



## IMPLEMENTATION OF GUIDANCE SERVICES IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN HO MUNICIPALITY, GHANA

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### **Abstract:**

The most important outcome of a guidance and counselling programme is desirable change in students, such as improved school attendance, better study habits, and better scholastic achievement, fewer scholastic failures, lower dropout rate, better educational planning, and better home-school relations. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the implementation of guidance services in senior high schools in Ho the Municipality. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample size of 376 students and 21 counsellors from 7 senior high schools in the Ho Municipality was selected using the multistage sampling procedure comprising proportional stratified sampling, purposive sampling and systematic sampling procedures were used. Data was collected using researcher-made questionnaire with reliability coefficient of was 0.83 and 0.80 for students and counsellors questionnaires respectively. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the five research questions stated for the study. The findings revealed that guidance and counselling units were available even though the facilities were inadequate and the rooms were not well furnished. Again, orientation and counselling services were the most common guidance and counselling services while referral and evaluation services were the least common guidance and counselling services provided in the senior high schools in the Ho Municipality. The headmaster/mistress, housemaster/mistress, class teachers and chaplain were all involved in the provision of guidance and counselling services. Furthermore, it was found that the professional counsellors were comparatively better than the non-professionals in terms of adherence to the right practices. It was recommended that a clear national policy for Guidance and Counselling services in Senior High Schools with adequate funding, allocation of time and role definition of counsellors.

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## 1. Introduction

Studies have shown that senior secondary school students face a lot of problems both in their academic and social lives in Ghana (Otto, 2001; Ocansey, Forde, Awabil, & Otopa, 2005). Mapfumo (2001), asserts that students experience immense psychological pressures in today's world. Furthermore, Mutie and Ndambuki (2003) assert that students face many difficult situations in life today. Students have to make wise choices in curricular and other activities, acquire basic study skills for optimum achievement, and adjust to peers, teachers and parents. Students also have to live and share facilities in the institutions, hostels, dormitories, with individuals from different economic and social backgrounds. Students at this level therefore need assistance in order to cope well in the school environment and become useful members of the society. Guidance services in educational institutions, if properly practiced, will go a long way to eliminate student indiscipline and other student problems like dropping out of school, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and religious extremism among others.

Research has indicated that guidance and counselling has positive impact on the lives of students. Govere (1995) opined that Guidance and counselling services enhance student performance; reduce student dropout rates and prepare students for the world of work and life. Participants at a national summit advocating the incorporation of guidance and counselling in to the educational curriculum held in Accra by Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), a female-advocacy non-governmental organisation indicated that guidance and counselling is a necessary requirement for enhancing academic performance, reducing drop-out rates and facilitating informed career choices among other benefits (Andoh, 2016). Borders and Drury (1992) cite literature indicating that students who receive guidance and counselling services have shown significant increases in academic persistence and achievement, school attendance, classroom behaviour, better self-concepts and improved attitudes towards school work and peers. However, for guidance and counselling to make any positive impact, it must be comprehensive and effective. Effective guidance and counselling, as recommended by Urombo (2000), should be such as to ensure that each student can, to a meaningful degree, avail of several components inherent in guidance and counselling. To Urombo, these components involve counselling, information, assessment, advice, career transition programmes, educational development programmes, and personal and social development programmes. Murdock (2004) adds that effective student guidance services would also involve the use of assessments, such as psychological and practical tests to assist pupils to make their own decisions. There is the need therefore to constantly evaluate the guidance services that are provided in the schools in Ghana. Many educational reforms have advocated the provision of guidance and counselling services. A report by the President's Committee on Review of Education reforms in Ghana (2002) recommended:

*“...the establishment of guidance and counselling units in all senior high schools and for cluster of schools at the basic level. In all cases, the units should be well equipped and resourced to enable them function effectively. The objectives of establishing these units are to assist individuals to cope with the physical and emotional changes which take place during the stages of growth and development; to manage the effects of negative peer pressure; understand and respond positively to changing situations and then make appropriate choices” (p. 233).*

With this recommendation, a government white paper was issued which indicated the establishment of guidance and counselling units in all secondary schools in the country. Consequently, guidance and counselling units were established in some of the senior high schools. However, an observation made by the Ghana Education Service (GES) indicated that the current Guidance and Counselling programme in schools and colleges in Ghana leaves much to be desired. In most schools, there are no systematic Guidance and counselling services (GES, 2009). According to Lawrence, Jones and Smith (1999) (as cited in Awabil, 2002) researchers have written about adolescents, concerning their needs and ways of coping with those needs. But media reports (Kale-Dery, 2014; Andoh, 2016) and visitation to schools show that young people’s guidance needs are not being met adequately.

