



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## THE NEW TREND OF EDUCATION: PATHWAY TO EMPOWER HIGHER EDUCATION IN GHANA

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## ABSTRACT

Under certain circumstances, the school and students can serve as catalysts for changes in the community, the school, the students' own lives, and their families that will improve the environment and students' health. The research used a qualitative study methodology to collect and examine secondary data on the study objectives at the national, local, and global levels. The review concentrated on publications on educational interventions and policies that ensure equity, including books, peer-reviewed articles, and reports. The authors synthesized the literature based on the major themes they identified by analyzing the main points of each article using a grounded theory technique. The prospects for higher education to address the issues of education brought on by the pandemic are presented in this essay centered on improvement need in the delivery of instructional in the Ghanaian environment. When it comes to delivering higher education, e-learning should be an option, especially in Ghana and other countries where COVID-19 has been a pain in the neck. Due to the peculiar circumstances of today, it is strongly advised that higher education institutions in Ghana and around the world include environmental and health courses in the curriculum for every college student and offer learners with easy access to medical and mental health services in a well-thought-out manner. Until COVID-19 and any upcoming pandemics are effectively managed and physical contact is once again acceptable. This would guarantee that the objectives of education for development are realized in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Ghanaian universities must improve their medical and support services of student so that local communities and areas outside of academia can continuously assess and apply health practices.

## KEYWORDS

environmental problem, students, university, mental health and medical services

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The term "electronic learning" refers to all technologically assisted online learning platforms that have been used by individuals and organizations to deliver instruction and learner engagement as well as provide access to resources and content (Delen and Liew, 2016). Undoubtedly, the global COVID-19 epidemic has had an impact on a variety of human endeavors, including schooling (Mouchantaf, 2020). In order to stop COVID-19 spread, according to a study, several institutions of education shuttered their doors and stopped face-to-face instruction (Gupta et al., 2020). As said by some researcher, the pandemic upset numerous systems, particularly the irrelevant ones (Li and Lalani, 2020). Several universities around the world are fervently transitioning to these electronic study methods in part or fully for a variety of beneficial reasons, such as providing unrestricted educational access to several outside campus of the institution, encouraging flexibility in process of the learning and teaching, and clearing lecture halls that are typically crowded during busy academic seasons (Hadullo et al., 2018).

In 2001, for instance, the academic units at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) made the decision to offer instructional materials for more than two thousand, three hundred courses in order to reach more than 200,000,000 researchers and students worldwide (Yvonne, 2016). According to a study, these and online platforms' other benefits enable learners and professors to be more independent in their research and academic endeavors (Vidakis and Charitakis, 2018). By boosting the abilities of both students and teachers, online learning and teaching technology has several benefits over conventional face-to-face approaches

of instruction (Alfraih and Alanezi, 2016). There is no doubt that it is a more effective and trustworthy method of knowledge exchange that crosses all boundaries and significantly enhances global education and training (Vidakis and Charitakis, 2018). The availability of a favorable environment for corporate effective training in addition to lifetime access to resources of learning are additional noteworthy benefits of online learning (Tetteh, 2016). As said by Garrison (2017), it also cuts the time spent on learning and teaching by 50%. Regardless of the benefits given and many more unlisted, if our pupils are unable to adapt to or misunderstand it, we will lose the tremendous advantages (Tarhini, 2017).

Information communication technologies (ICTs) became more pervasive during Ghana's sector of education with schools' COVID-19-induced suspension on March 15, 2020 as part of our effort to stop the novel coronavirus from spreading (Cromwell, 2020). As said by UNESCO, the forced closure severely impacted university operations and deprived learners of their anticipated advancement objectives and goals (UNESCO, 2020). Hence, administrators at our universities acted pragmatically to address the situation COVID-19 limits had caused in the educational system. It is evident that in Ghana's university education of post-COVID, ICTs will continue to be the most reliable method for remote learning and a supplement to the very traditional on-campus face-to-face learning and teaching under the control of lecturers (Sue et al., 2003). The good news is that several Ghanaian higher education institutions have significantly increased their infrastructure of e-learning in reaction to the primary difficulties. Though, there is still work to be done in the areas of evidence-based practices, online mental health and medical services, and environmental sustainability. In order to achieve Sustainable Development

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Goal 3 (promote well-being and guarantee healthy lives for everyone at all ages) and Millennium Development Goal 7 (guarantee environmental sustainability), it is critical to provide assistance and direction to the numerous students and employees (United Nations, 2022; World Health Organization, 2022). The conclusion of this study is that administrators at our universities will need to:

- Include environmental and health topics in the curriculum;
- Include online resources for mental health and medical care.

