

RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE EFFECT OF TRUST, ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES AND STIGMATIZATION ON THE PATRONAGE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES BY STUDENTS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KUMASI METROPOLIS/ASHANTI REGION

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ABSTRACT

Students need guidance in environment and health linkages, plus gaining attitudes, info, and skills that result in failure or success of life. Counseling is progressively vital to encourage well-being of a child. Effective advice and counseling must aid students improve their self-esteem and attain their life goals. It is critical to emphasize that thorough advice and counseling is one strategy to achieve educational greatness. Guidance and counselling services are widely recognized as being beneficial in molding the making of decision and pupils' and employees' thinking abilities. The study involved students at universities in the Kumasi metropolis in examining the effect of trust, accessibility of services and stigmatization on guidance and counseling services' patronage. The study employed quantitative research with survey design. This study method was considered as explanatory to test the hypotheses. The population of the study was 3577 students at Kumasi Technical University and Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development. The researcher employed a non-probability sampling which is a snowball sampling technique. The sample size was determined by the number of responses obtained which was 236. The researcher employed Google Forms to collect data. The quantitative tools used were Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 26) and Microsoft Excel to analyze data. The study revealed that trust was positively and significantly related with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students. The study found that accessibility of services was positively and significantly related with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students. The study further revealed that stigmatization was positively and significantly related with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students.

KEYWORDS

stigmatization, guidance and counselling, accessibility of services, trust and tertiary institutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

In many cultures, there is an ingrained strongly belief that, when people are given the correct situations, they can help others with their problems. Few individuals aid others in identifying the way to solve, deal with, or overcome their challenges (Ackumey, 2003). Students study in a practical approach at schools when there is good cooperation between students and teachers. As they become aware of possibilities and take use of them, young people have a sense of freedom in their life. Helping should, at its best, empower people to break free from shackles and efficiently manage their lives (Adejimola and Tayo-Olajubutu, 2009). Over the years, extraordinary social and economic transformations have altered the way we govern our lives. As a result, not all of the lessons learned in the past are applicable to today's difficulties. Effective counseling, mainly in institutions for education, is progressively vital (Alice et al., 2013).

Girls and boys, in addition to young women and men, need guidance in environment and health linkages, plus gaining attitudes, info, and skills that result in failure or success of life. Counseling is progressively vital to encourage well-being of a child. Effective advice and counseling must aid young individuals improve their self-esteem and attain their life goals. Counseling must permit people to engage fully in and profit from social

and economic progress of the nation (Anim, 2005). It is apparent that school counseling services are critical in giving confidential help to students to make a favorable learning atmosphere in which students will commit more time and attention to studying while obtaining assistance. Counselling and guidance occur on several levels in everyday life; for example, in a society, lawyers counsel clients, doctors advise patients, lecturers counsel pupils, and parents counsel their kids at every educational level (Appiah, 2013).

It is critical to emphasize that thorough advice and counseling is one strategy to achieve educational greatness. That means subject lecturers must participate in providing guidance and reorganizing the curriculum for academic to make time for guidance of development (Alice et al., 2013). Guidance and counselling services are widely recognized as being beneficial in molding the making of decision and pupils' and employees' thinking abilities (Aspen et al., 2015). It is also suggested that such services be available in areas where children are growing up without understanding what is expected of them. In Ghana's tertiary institutions, there appears to be little or no evidence of counseling services (Assuah, 2004). There are several instances of kids growing up with no direction and choosing bad decisions. Several young individuals, for example, choose to marry young, whereas others choose subjects with no suitable mixture

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during enrolment of school (Assuah, 2004). Students may be stigmatized as a result of patronizing assistance and counseling. This could lead to a decrease in the number of students seeking guidance and counseling. Goffman was the first to define stigmatization as a sociological construct (Goffman, 1963). It's been described as a method wherein some human qualities, known as stigmas, are labeled negatively and stereotyped (Esser et al., 2017; Link and Phelan, 2001). Stigmatization has been linked to isolation, social exclusion, and variations in the affected person's life status, such as career chances or housing, as well as influencing personal identity (Link and Phelan, 2006; Link and Phelan, 2001; Goffman, 1963).