Meanwhile, evidence that guidance services do produce benefits will increasingly be demanded, and it is only through research and evaluation can such evidence be secured (Shertzer & Stone, 1980). Thus, an evaluation of the school guidance services is vital for programme improvement and development.

Adolescence is a stage of development which is characterised by several important decisions (Assabieh, 2010). These decisions can lead to high social and emotional confusion, peer pressure, and independent desires which need to be monitored and nurtured. Hall (1904) describes this stage as that of “storm and stress”. Secondary level school guidance services and programmes and have therefore been included in most educational systems of the modern world to target adolescents. This is to help them make the right choices about their identities, who they wish to become, and to help them find acceptable ways of developing themselves and their careers in order to contribute meaningfully to society (Gybers & Henderson, 2001).

Owino (2013) identified some constraints that have the potential to curtail the effective achievement of guidance and counselling goals, and indicated that the challenge associated with guidance and counselling within senior high schools is the fact that guidance and counselling is still in its developmental stages in Ghana. Ndego (2010) studied the effectiveness of guidance and counselling in selected senior high schools in the Tano North District of Brong Ahafo. The study revealed that most of the schools studied did not, as of that time, run guidance services for students. In a study to evaluate how counselling services could be used as an intervention for indiscipline in schools in the Ho Municipality, Fia (2008) found among other things, that none of the schools studied had a counselling centre that was well equipped for effective counselling and that most of the schools lacked trained or professional counsellors.

Sedofia and Ocansey (2013), in a study to evaluate the information and consultation services in Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana found that the services were not adequately provided in the colleges. The study also revealed that the counsellors in the colleges were not trained professionally. Studies by Nyarko-Sampson (2010; 2013) in colleges of education in the Eastern-Greater Accra zone, and the northern region respectively, found that appraisal, consultation, placement, information and follow-up services were provided to a lesser extent in schools.

Though Guidance and Counselling units are envisaged to have been set up in the senior high schools for some time now (per Anamuah-Mensah report), there has been a little systematic attempt to reorganize them so as to deal adequately with the problems learners face. As a result, there has been an increase in adolescent problems such as indiscipline among students in the schools. The need therefore, for well-established and functional Guidance and Counselling units in schools is pertinent.

The study therefore sought to evaluate the guidance services that are provided in senior high schools in the Ho Municipality.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

Five research questions guided the study as follows:

1. To what extent are guidance and counselling units available in senior high schools in Ho municipality?
2. What guidance services are provided at the senior high schools in Ho Municipality?
3. Which persons are involved in the provision of guidance services in senior high schools in Ho Municipality?
4. What roles do counsellors perform in senior high schools in Ho Municipality?
5. What is the difference between the practices of professional and non-professional counsellors in the implementation of guidance services in senior high schools in Ho Municipality?

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design**

Descriptive survey design was used for the study. Descriptive survey design refers to the collection of standardized information from specific population perhaps about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or previous experiences by asking questions and tabulating their answers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The descriptive survey design was used because Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) indicated that the big advantage of the design is the potential to provide a lot of information obtained from quite a large sample of individuals. Furthermore, it provides a quantitative picture of the individuals or units under investigation in their current status.

## 2.2 Population

This comprised the total number of respondents a researcher intends to gather data from. For the 2016/2017 academic year, there were 10, 804 students in the twelve senior high schools in Ho municipality (Ghana Education Service, Ho Municipality, 2017).

