



Guidance services and pre-service teachers' problem solving ability: A study of Wesley College of Education, Kumasi, Ghana

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Abstract

This study was carried out to find out the effectiveness of Guidance services on pre-service teachers' problem solving ability at Wesley College of Education in Ghana. A survey research design was used, and the simple random sampling technique was employed to select 200 students. Data collected was processed using STATA 15. Research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Study habit was found as the most dominant problem encountered by the students. The results revealed a significant difference between pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling and those who did not in their problem solving ability. The study also revealed that, there was no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling from those who did not in their problem solving ability. Recommendations were made and one of which was that, counsellors should focus on helping pre-service teachers develop good study habits.

Keywords: pre-service teachers, guidance service, problem solving, skills, guidance and counselling

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Guidance is for all individuals who want to understand themselves and their world to become more effective, productive and happier beings (Makinde, 1987) ^[8]. This goal is achieved by helping the individual to gain more understanding of himself or herself, the environment and also use problem-solving techniques rather than focusing on faults findings and blame games. Guidance as a helping relationship dwells on services which are offered in schools to the students to take care of the totality of their educational experiences (Buku & Taylor, 2006) ^[20]. As observed by Sheltzer & Stone (1976) ^[19], guidance services are formalized actions by the school to make guidance operational and available to students.

Guidance services are provided on an ongoing basis to help students receive the information they require to solve personal problems and provide support as they discover their unique personalities, students experience social, personal and academic problems at school and in all other spheres of life. These services if unattended to, could lead to maladjustment and causing numerous disciplinary issues such as frequent tardiness, bullying, disrespect, aggression, truancy, tardiness and many others. Gora, Saivatzky & Hague (1992) states that, the increase in diverse students' problems, complexities of challenges and the current hard economic situation has made the need for effective delivery of guidance services even more critical now than ever. Mapfumo (2001) ^[10] adds that students experience immense psychological problems which disturb the learning process of students.

Pre-service teachers are teacher trainees who are undergoing training in pedagogical skills in specialized higher educational institutions. As teacher trainees, Sadofia, Antwi-

Danso & Nyarko-Sampson (2018) ^[12] observes that such individuals are often faced with problems pertaining to academic, adjustment of college life, anxiety, difficulties in making and sustaining significant relationships, self-esteem, body image, procrastination, study habits, sexual concerns, choice of life partner and self-defeating behaviours. McGuiness (1998) ^[11] adds that students bring the following personal problems into class which interferes with their learning. Thus, pre-service teachers are confronted with the complexities of life challenges, where many battles for self are either won or lost in the process. Bruce & Cockreham (2004) ^[5] opines that students experiencing the aforementioned problems need information, understanding and guidance to help them adjust to the changes and overcome these worries.

Problem solving is a complex cognitive skill that characterizes one of the most intelligent human activities. From childhood onward, people actively solve problems that confront them in everyday life. How the individuals develop their abilities to solve their own problems differs, children from adults, experts from novices and also males from females. These differences are based on cognitive processes and mental organizations that humans have in common and that characterize their problem-solving abilities. Problem-solving ability can also be said to be one's ability to think and apply these thinking in the process of solving the day-to-day challenges as they unfold.

For effective problem solving ability to occur, it behooves on counsellors to help pre-service teachers to develop and master the skills and techniques involved in the process. Comprehensive Guidance services in school should address the developmental needs of the students in the three domains namely: educational, vocational and psychosocial. The most important function of Guidance services is to

study the students in order to discover their value, abilities, interest, needs, aspirations, strengths and weaknesses which will help them adjust effectively to school life, shape their future plans and make informed decisions.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Maluwa-Banda (1998) ^[19] Guidance services help students understand their own interest and develop their potentials to the full. It also aims at helping students develop problem solving ability and to be well equipped in order to make informed decisions. Guidance as a process helps an individual to recognize him/herself and to use his or her ability to make plans to work out his or her own problems of development under the most favourable therapeutic conditions that the school counsellor can provide. Guidance involves personal help given from someone known as ‘Guidance Counsellor’ to other persons (Clients). It is designed to aid an individual to solve problems that arise in life and to accomplish his or her life goals.