## 2. MENTAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

Given the rising need for such services at postsecondary schools, the majority of colleges offer some kind of on-campus counseling center or services (Watkins et al., 2012). Relatively few small institutions with counseling centers or services use a triage method for students in need of immediate attention. The adoption of a triage system will undoubtedly provide some challenges for small schools, such as staffing shortages and preparing for increased client flow (Rockland-Miller and Eells, 2006). However, the existence of such a system enables counseling centers to take advantage of the fleeting window of time when a disturbed student is ready to get assistance. Additionally, especially at small institutions, using unconventional triage procedures involving educators, clergy, or Aboriginal advisers should be taken into consideration. Complete diagnostic evaluations are frequently unavailable, and postsecondary institutions rarely use standardized diagnostic instruments. The campus staff may find it easier to direct students to the right resources (such as further counseling, support services, etc.) if these exams and tools are used more frequently (Mowbray et al., 2006).

According to some research, culturally appropriate mental health interventions (such as those delivered in the clients' native tongue) are more effective than those that are not (Griner and Smith, 2006). Few respondents, meanwhile, claimed that the personnel of the counseling services are made up of people from various backgrounds. Therefore, a policy promoting staff diversity might be useful. For instance, hiring Aboriginal advisors may be advantageous for Canadian universities in northern towns with larger percentages of Aboriginal students (Statistics Canada, 2006). Additionally, "e-health initiatives" that connect minority students with specialized clinicians must be taken into account (Reavley and Jorm, 2010). Finally, there were few reports of peer counselors or the inclusion of self/group components in counseling sessions in smaller universities. These methods might ease the strain on scarce resources, especially in smaller schools, but further research is required to determine how beneficial they are (Webel et al., 2010). Long-term therapy is typically not offered, which is in line with worries that campus MHSs are only concerned with short-term therapy (Stone et al., 2000). Off-site referral may result in an additional cost load, which may be troublesome for students without enough insurance or resources (Blanco et al., 2008). There are no official follow-up processes for patients who need lasting therapy, which is typically offered off campus. Having a clear policy is crucial because data indicate that a significant portion of off-site referrals fail (Owen et al., 2007). According to a study, it may be beneficial to give official campus follow-ups for customers during the transition and to routinely update lists of available community practitioners (Washburn and Mandrusiak, 2010).

## 3. CONCERN, FEELINGS OF POWERLESSNESS, AND INDIVIDUALIZATION OF THE CAUSES

The natural science disciplines of biology, chemistry, and physics have been in charge of environmental education in schools in many European nations. In biology, attempts have been undertaken to better understand how pollution concentration levels affect human and animal existence as well as ecosystem equilibrium (Gericke et al., 2020). The effects of future increases in nitrates in surface waters, CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, the destruction of rain forests, and the usage of drinking water, among other things, have been predicted. The severity of environmental issues, such as nitrates in water, acidity of rainwater, oxygen content in lakes, contaminants in the air, and organisms in polluted water, are illustrated and documented by laboratory tests. Students now have a solid and well-founded grasp of and insight into the effects of environmental problems on people and communities as well as the natural world thanks to such practical and theoretical work in the natural sciences (Buchman and Henderson, 2019). Additionally, information has been given to pupils on how environmental circumstances are getting worse, which heightens the gravity of the effects in the future. In short, the effect-levels, in theory and in practice, have been the focus of the studies. The rationale behind this strategy is that if students can comprehend how pollution threatens both human life and the environment, they will become engaged and motivated to find solutions (Tun, 2019). However, because environmental issues are

intricately tied to our technology and cultures, identifying their intricate origins must come before making any contributions to finding solutions (Manisalidis et al., 2020). This necessitates teaching strategies that integrate causes and actions in addition to effects at all levels. In other words, a science-based approach to environmental education can help pupils become concerned, worried, and anxious about environmental issues and the future of the environment. The risk is that we might not advance to the level of action. Environmental education that emphasizes science can lead to the growth of anxiety and inaction (Douthit et al., 2021).