## 2.3 Sample and Sampling Procedures

A sample, according to Amedahe (2002), consists of a carefully selected subset of the unit that comprised the population, while sampling refers to the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population. According to Sarantakos (2005), sampling unit should be chosen in a systematic and objective manner. A sample of 380 male and female students was selected based on Krejcie and Morgan's Table for Determining Sample Sizes (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). According to Krejcie and Morgan's Table for Determining Sample Size, at a confidence level of 0.005, a sample of 376 students is suitable for a population of 10804.

A multi stage sampling technique was employed in the study. Multistage sampling in the view of Ogah (2013), is a sampling procedure which involves the combination of several sampling methods. In this study proportional stratified sampling, purposive sampling and systematic sampling procedures were used.

Whitley (2000) and De Vos (2002) have opined that purposive sampling enables a researcher to have a sample that contains the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population. Again, Patton (1990) opined that Purposive sampling is used because of its power and logic which lies in the selection of information rich cases for in-depth study and its illumination of the questions under study. Thus, in purposive sampling the researcher hand picks the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their typicality to the issues under study. Purposive sampling method was used to select 21 guidance coordinators and counsellors from the schools based on their typicality to the issue.

Proportional stratified random sampling is a sampling procedure in which population is divided into strata and then respondents are randomly selected from each stratum (Gibson, 1990). Proportional stratified sampling was relevant for the study because it helped to reduce chance variation between a sample and the population it represents (Grinnel & Richard, 1993). Stratified random sampling was used to categorize schools into public, private and single sex and co-educational schools. Schools from different strata were then listed and random selection done to choose the schools and the respondents.

Sampling targeted forms one and two students from senior high school in Ho Municipality. The reason for this is because the form three students were busy writing their final examination as at the time of data collection. The Municipal Education Office indicated that the number of registered senior high schools in the municipality is 12 in: seven (7) were public and five (5) private. Out of these, ten (10) were co-educational, two (2) single sex (all were girls schools), all the schools catered for both boarders and day students. A total of five (5) public schools and two (2) private schools were

sampled. Thus, from a total population of 12 schools, a sample of seven (7) schools was selected.

Further, within each school, the stratified sampling method was used to sample students according to their gender and forms of study. It involved dividing students according to their form of study. Students were sampled from among the first and second years. To achieve a fair representation among the programmes of studies, the researcher selected the programmes: general arts, visual arts, sciences, home economics and business. This is because these are the common courses that are offered in all the senior high schools.

#### **2.4 Data Collection Instrument**

The study employed two sets of self-designed questionnaires (one set for students and the other for Counsellors) as instruments for collecting data in the research. The questionnaire for the students was in a Four-point Likert- Type Scale which requires participants to indicate their levels of agreement or disagreement to the items using Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree. The questionnaire consisted of four sections; Section A consisted of personal data while Sections B, C and D catered for the availability of counselling units in the schools, guidance and counselling services that are being provided, and students' perception of the guidance and counselling services respectively. Section A contained of 5 items while sections B, C and D had 10 items each. The total number of items was therefore 35. A second questionnaire was prepared for the Counsellors. This questionnaire comprised seven sections; Section A for demographic data comprising 7 items, Section B (10 items) for indicating the availability of guidance and counselling units in senior high schools, Section C (10 items) solicited data on guidance services that are provided in the senior high schools in Ho Municipality, and Section D (6 items) personnel involved in the provision of guidance services. Also Section E had 9 items solicited data on the roles counsellor actually perform in the schools. The last Section, F comprised 15 items that sought to collect data on the difference between the practices of professional and non-professional counsellors in the implementation of guidance services in senior high schools in Ho Municipality. In all, there were 57 items on the questionnaire.

The reliability measure established for the instrument was internal consistency. To check the internal consistency of the instrument a pilot test was conducted with 30 students from two senior high schools (Agotime Senior High and Ziope Senior High Schools) in Agotime Ziope District. The reliability of the instruments was 0.83 and 0.80 for students and counsellors respectively. These were estimated using the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient.

#### **2.5 Data Collection and Analyses**

The consent of the participants was sought before the data was collected. The instrument was administered directly by the researchers and collected the same day from some of the schools. However, for some other schools, the questionnaires were

distributed on the first day but were retrieved on another day after participants had answered.