In addition, the view of the school as a context where pre-service teachers experience a number of problems which they cannot solve on their own are dealt with through guidance interventions. Such problems may include violent behaviour, academic problems, relationship difficulties, sexual problems among others. It is in view of this that the study, therefore, sought to assess whether the guidance services offered at Wesley College of Education, Kumasi, are effective in helping pre-service teachers acquire the ability to solve their problems.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study, the following questions were answered:

1. What guidance services are offered at Wesley College of Education?
2. What personal problems or challenges do pre-service teachers of Wesley College of Education encounter?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study

1. There is no significant difference between pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling and those who did not have in their problem solving ability.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling in their problem solving ability from those who did not.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Guidance Services

According to Oladele (2000) ^[16], Guidance Services are professional aids, to the individual and small groups in dealing with commonly recurring problems. They are often classified according to the area of life in which the problem occurs. The services prepare students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and growth in their ability to understand and accept the result of their choices. There are formulated actions which together come to be known as guidance services. The services include:

2.1.1 Information Services

This is a major component of the guidance services common in schools. It is designed to provide students with a greater

knowledge of educational, vocational and social opportunities in the locality or beyond, so that they make better and inform choices and decisions in an increasingly complex society. Rapp & Goscha (2011) ^[17] sees information services as the assistance given to the student to understand, accept and utilize his abilities, aptitudes, interest and aspirations. Invariably, it is designed to help each student adjust to his environment, develop the ability to set realistic goals for himself, and improve his total educational programme. An information service should be a vital part of organized school guidance for the following reasons:

- a. It is fundamental if students are to be equipped with the basic knowledge needed to think through important personal issues with which they are confronted with such as extent of education, choice of occupation, maintenance of individuality.
- b. It is fundamental if students are to become self-regulatory.
- c. It is fundamental if students are to explore and become aware of the contingencies of stability and change that mark their development, data used in information services are often categorized into three broad areas, namely; educational information, occupational information and personal-social information (Iwuama, 1991) ^[8].

2.1.2 Orientation service

Orientation is a guidance service provided to an individual or a group of individuals so that they can adjust faster and better to a new school, place of work or neighbourhood. It is useful for students just entering a new educational level, such as Kindergarten (KG) pupils entering primary one, primary six pupils entering Junior High School (JHS), a product of Senior High School (SHS) just entering a University or a fresh graduate just starting to work or someone who has just moved from a rural area to a high density area of a city. A fresher in the College of Education, for instance, would need orientation on the history, geography, social and academic matters in his new institution. One would need orientation as to what courses to enrol for and how to register properly. One would need to be familiar with important facilities and personalities. These may include his lecture halls, library, laboratories, halls of residence, administrative blocks, and key officers such as his Head of Department, Academic Affairs Officer, Dean of Student Affairs, his or her Tutors and other essential supportive or non-academic staff. Orientation will help the individual to feel emotionally and mentally secure. It will help him to adapt to social and physiological conditions of this new environment.

2.1.3 Appraisal Service

This is that aspect of guidance that is designed to collect analyses and use a variety of objective and social data about each pupil for the purpose of better understanding of students as well as assisting them to understand themselves. When pupils understand themselves in terms of potentialities, weakness, strengths, etc., they can make rational decisions and choices. The various aspects of data needed for the appraisal of the student cover his family background, mental abilities, interests, social skills, aptitude and health. Such records or data are always placed or obtained in the inventory (Iwuama, 1991) ^[8].

2.1.4 Referral Service

According to Akinade, Sokan & Osarenren (1996) ^[2], the counsellor must be skilled enough to know at what point a referral is considered necessary. Since a counsellor's training is not the same as a psychotherapist or physician, problems, which are emotionally deep-rooted, must be referred to the psychotherapist. Problems like deep neurosis and psychosis must also be referred to the appropriate experts. Students may manifest during the counselling, health problems that may warrant referral to physicians. The counsellor must keep an accurate record of referral services rendered within the locality. He or she should have data on the social welfare department, students' aid programme like the education bank, students' loan trust, scholarship secretariat, data on hospitals and public and private firms in the locality. He or she should have data on the security operatives in the locality.

Educational programmes and their brochures must be available to the counsellor. Data on correspondence programmes and recreational centres must be available to the counsellor. Referral may be necessary because of factors such as lack of time, interest, and experience of sex or even religion. Referral may be literal if it is to one's peers or colleagues or it may be vertical if it is to one's superior in the discipline.