Labeling process, according to Goffman, whether done by oneself or others, frequently comprises shame as a of disapproval or self-stigmatization form (Goffman, 1963). It's crucial to differentiate between external and internal stigmatization since people stigmatized don't always classify with others' unfavorable categorization (Ernst, 2016). In social interactions, stigmatization has an orienting role, as it aids to maintain norms and predictable conduct. According to Hohmeier, distancing oneself from a stigmatized individual preserves one's own identity while normalizing or devaluing the other (Hohmeier, 1975). Likewise, according to stigmatization is not constant and is dependent on personal characteristics, social ties, and settings when determining whether or not something is stigmatizing (Tang et al., 2016). The use of advice and counseling services in tertiary institutions may expand as a result of trust.

Today's organizational literature has identified trust as a widely utilized concept (Bunker et al., 2004). Though numerous definitions of trust have been proposed in research studies, is the best suited for this study (Mayer et al., 1995). Trust is a trustor's readiness to be exposed to a trustee's activities based on the expectation that the trustee will conduct a specific activity (Mayer et al., 1995). The popularity of guidance and counseling services in tertiary institutions may expand due to their accessibility.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

People's stigmatization is a major factor to inequality (World Health Organization, 2019). Students may avoid seeking guidance and counseling due to stigmatization. Students may be motivated to seek guidance and counseling because they have gained their trust, or vice versa. Accessibility to guidance and counseling services may also be a factor in students' use of these services in tertiary schools. Future studies should look into the possibilities of involving all year groups of students in evaluating guidance and counselling (Sedofia, 2021). For this reason, the current study involve all year groups of students in examining the effect of trust, accessibility of services and stigmatization on guidance and counseling services' patronage by students in tertiary institutions. The study seeks to:

1. Assess the effect of trust on the patronage of guidance and counseling services by students in tertiary institutions.
2. Assess the effect of accessibility of services on the patronage of guidance and counseling services by students in tertiary institutions.
3. Assess the effect of stigmatization on the patronage of guidance and counseling services by students in tertiary institutions.

2.1 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the study will add to attribution theory. The research will contribute to literature by examining the relationship among accessibility of services, trust, stigmatization and guidance and counseling services' patronage by students in tertiary institutions. To tertiary institutions and other business organizations, the result of the study will help them in taking decisions on counseling and guidance services' patronage. To pupils, researchers and academicians, the research will serve as a guide and literature to them in their studies.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Inception of Guidance and Counseling in Ghana

With educational reforms beginning in 1987, the necessity for structured Counselling and Guidance became increasingly important in Ghana. In 1990, Junior and Senior Secondary Schools were established as a result of this. The system of Junior Secondary School (JSS) was designed to introduce pupils to basic technical and scientific abilities while also organizing them for vocational/technical skills development and academic work at level of secondary. This necessitates the use of guidance and counseling, as it is responsible for the individual's and society's educational and social development. In 1976, the then Ghanaian government issued its first order on Counselling and Guidance Services'

development in second-cycle universities (Awinsong et al., 2015). In 1982, another order was issued, signaling Counselling and Guidance Services' implementation in first-cycle universities.

Cape Coast University was tasked with educating counseling staffs providing services to ensure that these directions were followed. Furthermore, the University of Cape Coast's "Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (I.E.P.A.)" was tasked with training selected instructors from institutions that are second cycle to function as Co-coordinators for Guidance in these institutions as a temporary expedient to satisfy student needs. The directive recommended that the institution offer courses for in-service training in counselling and guidance for school heads in first-cycle institutions. This will prepare them to perform as coordinators for guidance in their institutions (Badu, 2011). In 1980, two new instructions were issued: one to include counselling and guidance in the budget estimates of 1981/82, and alternative in 1982 to introduce counselling and guidance in schools that are first cycle (Badu, 2011).