The data collected was edited, coded, and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Percentages and frequencies were used to answer the research questions.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Availability of guidance and counselling units in senior high schools

Research question one sought to find out if guidance and counselling units existed in senior high schools in Ho municipality. The four responses were collapsed into two homogenous responses; Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) to indicate Agreement (A), and Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) to indicate disagreement (D). Table 1 presents analysis of the data.

**Table 1:** Availability of guidance and counselling units in senior high schools in the Ho municipality

Statement	Agree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%
There is a guidance and counselling unit in my school	321	85.4	55	14.6
The guidance and counselling unit has facilities that are adequate for services.	185	49.2	191	50.8
Enough privacy is provided for guidance and counselling in the school.	223	59.3	153	40.7
Adequate space is provided for guidance and counselling in the school.	217	57.7	159	42.3
There is a full time counsellor or guidance officer in my school.	198	52.7	178	47.3
I have easy access to the counsellor any time I have a problem.	218	58.0	158	42.0
Other staff are ready to provide guidance services anytime I need them.	328	87.2	48	12.8
Other teachers also serve as counsellors	347	92.3	29	7.7
The counsellor assists me in solving my problems.	307	81.6	69	18.4
The guidance and counselling room is well furnished so I feel comfortable any time I visit the counsellor	179	47.6	197	52.4

Table 1 shows the availability of guidance and counselling units in senior high schools. It was shown that 85% of the respondents agreed that there are guidance and counselling units in their schools while only about 15% of the respondents disagreed. In terms of the adequacy of facilities for guidance and counselling, about 51% of the respondents disagreed. Again, 59% of the respondents agreed that there was enough privacy for guidance and counselling in their schools.

Furthermore, in response to whether there was adequate space for guidance and counselling, about 58% of the respondents agreed while 42% disagreed. With regards to the presence of a full time counsellor or guidance officer, about 53% of the respondents answered in the affirmative while 47% disagreed. It was again agreed in Table 1 by 58% of the respondents that they had easy access to the counsellor anytime they had problems.

A majority of 87% of the respondents also agreed that other staff were ready to provide guidance services, with about 92% of the respondents also indicating that other teachers also serve as counsellors. Table 8 showed again that about 82% of the

respondents agreed that the counsellor assists them in solving their problems. Finally, with regards whether the guidance and counselling room was well furnished to the comfort of the students when they visit the counsellor, 52% of the respondents disagreed. The results imply that guidance and counselling units were available and functioning with the exception of the adequacy of facilities and furnishing of rooms which recorded the agreement of less than half of the respondents. The findings of the study confirm the study of Owino (2013) which found that majority of the students interviewed affirmed that their schools had specific rooms for Guidance and Counselling. The findings of Owino also showed that only one school out of the nine schools studied met the criterion of having rooms well-furnished. This was supported by the findings of the current study which showed that counselling rooms were not well furnished. The findings of Owino (2013) again indicated that majority of the respondents felt that the Guidance and Counselling staff were easily available. The results of the study again supported the findings of Oladele (2000) that adequacy of counselling facilities in which to carry out counselling services is very necessary yet it is the last unit to be provided.

### 3.2 Guidance services provided in senior high schools in Ho municipality

Research question two elicited responses from students and school counsellors on the types of guidance services provided in their senior high schools in the Ho Municipality. Table 2 shows the responses of students.

**Table 2:** Students' responses of Guidance Services provided

Service	Freq.	%
Orientation	364	96.8
Pupil Inventory/ Appraisal	206	54.8
Consultation	231	61.4
Information	208	55.3
Follow-Up	155	41.2
Placement	176	46.8
Counselling	297	79.0
Referrals	82	21.8
Evaluation	96	25.5

Table 2 shows that guidance services are provided in senior high schools as indicated by the students' responses. Almost 97% indicated that orientation service was provided. It was again shown by 79% of the respondents that counselling service was being provided. About 61% of the respondents indicated that consultation was also being provided. A little more than half, 55.3% and 54.8% of the respondents indicated that information service and pupil inventory/appraisal service were being provided respectively.