2.1.5 Follow-up Service

The counsellor should not regard the end of the therapy session as an end in itself, but a means to an end. He or she has to monitor clients on a follow up and out of therapy basis. Often times, the counselling goals will be to affect a greater facility in function. The counsellor needs to give assignments to the clients to practice on his own. At the termination of therapy, there is still the need for a follow-up appraisal. The aim of the follow-up appraisal is to re-evaluate the effectiveness of therapy; to ensure that there is no relapse and to ensure that the gains of therapy have been put to use. His type of guidance service helps to maintain correction of faults and improve or evaluate strategies.

2.1.6 Placement Service

Placement is one of the crucial functions of the Counsellor. Placement can be in educational, vocational or personal – social areas.

- a. **Educational Placement:** The purpose of employment placement is to help the graduating student or the school drop-out make the transition from the school level to employment institutions or vocational training programmes which are commensurate with his level of education, interest and abilities. Counsellors are supposed to be in possession of work study programmes, part-time or permanent and long vacation placement (where available) for their students. Counsellors should also provide potential employers, information about individual students, the counsellor can organize an excursion for students to visit work establishment (Akinade, Sokan & Osarenren, 1996) ^[2].
- b. **Vocational Placement:** Vocational placement is concerned with assisting young students to enter into occupational field which enable them to achieve their objectives in life. Vocational placement involves helping students to find suitable jobs, assisting employers to recruit suitable applicants to fill vacant posts, helping students to accept the skills of writing application letters

and attend interviews with the skills which are involved in this field.

- c. **Social Placement:** Social placement is a service whereby pupils are placed in social groups that will foster their social interaction. Social placement involves, helping students to develop social skills, assisting pupils to enhance self-acceptance in a group and helping pupils to develop leadership skills (Taylor & Buku, 2006) ^[20]

2.1.7 Counselling Service

The counselling service is concerned with assisting a client or troubled individual to overcome obstacle to his growth and helps him in achieving maximum development of his personal resources through a special interaction with a counsellor. The ultimate goal of counselling is to help the individual resolve personal conflicts and become more self-directed (Iwuama, 1991) ^[8].

The purpose of the counselling services according to Taylor & Buku (2006) ^[20] includes the following:

- Assisting students with opportunity for growth
- Preparing the students to make decisions to face new challenges.
- Motivating the youth towards embracing the challenges of his /her complex environment.
- Helping students to move towards a better and satisfying life.

2.1.8 Evaluation Service

This is a direct service to the students as the other services. The purpose is to evaluate the guidance and counselling programmes in the schools to find out if its objectives are realized and whether the programme meets the developmental needs of the students. According to Badu-Addo (2002) ^[4], it is a process for assessing the effectiveness of the school guidance and counselling programme to ensure the verification and improvement of professional and programme performance. Evaluation services are the engine of growth and development of all the other services and provide the bedrock upon which all other guidance services are established.

Taylor & Buku (2006) ^[20] consider evaluation as a means of determining the effectiveness of the school guidance programme revealing lapses in the programme and suggesting ways of improving it. School guidance programme ought to be evaluated periodically to take care of changing needs of students (Kankam & Onivehu, 2000) ^[14]. Amenyedzi (1997) ^[3] in his study contend that an evaluation of guidance programmes in Senior Secondary Schools in Ketu and Keta District" recommended that counsellors should be encouraged to plan and evaluate their activities. He concluded that the guidance programmes were, to some extent, encouraging and beneficial to students, though some of the guidance services including evaluation were not being adequately utilized to meet all the objectives of the programmes.

An evaluation of existing guidance services is likely to lead to improve guidance services in schools. Shertzer & stone (1976) ^[19] asserted that:

The major aim of evaluation of guidance services is to ascertain the current status of the guidance services within some framework of reference and on the bases of this knowledge, to improve its quality and efficacy. (pg.25)

Guidance programmes as a whole need to be evaluated after a period of implementation. This can be done quarterly, half yearly or annually. Quarterly evaluations allow for early corrections and changes to improve the programme. Annually enable the counsellor to take stock of the various services implemented within a year. Shertzer & Stone (1976) [19] point out that one important factor in the evaluation is the extent of the counsellor’s training experience. One would conclude that it is imperative for the school counsellor to spend part of his time in research activities aimed at evaluating his guidance services. The present researcher believes that evaluation will inform all those who have a stake in running guidance and counselling programmes.

