable to rely on their own resources to solve their own problems.

Guidance in Ghana is comparatively a new field within the larger and more inclusive field of education and is used as a technical term for a specific meaning. It covers the whole spectrum of education, which starts from the birth of the child and continues till his/her death. This is a wide meaning of the term, which includes all types of education such as formal, non-formal, informal and vocational etc., which aims to adjust the individual in his environment in an effective way. To Eshun (2016), counselling is a help-oriented relationship that exists between a trained counsellor and a client. Most of the time, the relationship is from person to person and sometimes, it involves more than one person.

Adebayo as cited in Eshun, 2016 indicated that the task of counselling is to give the client the opportunity to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more satisfactory and resourceful lives. The ethical expectation of the counsellor is to work with clients to assist and empower them to ameliorate their current and possibly past life struggles by Kay (as cited in Eshun, 2016). Counselling needs according to Eshun (2016) can be explained as certain issues an individual may be faced with that would require assistance. Students' counselling needs cannot be solved and met successfully without the use of effective counselling intervention programmes (Matemilola, 1991). Matemilola (as cited in Eshun, 2016) also described counselling services as the guidance and counselling strategies that a counsellor may apply in helping students self-actualize. Knowledge

of the counselling needs of students provides a basis for providing essential guidance services to help students deal with their problems.

Individuals may seek counselling for various reasons, however, whatever the reason may be, clients seek counselling in order to be able to address certain issues they may be faced in their lives. Some situations that may cause individuals to seek counselling are bereavement, illness, abuse, relationship and family issues among others. In these cases, people may be sympathetic and empathetic towards the individual because they are events that may happen to every individual at a point in their lives. The study seeks to investigate and determine the guidance and counselling needs of students in the Wa Polytechnic.

### **HYPOTHESES**

1. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference between the counselling needs of male and female students of Wa Polytechnic.  
H<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the counselling needs of male and female students of Wa Polytechnic.
2. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference between the counselling needs of married and single students of Wa Polytechnic.  
H<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the counselling needs of married and single students of Wa Polytechnic.
3. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference between the counselling needs of younger and older students in Wa Polytechnic.  
H<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference between the counselling needs of younger and older students in Wa Polytechnic.
4. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in the counselling needs of students of Wa Polytechnic in terms of their academic programme.  
H<sub>1</sub>: There is statistically significant difference in the counselling needs of students of Wa Polytechnic in terms of their academic programme.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Guidance and Counselling**

Surbhi (2016) defined guidance as a kind of advice or help given to individuals especially students, on matters like choosing a course of study or career, work or preparing for vocation, from a person who is superior in the respective field or an expert. It is the process of guiding, supervising or

directing a person for a particular course of action. The process aims at making students or individuals aware of the rightness or wrongness of their choices and importance of their decision on which their future depends. It is a service that assists students in selecting the most appropriate course for them, to discover and develop their psychological and educational abilities and ambitions. Guidance results in self-development and helps a person to plan his present and future wisely.

Egbo (2015) notes that guidance entails activities designed to induce positive functionalities into abilities, interest, attitudes, aptitudes, and at the same time, turn around weaknesses. Guidance traditionally involves provision of direction or advice as in a decision or course of action, showing the way; setting and helping to drive, lead, assist, pilot and steer ideals into individuals by counselling professionals to enhance the achievement of goals. Denga (as cited in Egbo, 2015) defined guidance as a cluster of formalized services through which help is given to individuals in situations where adjustment, planning interpretation of information, and choice are needed. It involves rendering assistance to individuals or a group of people to enable them direct themselves and relate their needs effectively to requirements, demand and opportunities of social, educational, occupational and psychological situations.

To Kinai (2006), counselling is a dynamic relationship between the counselor and the counselee where the counselor establishes rapport but maintains a psychological distance to avoid an overlay emotional involvement. It is a teaching learning process where the client learns new behaviour and attitudes through cognitive reasoning and behavior modification (Kinai, 2006). Teachers are required to identify and counsel students who are maladjusted with an objective of helping them adjust to school environment (Adangabe, 2020; Anane et al., 2021).

### **Types of Guidance and Counselling Services**

Student's life is getting complex day by day. Help is needed for optimum achievement and adequate adjustment in these varied life situations. The scope of guidance is very vast (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). The following are some of the important areas of guidance suggested by Ramakrishnan and Jalajakumari (2013).