However, less than half of the respondents indicated that services like placement (46.8%), follow-up (41.2%), evaluation (25.5%) and referrals (21.8%) were being provided in their schools. The results imply that orientation is the most common guidance and counselling service, followed by counselling service while referrals is the

least common guidance service provided in senior high schools in the Ho municipality. These findings support the findings of Nyarko-Sampson (2010), that orientation and counselling are the common guidance services provided to students. Similarly, the findings also confirmed that of Braimah (2010), who found that counselling and orientation services were the most popular services offered to students while information, appraisal, placement, evaluation, consultation and referral services were inadequately provided.

In order to confirm the assertions by the students, and firm up their responses in order to arrive at a much stronger conclusion on the guidance services that are most provided the views of the school counsellors were solicited. Table 3 shows the responses from school counsellors on the types of guidance services provided in senior high schools in the Ho municipality

**Table 3:** Counsellors' responses of Guidance Services provided

Service	Freq.	%
Orientation	21	100.0
Pupil Inventory/ Appraisal	16	76.2
Consultation	15	71.4
Information	13	61.9
Follow-Up	14	66.7
Placement	12	57.1
Counselling	19	90.5
Referrals	14	66.7
Evaluation	7	33.3

Table 3 shows the guidance services that are provided in senior high schools as indicated by school counsellors. All the respondents (100%) that orientation service was provided in their schools. Again, 90.5% of the respondents indicated that counselling service was being provided.

Other services that were indicated by majority of the respondents as being provided included pupil inventory/appraisal (76.2%), consultation (71.4%), follow-up (66.7%), referrals (66.7%), information (61.9%) and placement (57.1%). Evaluation service was however indicated as being provided by less than half of the respondents (33.3%).

The results imply that orientation service was the most common service, followed by the counselling service while evaluation service was the least common service provided in the senior high schools in the Ho Municipality. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Aidoo (2011), that orientation and counselling are the popular guidance and counselling services rendered to students in the colleges. This study again confirmed the findings of Nyarko-Sampson (2010; 2013), and Sedofia (2011), that appraisal, consultation, placement, information and follow-up services were provided to a lesser extent in schools.

### 3.3 Other personnel providing guidance and counselling services in senior high schools in Ho municipality

Research question three elicited counsellors' views concerning other persons, apart from school counsellors, who are involved in the provision of guidance services in senior high schools in Ho Municipality. The result is presented in Table 4:

**Table 4:** Other Personnel providing Guidance Services

Personnel	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Headmaster/mistress	21	100.0
Housemaster/mistress	21	100.0
Chaplain	21	100.0
Class teachers	20	95.2
School Prefects	7	33.3

Table 4 shows the other personnel involved in the provision of guidance services in senior high schools in the Ho Municipality as reported by the counsellors. All the respondents (100%) indicated that Headmasters/mistresses, Housemasters/mistresses, and Chaplains were involved in the provision of guidance services. About 95% of the respondents also indicated that class teachers were involved in the provision of guidance services. However, only 33.3% of the respondents indicated that school prefects were involved in the provision of guidance services. The results imply that with the exception of school prefects who are students, all significant personnel in senior high schools were involved to some extent, in the provision of guidance services to students.

### 3.4 Roles performed by counsellors in senior high schools in Ho municipality

Research question four sought to find counsellors' responses to the roles they performed in senior high schools in the Ho Municipality. Table 5 presents the results.

**Table 5:** Roles performed by counsellors

Role of Counsellor	Freq.	%
Providing individual and small-group counselling services to students.	20	95.2
Assisting with duties in the principal's office.	9	42.9
Providing teachers with suggestions for effective classroom management.	17	81.0
Teaching classes when teachers are absent.	7	33.3
Performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences.	15	71.4
Helping the school principal identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems.	17	81.0
Maintaining student records.	13	61.9
Supervising student activities.	17	81.0
Checking students' class attendance.	18	85.7

Table 5 shows the roles performed by counsellors in senior high schools in the Ho Municipality as reported by the counsellors. A majority of the respondents (95.2%) were involved in providing individual and small-group counselling services, whilst about 86% were involved in checking students' class attendance. Further, 81% of the

respondents each were involved in providing teachers with suggestions for effective classroom management, helping the school principal identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems, and supervising student activities.