By 1981, two hundred coordinators were trained while working in the Ghana Educational Service's regional and district offices, as well as second-cycle colleges (Chan and Quinn, 2012). As a result, business disciplines, technical, and vocational were introduced to curriculum of the school in addition to the existing content. This indicates that Ghana considered guidance and counseling in the school system to be critical. The dynamic nature of our current technology world activates a multitude of forces that cause adjustment issues. Because educational institutions respond to and reflect societies' demands they serve, the projected education content and new structure in Ghana, which includes a counselling and guidance service, should be taken seriously. As a result, guidance and counseling programs have been established in private and government postsecondary schools for example Cape Coast University and the University of Education, Winneba. These institutes are responsible for training guidance and counseling experts who will provide services to different people and students.

3.2 Attribution Theory

According to one social categorization's implications, according to this idea, is "attributions" (Greenberg and Arndt, 2012). People are "naive psychologists" attempting to comprehend their social environment (Heider, 1958). One of the key mechanisms employed by humans to achieve this is "attribution" (supposing others and our own conduct and events' reasons). Certain attribution biases are also brought about by social categorization. These most common, "ultimate attribution mistake," can be characterized as the inclination to outgroups derogate and prefer the in-group when making attributions (Pettigrew, 1979). It is made up of 2 distinct biases: (i) "explaining their own group's negative acts by situational factors" (specifically, "bad luck") instead of personal characteristics, and (ii) "explaining outgroup members' positive acts by situational factors" (i.e., "good luck," or "applied effort") instead of personal characteristics.

This error is a combination of "self-serving bias" (taking success credit tendency while denying failure responsibility to guard one's self-esteem) and "group-serving bias" (the tendency to take credit for success while denying responsibility for failure in order to protect one's self-esteem) (Coleman, 2013). According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), this is a practical means of favoring one's in-group and feeling superior to others to boost one's own self-esteem. By "seeing favorable group differences as constant and unfavorable group differences as malleable," these attribution errors contribute to prejudice (Fiske, 2005). Humans mostly trust just world, that everybody receives what they merit, and that they do not unjustly suffer, according to the "just world hypothesis" in theory of attribution (Lerner, 1980). This approach to living in a "manageable and predictable environment" can likewise lead to error of attribution, which involves persecuting those suffering and blaming them for their own predicament (Lerner, 1980). Disadvantaged groups or victims of tragedy pose a threat to our belief in a just universe, and this threat prompts us to restore this functional belief in attributing these problems to one's qualities, earlier faults, or particular flaws. People can feel relieved by thinking in this way because they believe that if they do not behave in a way that would make them deserve of such disasters, they would not suffer the same fate (Greenberg et al., 2009).

3.3 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 below shows that trust, accessibility of services and stigmatization are independent variables whereas patronage of guidance and counseling services is dependent variable.