3. Materials and Methods

The survey design was used and the population consisted of all pre-services teachers in levels 100 and 200 of Wesley College of Education, Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The sample for this study consisted of 200 students selected from the total population of 1,246 students of the 2018/2019 academic year. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the students, which afforded all the students an equal opportunity of being selected for the study. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire adapted from the Guidance Services and Students Problem Solving Ability Questionnaire (GSSPSAQ). The instrument was divided into three sections, namely; Section A, B and C. Section A was based on the respondents’ personal data, Section B was on the various Guidance services offered while section C was structured to obtain the respondents’ views of Guidance services and students’ problem solving abilities. The respondents were required to choose the option that best described their opinions. In order to ensure the content and construct validities of the instrument, draft copies were given to experts in test and evaluation in the Department of Psychology and Education, University of Education, Winneba, to assess the suitability of the items on the instrument.

A pilot test was carried out by the researchers to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. This involved the administration of the same instrument to 20 neutral subjects at Offinso College of Education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. These respondents were not part of the study population but possess similar characteristics as those in the main study. The reliability co-efficient was determined using the test re-test reliability method and a reliability co-efficient of 0.79 was obtained after using the STATA 15 to process the data from the pilot study. Consequent upon this high correlation coefficient, the instrument was considered appropriate and suitable in terms of consistency and suitability. The final data from the respondents was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of STATA 15, a statistical software for analysing data. Specifically, frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations were used to analyse the data in relation to the research questions while the hypotheses were analysed using the independent sample t-test.

4. Results/Findings

The findings from the study are presented as follows:

Research question 1: What guidance services are offered at Wesley College of Education?

The aim of this research question was to determine the most offered guidance services in the college. The results from the pre-service teachers are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Pre-service Teachers' Responses on Guidance Services Provided (N=200)

Guidance Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Appraisal	47	23.5
Consultation	120	60.2
Counselling	131	65.7
Evaluation	69	34.4
Follow-up	71	35.6
Information	105	52.6
Orientation	197	98.5
Placement	93	46.3

As shown in Table 1, the guidance services that are provided at the college are indicated by the pre-service teachers. Almost all the respondents (98.5%) indicated that orientation service was the most guidance services provided in the college followed by counselling service (65.7%). The least services provided in the college were evaluation and follow-up service, that is; (34.4%) and (35.6%) respectively.

Research question 2: What personal problems or challenges do pre-service teachers of Wesley College of Education encounter?

This research question sought to find out the kind of academic and psychosocial problems or challenges confronting pre-service teachers of Wesley College of education. The results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Personal Problems or Challenges Facing Pre-Service Teachers

Variable	Mean	SD
Study habit	4.43	1.03
Concentration during personal studies	2.34	0.97
Relationship	3.78	0.88
Personal hygiene	2.66	0.67
Use of library	2.01	1.22
Completion of assignment	2.44	1.23
Frequent engagement on social media	3.22	1.08
Anxiety	3.67	0.76
Financial difficulties	3.65	0.88
Drug abuse	1.65	0.67
Alcoholism	1.88	1.04
Fear of exams failure	1.66	1.12

SD= Standard Deviation

Table 2, shows the various personal problems pre-service teachers encounter in their school life. The results indicated that study habit (mean=4.43, SD=1.03), relationship (mean=3.78, SD=0.88), anxiety (mean=3.67, SD=0.76) and financial difficulties (mean=3.65, SD=0.88) were identified as the top most frequent problems for the present sample of teacher trainees. However, Table 2 also indicates that, drug abuse (mean=1.65, SD=0.67), fear of examination failure (mean=1.66, SD=1.12) and alcoholism (mean=1.88, SD=1.04) were the least problems or challenges faced by respondents in the study.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling and those who did not have in their problem solving ability.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis of pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling and those who did not in their problem solving ability

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	DF	T-Calculated	T-Critical
Pre-service teachers who had G & C services	100	26.30	2.57	98	2.44	1.98
Pre-service teachers who Didn't have G & C services	100	24.42	4.80			

From Table 3, the mean responses (26.30) of pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling is greater than the mean responses (24.42) of them who did not have Guidance and Counselling services in their problem solving ability. Table 3 also shows that the calculated t-value 2.44 is greater than the critical t-value 1.98. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference between pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling services and those who did not have in their problem solving ability.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers who had Guidance and counselling from those who did not in their problem solving ability.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis of male and female pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling from those who did not in their problem solving ability

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	DF	T-Calculated	T-Critical
Males	125	25.66	3.23	98	0.81	1.98
Females	75	25.02	4.64			

Table 4, revealed that the mean response (25.66) of males is greater than the mean responses (25.02) in females. Table 5 also shows that the calculated t-value (0.81) is less than the critical t-value (1.98). Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. This implies that there is no significant difference between pre-service teacher's male and female who had Guidance and counselling from those who did not have in their problem solving ability.