Table 5 also showed that 71.4% of the counsellors indicated that they were involved in performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences to students, while almost 62% indicated that they were involved in maintaining students' records. However, Table 5 shows that less than half of the respondents were involved in assisting with duties in the principal's office (42.9%) and teaching classes when teachers are absent (33.3%). The results imply that the counsellors were actively involved in all their roles with the exception of assisting with duties in the principal's office and teaching classes when teachers were absent.

### 3.5 Difference between the practice of professional and non-professional counsellors in senior high schools in Ho municipality

Research question five was to determine the difference between the practices of professional counsellors and non-professional counsellors in the implementation of guidance services in the senior high schools in the Ho Municipality. The results are presented in Tables 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

**Table 6:** Existence of Counselling Units

Existence of a Counselling Unit	Professional Counsellors				Non-Professional Counsellors			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do you have a Counselling Centre	2	40.0	3	60.0	4	25.0	12	75.0
Does the present student/counsellor ratio allow you to meet the needs of students and staff?	1	20.0	4	80.0	5	31.3	11	68.7
Do you have a written plan for guidance and counselling activities for each academic year?	2	40.0	3	60.0	5	31.3	11	68.7
Plan including activities for entire school	2	40.0	3	60.0	5	31.3	11	68.7

Table 6 shows the views of both professional and non-professional counsellors about the counselling units in their schools. It was shown that 40% of the professionals had a counselling centre in their schools while 25% of the non-professionals indicated that they had a counselling centre in their schools. Again, it was shown by 20% of the professionals that the student-counsellor ratio in the schools allowed them to meet the needs of the students and staff while 31.3% of the non-professionals indicated that the student-counsellor ratio in the schools allow them to meet the needs of the students and the staff.

Further, Table 6 showed that 40% of the professionals had a written plan for guidance and counselling activities for each academic year while 31.3% of the non-professionals had a written plan for guidance and counselling activities for each academic year. Finally, Table 6 showed that 40% of the professionals had their guidance and counselling plans including activities for the entire school while only 31.3% of the non-professionals had their guidance and counselling plans including the entire school.

The results imply that overall, the professionals were comparatively better than the non-professionals. This is so because with the exception of the student-counsellor ratio allowing the counsellor to meet the needs of the students and staff, most of the professionals had a counselling centre and had written guidance and counselling plan that included the entire school as compared to the non-professionals.

**Table 7:** Existence of Written Policy on managing Ethical Issues in Counselling Practice

Practice	Professional Counsellors				Non-Professional Counsellors			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Consent	-	-	5	100.0	2	12.5	14	87.5
Confidentiality	1	20.0	4	80.0	2	12.5	14	87.5
Record keeping	-	-	5	100.0	3	18.8	13	81.2
Providing feedback	-	-	5	100.0	4	25.0	12	75.0
Referral to other agencies	1	20.0	4	80.0	1	6.3	15	93.7

Table 7 shows both professional and non-professional counsellors' views about the existence of a written policy in relation to how some ethical issues were managed in their counselling practices in their schools. It was shown that none of the professional counsellors had a written policy in relation to consent while 12.5% of the non-professionals had a written policy in relation to how consent was managed. In relation to having a written policy on how confidentiality is managed, 20% of professionals responded in the affirmative while only 12.5% of the non-professionals indicated assented. Table 7 also revealed that in terms of record-keeping, one of the professionals had a written policy guiding how it was managed while 18.8% of the non-professionals had a written policy in place for record-keeping.

Again, none of the professionals had a written policy guiding how to manage the provision of feedback while 25% of the non-professionals had a written policy guiding the provision feedback in the counselling practice in their schools. Finally, Table 7 showed that 20% of the professionals had a written policy guiding how to manage referrals to other agencies while only 6.3% of the non-professionals had a written policy guiding how to manage referrals to other agencies. The results imply that overall, the non-professionals were comparatively better than the professionals with regards to the existence of written policies guiding how to manage ethical issues in counselling. This is because, aside confidentiality and referrals to other agencies, the non-professionals were better in consent, record-keeping and providing feedback.