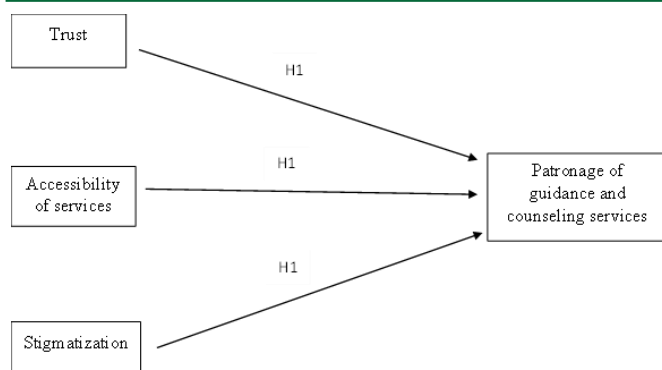


Figure 1: Researcher's conceptual framework

4. METHODOLOGY

The current study employed quantitative research. The current study also adopted a survey design. Explanatory research was employed in the current study. This is because descriptive research describes a phenomenon as they exist to portray an accurate profile of a situation and characteristics of pertinent issues. Whereas exploratory research is employed for qualitative research. The current study was quantitative research. Descriptive research does not explain the cause-and-effect relationship which the current study seeks for. Quantitative research was adopted, and a questionnaire was applied. In this regard, the purpose was to examine the effect of trust, accessibility of services and stigmatization on counseling and guidance services' patronage by students in tertiary schools. This study method was considered as explanatory to test the hypotheses. There are many business organizations in Ghana, but the researcher limited the study to one public University in Ghana. The population of the current study was defined as students at Kumasi Technical University and Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AAMUSTED) in Kumasi, Ghana.

The total number of students' strength analysis was 3577. The sample to the current research was students from Kumasi Technical University and Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development in Kumasi, Ghana. The researcher employed Google Forms to collect data. The sample size was determined by the number of responses obtained which was 236. The researcher employed a non-probability sampling which is a snowball sampling technique. Given this, the researcher used Google Forms to present the questionnaire to participants online. Sources of data were items tested to be reliable and valid in other articles. A structured and close-ended questionnaire was used for the current study. Items in the questionnaire were adopted. A questionnaire was used to ensure that each respondent receive and respond to the same questions in one format.

The quantitative tools used were Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 26) and Microsoft Excel to analyze data. Reliable and valid questionnaire items were adopted. An ethics permit was obtained from each respondent before the questionnaire was distributed. Participants were assured that they were free from any harm as a result of responding to the questionnaire. Their anonymity and confidentiality were strictly kept and securely stored. The researcher informed and clarified the study's aim and purpose to participants clearly with the absence of intended research nature misrepresentation. The researcher undertook actions to ensure the protection of participants' privacy and maintain their confidentiality and anonymity. This helped to obtain sincere and truthful responses. The researcher ensured the granting of authorization from all participants. The data collection was initiated once authorization was granted. Every participant was contacted through social media since the questionnaire was in the form of Google Forms.

5. RESULTS

5.1 The Effect of Trust on the Counseling and Guidance Services' Patronage By Tertiary Students

In Table 1, the R value is .169^a. Meaning that the association between trust and counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students is positive and strong. The R Square is .029 meaning that trust significant influence makes up 2.9% of factors' contribution that influence patronage of guidance and counseling services by students in tertiary institutions. The Std. Estimate Error between the variables is 1.524. The model is good. The model's F Change is 6.934 which is significant. Trust showed a positive

and significant relation with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students ($B = .169$, $t = 2.633$, $p = .009$).

Table 1: Model Summary, ANOVA and Coefficient for the effect of trust on the patronage of guidance and counseling services by students in tertiary institutions

Model	1
R	.169 ^a
R Square	.029
Adjusted R Square	.025
Std. Error of the Estimate	1.524
F Change	6.934
Df1	1
Df2	235
Sig. F Change	.009
Sig.	.009 ^b
Standardized Coefficients	
Beta	.169
t	2.633

Dependent Variable: counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students

Predictor: trust

5.2 The Effect of Accessibility of Services on Counseling and Guidance Services' Patronage By Tertiary Students

In Table 1, the R value is .347^a. Meaning that the association between accessibility of services and counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students is positive and strong. The R Square is .121 meaning that accessibility of services' significant impact make up 12.1% of factors' contribution that influence patronage of guidance and counseling services by students in tertiary institutions. The Std. Estimate Error between the variables is 1.716. The model is good. The model's F Change is 32.25 which is significant. Accessibility of services showed a positive and significant relation with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students ($B = .347$, $t = 5.679$, $p = .000$).