**Educational Guidance:** If one closely examines the problems of young pupils in schools and colleges, one will exactly realize the need of educational guidance. Educational problems head the needs of student's problems. Educational guidance is related to every aspect of education

school/colleges, the curriculum, the methods of instruction, other curricular activities and disciplines.

**Vocational Guidance:** Due to advancement in science and technology and consequent changes in industry that occupational guidance emerged. There are thousands of specialized jobs/ occupations in this globalized world. Vocational guidance is a process of assisting the individual to choose an occupation, prepare for it, and enter upon it and progress in it. It is concerned primarily with helping individuals make decisions and choices involved in planning a future and building a career.

**Avocational Guidance:** The individual student spends only a small portion of his time (4 to 6 hours per day) in school. The rest of the time needs to be effectively managed and utilized by the student for his/her progress and development. Avocational guidance helps the child to judiciously utilize the leisure time. Some interpretations may arise among the readers or teacher practitioners while they deal with the term avocation guidance. It becomes avocational when the leisurely practised vocation becomes a means of livelihood, a trade or an industry. This is the educational implication of avocational guidance other than that of the leisurely vocation.

**Social Guidance:** School/educational institution is a miniature society and students from different socio-economic status, linguistic and socio-cultural background reach there. Students some time may face problems in adjustment and social relationship. It is very important that the students are to be helped in acquiring the feeling of security and they must be accepted by the group in developing social relationship and in becoming tolerant towards others. Religious maturity, national integration, international understanding, secularism, democracy, political responsibility, empathy, sympathy can be built up through social guidance. Social guidance will help the students to attain intellectual and personality development through pragmatic opportunities provided to them.

**Moral Guidance:** Moral values occupy an important place in our life. Sometimes due to influence of diverse factors students tell lies and indulge in undesirable practices. Moral guidance helps in bringing these students in to proper track and helps their all-round development. The value system developed by the adolescent students will occur as a lifelong ethical code and it will be a base platform for their social as well as cultural development. The philosophical and ideological thinking will strengthen the self-confidence and individuality of the students at this critical age of intellectual and social development. The peer group formation at this age level is clearly on the basis of their moral development. Hence, they will be provided with socially desirable and culturally valuable moral support, proper guidance and counselling at any cost.

**Health Guidance:** Health is regarded as wealth. Total health such as preventive and curative is the goal of health guidance. The health guidance may be a cooperative effort of principal, doctors, counsellor/psychologist, teachers, students and parents. For promoting preventive care the conditions of school hostel, canteen needs to be checked. Similarly, health education through formal classes and information is essential in school education stages. In the present day the concern of health guidance also pertains to guidance in HIV/AIDs. Habits of cleanliness, Healthy food habits, awareness on nutrition, prevention of communicable diseases, measures and practices for the prevention of pollution, maintenance of body fitness, importance of physical exercises etc. should be practiced compulsorily at this age level (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013; Adangabe et al., 2021).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used a quantitative approach, using descriptive survey design. The study sought to determine the guidance and counselling needs of Wa Polytechnic students in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region. In all, 792 students in Wa Polytechnic were selected for the study using census sampling technique. The data was analysed using both descriptive (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (Independent t-test and One-Way ANOVA).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Hypothesis One

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the differences in gender with respect to the guidance and counselling needs of students in the Wa Polytechnic. The needs were in four categories and as such independent sample t-test was appropriate for the analysis. Table 7 presents the results on t-test:

**Table 7:** Results of Independent Sample t-test

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Gender	Male	401	76.76	25.91			
	Female	391	85.51	28.62	-4.527	*790	.000

Source: Field Survey (2019) thus; \*Significant,  $p < 0.05$  level

Table 7 indicates the results of the test of difference using the independent samples t-test between male and female in terms of their counselling needs. The Levene's test for Equality of Variance results indicate that equal variance among the variables was not assumed. Results from

the independent samples t-test shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the variables, thus,  $t$  (-4.527,  $df=790$ ,  $p>.05$  (2-tailed). The result suggests that, female students ( $M= 85.51$ ,  $SD = 28.62$ ) were different from male students ( $M=76.76$ ,  $SD= 25.91$ ) in the guidance and counselling needs. The results imply that female students need counselling services than their male counterparts. The Cohen's  $d$  for the finding is .3, which signifies a moderate effect in terms of difference (Cohen, 1988). Based on the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### Research Hypothesis Two

The study investigated differences in marital status of students in terms of guidance and counselling needs. Based on the nature of the variables, differences could only be conducted using independent samples t-test after assumptions were satisfied. Table 8 presents the results:

**Table 8:** Results of Independent Sample t-test

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Marital Status	Married	220	76.97	30.20	-2.965*	790	.003
	Single	572	83.94	27.12			

Source: Field Survey (2019) thus, \*Significant,  $p<0.05$  level

Table 8 indicates the results of the test of difference using the independent samples t-test on marital status against guidance and counselling needs. The Levene's test for Equality of Variance results indicate that equal variance among the variables was not assumed. Results from the independent samples t-test shows that there was a statistically significant difference between variables, thus,  $t$  (-2.965,  $df=790$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The result suggests that students who are married ( $M= 76.97$ ,  $SD = 30.20$ ) were different from students who are single ( $M=83.94$ ,  $SD= 27.12$ ) in terms of guidance and counselling needs. The Cohen's  $d$  for the finding is .2, which signifies a small effect in terms of difference in guidance and counselling needs (Cohen, 1988). It implies that students who are single needs the services than the married students. Based on the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### Research Hypothesis Three

The study factored age difference as a variable that could determine guidance and counselling needs of students in the Wa Polytechnic. In this, the age brackets were three (3), thus, 17-21 years, 22-26 years and 27 years and above. In exploring possible analytical tools, One-Way ANOVA seemed suitable, as the categorical variables were three (3) while that of the continuous variables was one (1). Before analysis, assumptions for the tool usage were satisfied. Table 9 presents results



on the Levene Test:

Table 9-Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
33.709	3	799	.000

Source: Field Data (2019)

The Sig. value for the Levene Test is greater than the 0.05. Scholars have the view that, if it is less than 0.05 then the data significantly deviate from a normal distribution. It was evident from the Table 9 that the significant value (Sig) for Levene' Test is .000 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. This implies that equal variances were not assumed among the age categories. Based on these results, the Welch Table was reported. Table 10 presents the Welch results:

Table 10: Robust Tests of Equality of Means

	Statistic <sup>a</sup>	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	85.041	3	341.354	.000

Source: Field Data (2019)

Table 10 shows whether the overall *F* ratio for the Welch Table is significant or not. From the analysis, it was noted that the results were significant at 0.05 ( $p = .000$ ) alpha level which implies that there was a significant difference in ages with regards to counselling needs of students in the Wa Polytechnic.

The Post-Hoc test of multiple comparisons was conducted using one-way ANOVA on the dependent variable to assess the group means to determine the age category that account for the significance in the deference. Table 11 presents the Post Hoc results:

Table 11: Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons

Needs	(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Tukey HSD	17 – 21	22 – 26	.65119	2.89998	.973
		27 above	11.30036*	3.26150	.002
	22 – 26	17 – 21	-.65119	2.89998	.973
		27 above	10.64917*	2.32586	.000
	27 above	17 – 21	-11.30036*	3.26150	.002

	22 – 26	-10.64917*	2.32586	.000
Source: Field Data (2019)		thus, Significant, p<.05		

From the Post-hoc test result using the Turkey HSD, the results showed that there was a significant difference in vocational needs of the students between those aged 17-21 years and 27 years above (Mean/Std Dev. Refer to Table 11, Sig.=.000, p<.05, 2-tailed). This implies that students aged 17-21 years needed guidance and counselling than those aged 27 years above. Again, there was a significant difference between students aged 22-26 years and those aged 27 years above (Mean/Std Dev. Refer to Table 11, Sig. =.000, p<.05, 2-tailed) in terms of vocational needs. It implies that students within the ages of 22-26 years need guidance and counselling more than those aged 27 years above. Table 11 presents the descriptive:

**Table 12: Descriptive of One-Way ANOVA**

Age	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% C I for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
17 – 21	112	84.5804	31.48763	2.97530	78.6846	90.4761
22 – 26	480	83.9292	26.40276	1.20512	81.5612	86.2971
27 above	200	73.2800	28.23095	1.99623	69.3435	77.2165
Total	792	81.3321	27.99570	.99478	79.3793	83.2848

Source: Source: Field Data (2019) thus, \*Significant, p<.05

#### Research Hypothesis Four

The study espoused school of study as a determinant of guidance and counselling needs of students in the Wa Polytechnic in terms of their academic programmes. There were five (5) schools where differences were to be established among them with regard to the needs (academic, vocational, social and practical). Exploring analytical tools gave credence to the One-Way ANOVA as the most tool purposely for testing the hypothesis. Table 12 presents the Homogeneity of Variances Test:

**Table 13: Results of Homogeneity of Variances Test**

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.812	4	788	.125

Source: Field Data (2019) thus, \*Significant, p>0.05

Table 12 presents the results for test of homogeneity. It was evident from the Table 12 that the significant value (Sig) for Levene' test is .125 which is greater than the alpha value of 0.05. This

implies that equal variances were assumed among the age categories. Based on these results, the ANOVA was reported. Table 13 presents the ANOVA result:

**Table 14:** *Summary of One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results*

Substance usage	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33920.516	4	8480.129	11.330*	.000
Within Groups	595010.702	788	748.441		
Total	628931.219	792			

Source: Field Data (2019) thus, \*Significant,  $p > 0.05$

Table 14 shows whether the overall  $F$  ratio for the one-way ANOVA between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) is significant or not. From the analysis, it was noted that the  $F$ -ratio (11.330) is not significant at 0.05 ( $p = .000$ ) alpha level which implies that there was no significant difference in schools. The ANOVA  $F$ -ratio of  $F(4, 788) = 11.330, p = .05, n = 792, Sig. = .000$  gives statistical evidence to that effect. It was concluded that statistical difference exist among schools in terms of guidance and counselling needs. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no statistical difference among schools in terms of guidance and counselling needs was rejected. The Post-Hoc test of multiple comparisons was conducted using one-way ANOVA on the dependent variable to assess the group means to determine school that account for the significance difference. Table 14 presents the Post Hoc results:

**Table 15:** *Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons*

Needs	(I) School	(J) School	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Tukey HSD	Engineering	Natural Resources	1.68210	3.39853	.988
		Business	-6.13402	2.74656	.168
		Applied Sc.	11.40008*	3.07387	.002
		Art and Design	-5.76647	3.30294	.406
	Natural Resources	Engineering	-1.68210	3.39853	.988
		Business	-7.81612	3.13905	.094
		Applied Science	9.71798*	3.42909	.038
		Art and Design	-7.44857	3.63585	.244
	Business	Engineering	6.13402	2.74656	.168
		Natural Resources	7.81612	3.13905	.094

	Applied Sc.	17.53410*	2.78429	.000
	Art and Design	.36755	3.03530	1.000
Applied Sc.	Engineering	-11.40008*	3.07387	.002
	Natural Resources	-9.71798*	3.42909	.038
	Business	-17.53410*	2.78429	.000
	Art and Design	-17.16655*	3.33438	.000
Art and Design	Engineering	5.76647	3.30294	.406
	Natural Resources	7.44857	3.63585	.244
	Business	-.36755	3.03530	1.000
	Applied Science	17.16655*	3.33438	.000

Source: Field Data (2019)

thus, \*Significant,  $p > 0.05$ 

From the Post-hoc test, the results showed that there was significant difference between engineering students and applied science students (Mean/Std Dev. Refer to Table 15, Sig.=.002,  $p < .05$ , 2-tailed). This implies that engineering students needed guidance and counselling than those applied science students. Again, there was a significant difference between students' natural resources and applied science (Mean/Std Dev. Refer to Table 15, Sig. =.038,  $p < .05$ , 2-tailed) in terms of guidance and counselling needs. It implies that students pursuing natural resources need guidance and counselling more than those pursuing applied sciences. In addition, there was a significant difference between students of applied science and business (Mean/Std Dev. Refer to Table 15, Sig. =.000,  $p < .05$ , 2-tailed) in terms of guidance and counselling needs. It implies that students pursuing applied sciences need guidance and counselling more than those pursuing business. Furthermore, applied science and art and design students recorded a difference where applied science students needed guidance and counselling more than art and design students' (Mean/Std Dev. Refer to Table 15, Sig. =.000,  $p < .05$ , 2-tailed). Table 15 presents the descriptive:

**Table 16: Descriptive Statistics based on School**

Needs	School	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% C.I		Mean
						L B	U B	
G & C	Engineering	161	81.2840	26.52796	2.08423	77.1680	85.3999	
	Natural Res.	106	79.6019	30.13705	2.89994	73.8531	85.3506	
	Business	252	87.4180	26.60814	1.66301	84.1430	90.6929	
	Applied Sci.	155	69.8839	26.56063	2.13340	65.6694	74.0984	
	Art and Design	118	87.0504	28.42589	2.60580	81.8902	92.2106	
Total		792	81.6688	28.05616	.99193	79.7216	83.6159	