5. Discussion of findings

The results depicted that, the orientation and counselling services were the most popular guidance services available in the college was not surprising. These findings confirm earlier results by Aido (2011) [1] and Kemetse, Nyarko-Sampson, Nkyi & Nyarko (2018) [15] who found that orientation and counselling services were the most common services delivered in Colleges of Education. This revelation may be due to the fact that a weeklong activity is designated to orient freshmen and women who have been admitted to the college. Orientation is therefore placed on the college calendar and it makes it mandatory for all fresh pre-service teachers to partake in the activities. Again, students who are identified with academic challenges, persona-social and relationship issues are mostly referred to the counselling centre by the college administration for Guidance and Counselling. Hence, these approaches could account for the popularity of these two services in the college. The revelation indicating that appraisal, evaluation and follow-up services were the least offered guidance service is also in line with the findings of Sedofia (2011) [12], which revealed that appraisal and follow-up services were among the least Guidance services provided in the Colleges of Education. The findings also showed that study habit, frequent engagement in social media, financial difficulties and anxiety were the most prevalent problems or challenges

facing pre-service teachers. This result confirms the findings of Sadofia, Antwi-Danso & Nyarko-Sampson (2018) [15], who discovered that pre-service teachers are often faced with problems such as academic, study habit, difficulties in relationships, self-esteem, finance, anxiety among others. The possible reasons for these academic challenges could be the lack of self-discipline on the part of the students to strictly adhere to personal planned timetables and also their inability to consult peers or tutors for more clarification or explanations of concepts they found difficult to understand. Similarly, students spending more time frequently on social media, such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter and many others at the expense of their academic life could point to lack of discipline and loss of focus. The problem bothering on financial difficulties is not surprising since the issue of inadequate funding of education is common with most students, especially from developing countries. Pre-service teachers need money to pay their study fees, buy study materials such as textbooks, laptop computers and many more. Hence, the lack of funds to cater for these needs may put them into great distress.

From the statistical analyses of *Hypothesis 1*, the result reveals that there is a significant difference between pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling and those who did not in their problem solving ability. The findings indicate that pre-service teachers who were exposed to Guidance and Counselling have a better problem solving ability when compared to their counterparts who did not have the Guidance and Counselling. This is an indication that Guidance and Counselling go a long way to help them develop the ability to solve their problems. This is in consonance with the submission of Gibson (2008), who opines that, one of the functions of Education is to provide opportunities for each student to reach his or her full potential in the area of his or her interest, ability and aspiration. Guidance services prepare students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and grow in their ability to understand and accept the result of the choices they make in life.

The result of *Hypothesis 2* indicates that there was no significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling from those who did not in their problem solving ability. In other words, male and female pre-service teachers who had Guidance and counselling and those who did not are almost similar in their problem solving ability. This is in agreement with the findings of Zimmerman & Campillo (2003) [13], who argued that having the knowledge and skill does not produce a high quality problem solving ability. He further emphasized that, it is people's lack of self-assurance to use these personal resources, and that such confidence and self-efficacy and predictive of persistence and effort during problem solving due to their beliefs about personal competence and value. This confidence they conclude, can only be acquired through Guidance and Counselling.

6. Conclusion

The study explored guidance services and pre-service

teachers' problem solving ability in one of the Ghanaian public Colleges of Education. The findings showed that, orientation and counselling were the two services most offered in the college. It was revealed that study habits, relationship, anxiety, and financial difficulties were the topmost problems bordering the students. The results also showed a significant difference between pre-service teachers who had Guidance and Counselling and those who did not have in their problem solving ability. Again, with respect to gender, male and female pre-service teachers did not differ in their problem solving abilities. It is recommended that counsellors should create more awareness of the Guidance services in the college so as to improve pre-service teachers' attitude towards them. An important implication of the findings for counsellors is that, other services such as evaluation and follow-up services should be offered so that the effectiveness of the guidance programme could be determined. This could go a long way to meet the needs of the students. This paper would be useful to all agents of Guidance and Counselling such as the Pre-service Teachers, Counsellors, Tutors and School Administrators.

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