Table 8 shows the views of both professionals and non-professionals about the structure of counselling sessions in their counselling practices in their schools. It was shown that all of the professional counsellors indicated that they feel their initial training in guidance and counselling has prepared them for the counselling aspect of their role, whilst only 6.3% of the non-professional counsellors indicated the same. Again, 60% of the professionals indicated that they use a counselling model/approach/theory in their counselling sessions while only 12.5% of the non-professionals revealed likewise.

**Table 8:** Existence of Structure in Counselling Practice

Practice	Professional Counsellors				Non-Professional Counsellors			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Do you feel your initial training in guidance and counselling has prepared you for your role?	5	100.0	0	00.0	1	6.3	15	93.7
Do you use a counselling model/approach/theory in your counselling sessions?	3	60.0	2	40.0	2	12.5	14	87.5
Do you use a guidance curriculum with structured developmental experiences presented systematically through classroom and small group activities?	4	80.0	1	20.0	1	6.3	15	93.7

Finally, Table 8 showed that 80% of the professionals use a guidance curriculum with structured developmental experiences presented systematically through classroom and small group activities while only 6.3% of the non-professions indicated the same. The results imply that the professional counsellors had better structures in running their counselling sessions as compared to the non-professionals.

#### 4. Findings

A summary of findings from the study is presented as follows:

1. Guidance and counselling units are available and effectively run in senior high schools in the Ho Municipality. However, the facilities for guidance and counselling services are not adequate and again there are problems with the refurbishing of rooms.
2. Orientation and counselling services are the most common guidance and counselling services in senior high schools in the Ho Municipality. However, referral and evaluation services are not very much in operation in senior high schools in the Ho Municipality.
3. Guidance and counselling in senior high schools in the Ho Municipality is a team effort involving the collaboration of headmaster/mistress, housemaster/mistress, class teachers and chaplain with the exception of school prefects who are students.
4. Counsellors were actively involved in all roles such as providing individual and small-group counselling services to students, providing teachers with suggestions for effective classroom management, performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences, and helping the school principal identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems. Other roles of the counsellor include maintaining student records, supervising student activities and checking student's attendance. Counsellors however do not engage in duties in the principal's office and teaching classes when teachers were absent.

5. The setting and structure of counselling practice of professional counsellors were comparatively different and better than the non-professionals in terms of adherence to the right practices. The difference is a good implication for professional counselling.

#### **4.1 Conclusions**

The study concluded from the findings that the implementation of guidance services in senior high schools in Ho Municipality was effectively run.

#### **4.2 Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings and conclusions of the study.

1. There is the need for a clear national policy for introducing and developing Guidance and Counselling programmes and services in Senior High Schools with adequate funding, allocation of time and role definition of counsellors. Policy makers must come out with clear national policy that will guide every aspect of guidance and counselling in the schools. The means of supervising the implementation of the policy must also be included in the policy.
2. The Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Ghana Education Service should employ and attach the qualified counsellors to the various Senior High Schools in the Municipality. Also, general training in guidance counselling for all teachers is necessary to improve practice of guidance and counselling. This is because the provision of guidance services in senior high schools is a team effort and as such, every staff member in senior high schools needs to be equipped with same basic counselling skills.
3. Students should also be equipped with some basic counselling skills and encouraged to engage in peer counselling since this might be a good way to reach out to their fellow students. Students who might not be comfortable with going to a counsellor or other personnel in the school might be comfortable speaking to their own colleagues.
4. An appropriate plan or policy guideline under which the counsellor must operate should be well established and followed in the schools. The guideline should be carved out of the national guidelines but must be tailored to meet the specific needs of the members of each school community. This guideline should also be made aware to students during guidance and counselling activities to guide counsellors in executing their duties. Counsellors should be encouraged to plan and evaluate their activities for the school year.
5. Counselling association such as the Counsellors Association of Ghana must embark on vigorous awareness campaigns so as to enhance the image of the counselling profession. Students should equally be sensitized on the immense benefits of guidance and counselling services to them as individuals.

### 4.3 Counselling Implications

Students should be counselled on the importance of guidance and counselling services. Counsellors should include other guidance and counselling services apart from orientation and counselling in their activities.

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