Source: Field Data (2019)

thus, \*Significant,  $p > 0.05$ 

### Academic Needs Guidance and Counselling

The objective of the study was to determine the guidance and counselling needs of students in Wa Polytechnic in terms of academics. The study revealed that, students needed guidance and

counselling as there were challenged in terms of time allocation problems, inability to discuss with lecturers about their problems, coping with workload issues as well as struggling to meet deadlines. The findings confirm Tuchili's (2008) study in the Lusaka district of Zambia which found that students were faced with educational challenges, with respect to academic needs. The studies revealed that the situation was enormous, and could overwhelm students if measures were not put in place to control them. Again, Mwape in his study on guidance and counselling needs of students revealed that 60% of respondents indicated that, they are faced with challenges like study skills, coping with academic pressure, and fear of tests and examinations (Mwape, 2015). Although the revelations are inevitable in tertiary institutions in Ghana, however, it calls for concern and appropriate steps are needed to manage the situation before it degenerates into psychopathology among the students.

### **Vocational Needs Guidance and Counselling**

The focus was to determine guidance and counselling needs of Wa Polytechnic students in terms of their vocational needs. The study revealed that students were concerned about getting a job after school, the quest for information about careers and difficulty starting personal businesses after school. In fact, the findings are not misplaced or are sheer exaggerations, as most tertiary students seem to possess thoughts of this nature concerning life after school. Almost everyone pursuing tertiary education aim at getting a job or find something doing after school so that they can make a meaningful life. The findings support the argument of Kochhar (2013) that students in schools face problems with making decisions about major careers. To Kochhar, it is a common problem for students because some may be unsure of what they want to do with their lives after school (Kochhar, 2013). Looking at the dynamics of the job market in Ghana, it is clear that many tertiary graduates will constantly compete for the least job opportunities available. The situation continues to pile up as less jobs are available for graduates from public and private tertiary institutions in Ghana. These findings corroborate Tuchili (2008) whose study revealed that students face various challenges including vocational/career challenges in terms of career selection.

### **Social Needs Guidance and Counselling**

The aim was to identify the social needs guidance and counselling among students in the Wa Polytechnic. The study revealed that students are challenged in terms of personal/social needs such as their inability to easily make friends, unable to understand themselves, having problems with dating as well as struggling to meet family expectations. The findings were not surprising as the personal/social aspect of life is a prominent component of every human being in any environment.

As such, the needs are real because the continuous unmet of such needs may lead to other inappropriate acts that could ruin the good self of those involved. The study findings support Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (2007) assertion that, students in schools were faced with challenges dealing with societal pressures. Irrespective of where they belong, they are challenged socially and as a result find it difficult to meet societal demands and making friends. Similarly, Legters and Mcdill's (1994) study findings is similar to the finding of the current study. Legters and Mcdill found in their study that students were faced with challenges of dealing with peer pressure. Social vices of the 21<sup>st</sup> century seem to emanate from unmet social demands that are not different from what the students of the Wa Polytechnic are facing.

### **Practical Needs of Guidance and Counselling**

The study aimed to find out practical needs of guidance and counselling of Wa Polytechnic. The study revealed that students were challenged practically in terms of high user fee charges, poor facilities in school, financial problems, emotional disturbance for not meeting financial demands and transportation problems in school. The revelation supports Andrews (1987) and Atik and Yalkin's (2010) findings that revealed that, students are faced with practical problems relating to finance, personal and self-control issues. The findings seem to be normal as it cut across campuses of most public and private tertiary institutions in Ghana. However, there is the need for policy dimension towards the revealed areas. Every institution that wants to progress in all aspects must hold in high esteem its major stakeholders such as students. Without students, schools would serve as just mere isolated environment with no value, so it is important that, the practical needs of students be considered in the decisions of school administration. Again, students as they are, would discern in the near future to demand equal measure for what they pay for in schools, so it would be appropriate if measures are put in place to control situations of this sort before they destroy the institutional foundations.

### **Ways in Solving Guidance and Counselling Needs Problems in School**

The aim was to find out how students are able to handle needs problems in the absence of professional counsellors. The study revealed that lecturers, friends, family members, and academic advisors are those students usually confer with about their problems. The revelation supports Hombrados-Mendieta, et al's (2012) study that revealed that students get support (emotional, instrumental, and informational) from family especially mothers, teachers, and classmates in the absence of professional counsellors.