Table 2: Model Summary, ANOVA and Coefficient for the effect of accessibility of services on counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students

Model	1
R	.347 ^a
R Square	.121
Adjusted R Square	.117
Std. Error of the Estimate	1.716
F Change	32.25
Df1	1
Df2	235
Sig. F Change	.000
Sig.	.000 ^b
Standardized Coefficients	
Beta	.347
t	5.679

Dependent Variable: counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students

Predictor: accessibility of services

5.3 The Effect of Stigmatization on Counseling and Guidance Services' Patronage By Tertiary Students

In Table 1, the R value is .180^a. Meaning that the association between stigmatization and counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students is positive and strong. The R Square is .032 meaning that stigmatization's significant impact makes up 3.2% of factors' contribution

that influence patronage of guidance and counseling services by students in tertiary institutions. The Std. Estimate Error between the variables is 1.807. The model is good. The model's F Change is 7.845 which is significant. Stigmatization showed a positive and significant relation with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students ($B = .180$, $t = 2.801$, $p = .006$).

Table 3: Model Summary, ANOVA and Coefficient for the effect of stigmatization on counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students

Model	1
R	.180 ^a
R Square	.032
Adjusted R Square	.028
Std. Error of the Estimate	1.807
F Change	7.845
Df1	1
Df2	235
Sig. F Change	.006
Sig.	.006 ^b
Standardized Coefficients	
Beta	.180
t	2.801

Dependent Variable: counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students

Predictor: stigmatization

6. DISCUSSION

It was found that trust significant impact was 2.9% on of counseling and guidance services' patronage by pupils in tertiary institutions. Related can be found in an article (Aspen et al., 2015). This necessitates the use of guidance and counseling, as it is responsible for the individual's and societies educational and social development. In 1976, the Ghanaian government issued its first order on Counselling and Guidance services' development in second-cycle universities (Awinsong et al., 2015). Trust showed a positive and significant relation with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students. In 1980, two new instructions were issued: one to include counselling and guidance in budget estimates of the 1981/82, and another in 1982 to introduce counselling and guidance in schools that are first-cycle (Badu, 2011). The significant impact of accessibility of services accounted for only 12.1% of factors' contribution that impact counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students. Accessibility of services showed a positive and significant relation with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students. A directive recommended that the institute offer courses for in-service training in counselling and guiding head teachers in first-cycle institutions. This will prepare them to perform as coordinators for guidance in their institutions (Badu, 2011). The significant impact of stigmatization accounted for only 3.2% of factors' contribution that impact counseling and guidance services' patronage by students in tertiary institutions. Similar can be seen in a paper (Alice et al., 2013). Stigmatization showed a positive and significant relation with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students. Related can be found in an article (Chan and Quinn, 2012).

7. CONCLUSION

The current study involved all year groups of students in examining the effect of trust, accessibility of services and stigmatization on counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students. The current study employed quantitative research. The current study also adopted a survey design, employed explanatory research and applied a questionnaire. This study method was considered as explanatory to test the hypotheses. The population of the current study was defined as the employees in AAMUSTED in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The sample size was determined by the number of responses obtained. The researcher employed a non-probability sampling which is a snowball sampling technique. The quantitative tools used were statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 21) and Microsoft Excel to analyze data. It was revealed that trust was positively and significantly related with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students. Also, accessibility of services was

positively and significantly related with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students. Moreover, stigmatization was positively and significantly related with counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that guidance and counseling coordinators and school counsellors build trust from student side so that guidance and counseling patronage can increase. Guidance and counseling coordinators should volunteer to discourage stigmatization on counseling and guidance services' patronage by tertiary students. Guidance and counseling services should be made easily accessible. Future studies should explore the need to engage student leaders as pioneers of guidance and counselling services. Also, the impact of adding counseling and guidance services as a course among the numerous courses offered by students on their patronage.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research is my own work and to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previous, except where due acknowledgment has been made in text.

COMPETING INTEREST

There was no conflict of interest in this study.

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