This finding is understandable as lecturers and friends seem to be the immediate and easiest contact to every student in school, hence sharing of information becomes so smooth and easy. Academic advisers and family members may seem to be untrusted. This is because in most cases, familiarity in families may supersede realities presented by members while the bond between students and academic advisors may be weak because they may not be having any direct contact established between them. This advisor-student relationship can be managed when the advisor is a trained counsellor or psychologists who possess the qualities to establish a conducive relationship with students even before they bring their problems for counselling.

### **Gender Differences in Guidance and Counselling Needs (academic, vocational, social and practical)**

The objective was to find out if there exist differences between male and female students in Wa Polytechnic about the guidance and counselling needs. The study revealed significant difference in the counselling needs of male and female. It showed that female students in the Wa Polytechnic require more guidance and counselling in terms of vocational, practical, social and academic needs. The findings were indifferent from others such as Guneri, Aydin, and Skovholt (2003) whose study revealed that gender differences in counselling needs of students exist. However, the differences varied, where in part, it favoured males and the other part favoured females. For instance, male students were found to express a significantly greater concern for family issues, while female students were more concerned about self-control and personal issues. Above all, females had greater needs than did male in the vocational, social, academic and moral issues and emotional issues. The findings seem to confirm the generally held impression that males are able to withstand troubles or problems within the environment against the equality in pursuing difficult task like academic work between males and females. For instance, the findings refuted Akik and Yalkin (2010); Guneri (2006) and Gizir (2005) findings that revealed males reported more concern for guidance and counselling needs in terms of practical, social, academic, and career issues.

### **Marital Status Difference in Guidance and Counselling Needs (academic, vocational, social and practical)**

The objective was to find out differences between those who are married and single as students in Wa Polytechnic. The study revealed small significant difference such that single students in the Wa Polytechnic require higher need in of vocational guidance and counselling and practical guidance and counselling needs than their married counterparts. The findings are interesting and could be supported by the idea that students who are married might have had some form of

counselling before marriage, hence their low requirement of needs guidance and counselling services.

### **Age Differences in Guidance and Counselling Needs (academic, vocational, social and practical)**

The focus was to find out if differences existed among age categories (17-21, 22-26 and 27 above). The study revealed small significant differences among the age categories as students aged 17-21 years needed vocational guidance and counselling than those aged 27 years above while those aged around of 22-26 years needed vocational guidance and counselling more than those aged 27 years above did. In addition, the study revealed that aged between 22-26 years require social needs guidance and counselling than those around 27 years above while those aged around 22-26 years require practical guidance and counselling more than those aged 27 years above do. The findings presuppose that the more years' one accumulates, the less need for guidance and guidance among the students in the Wa Polytechnic. The findings corroborate that of Chireshe (2011), which revealed that there were significant differences in age concerning students' ratings and needs for guidance and counselling in services.

### **School of Study Difference in Guidance and Counselling Needs (academic, vocational, social and practical)**

The aim is to find out if differences existed among students pursuing different programmes in terms of guidance and counselling needs. The study revealed significant differences as engineering students require more academic guidance and counselling than applied sciences while students pursuing natural sciences need academic guidance and counselling more than those pursuing business. Furthermore, students pursuing business require more academic guidance and counselling than those pursuing applied sciences while students pursuing art and design require more academic guidance and counselling than those in applied sciences. In terms of vocational needs guidance and counselling, engineering students needed it more than those in business and art and design.

Moreso, business students require more vocational guidance and counselling than applied sciences students while applied science students require more guidance and counselling than art and design students. Concerning social guidance and counselling, engineering students require more social needs guidance and counselling than applied science students while business students require more social guidance and counselling than those in applied science and as well, applied sciences students require more social guidance and counselling than art and design students. The study revealed



again that, students in engineering require practical guidance and counselling more than those in applied science do while natural science students require more practical guidance and counselling than those in applied science. Furthermore, students pursuing business require more practical guidance and counselling than those in applied science while students pursuing applied sciences require more practical guidance and counselling than those in art and design.

In fact, the findings are fascinating in that the need for guidance and counselling go by the programme read. This implies that all students in one educational setting might face similar challenges that could call for same counselling in the school because one's workload might be different from the other.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Due to the absence of guidance and counselling services, the results of the study led the researchers to the conclusion that students attending Wa Polytechnic were facing a number of challenges that need answers in order to be resolved. The provision of reliable guidance services inside the educational institution may prove to be the answer to the problem. Despite this, the school's counselling programme seemed to be in a state of disarray and was riddled with numerous difficulties. The circumstance is not appropriate for a university that is working toward attaining full tertiary status. Based on the findings and conclusion drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made: that the defunct guidance and counselling unit should be revived and properly resourced.

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