As a result, even when time and effort are invested in measuring the oxygen content in a stream or the acidity of rain to demonstrate environmental problems, the outcome is awareness of the existence and scope of problems rather than an improved capacity to take action. The scientific method also leads to an individualization of problem causes and, as a result, an individualization of responsibility for them. When, for instance, concern over energy issues and pollutant concentrations is limited to analyzing car exhaust emissions (Alharbi et al., 2018). Students may conclude that drivers are too responsible for problems related to rising energy consumption rather than the social factors that have made cars a necessary form of transportation in our culture. Additionally, the consequences on human behavior of large businesses' advertising operations are disregarded when the links between lung cancer and smoking or between eating habits and heart disease are highlighted (Ali et al., 2019). Environmental and health issues are not contextualized within their cultural and economic realities when environmental and health education is only based on the sciences. Students are given the implicit perspective that the individual is to blame for the issues and is the root of them. The complex of "causes" is never made clear, and the degree of action is never attained. More importantly, the prevalent method of teaching about the environment and health promotes an individualistic, fundamentally flawed view of society. It is difficult to remove environmental and health education from the scientific paradigm. How much science is actually required in environmental education, we can speculate in this vein. In order to ensure that viewpoints from the humanities and social sciences are given attention, time, and energy in environmental and health education, the authors frame the problem in this way—not necessarily because less science is required. It is thanks to the current e-learning trend in education that environmental and health issues may now be taught to all students without being limited to only science majors.

## 4. GLOBAL TRENDS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM

If one considers teaching to be a profession, one must first determine if universities provide sufficient preparation for teaching professionals. Connecting theory and practice is a typical issue in education. To close the gap, a group of researchers propose that teacher preparation should include more extensive contact with all the components of a teacher's profession in general (Westbury et al., 2005). According to Sachs, this is accomplished by making teaching a more collaborative and research-involved profession (Sachs, 2016). Economic issues exacerbate the situation with research. Costs for private education, public education, inclusion promotion, rising enrolment rates, and funding, among other things, have risen in recent years (Senplades, National Development Plan 2017–2021). According to Senate Agreement N.2013-160 (2013), education programs are seen as being in the public interest and are becoming more and more in demand. Effective policies that reflect the value of the profession and convey it with suitable compensation should take teaching programs into consideration. To improve their living and working conditions, to advance their profession, and to attract and retain qualified individuals as teachers and professors, instructors must be in a position to do so economically (UNESCO, 2013). Since the pandemic, the educational process has evolved, and connectivity has played a significant role (Bocconi et al., 2012; Bowen, 2013). This element is a key component of the new teaching and learning modalities, which favor accessibility, mediation by electronic devices, and a greater degree of flexibility in the curricula (Adams-Becker et al., 2017; Barnett, 2014; NMER, 2018). Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are in high demand as a result of this growing interest in online learning (Kochan and Dyer, 2017).

Promoting active learning techniques is necessary for training in educational programs. More efforts are required, according to a study, to boost creativity and incorporate evidence-based active media education practices, particularly to promote student involvement, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities (Bucklin et al., 2021). With the use of factors like satisfaction, performance, student engagement, and teacher assessment, a group researcher produced extremely positive and encouraging outcomes for topic assessment through cooperative learning (Bermejo Daz et al., 2021). They suggested incorporating topic matter and

cooperative learning into the teaching style. Another tactic investigated by some of researchers was service-learning, which was designed to enhance managerial skills in teachers' early training as they made their first encounter with the realities of the classroom and was crucial to the entire training process (Giles Girela et al., 2021). The development of competences can be aided by active strategy training that is included into experiential learning frameworks. Specific competencies valued in training are indicated by recent research of educational programs. A group researcher found that young individuals with a stronger overall self-concept and good self-emotional management abilities pursue a university degree through occupational training among Spanish primary school students (Espejo-Garcés et al., 2021). A group researcher found that the most recognized competencies were (a) critical interpretation of knowledge and reflection on pedagogical and professional practice; (b) designing and applying learning and evaluation activities; and (c) collaborative work and leadership (Ferro et al., 2021). This research involved future physical education teachers in 23 universities in Chile.

A research of Spanish university students enrolled in a degree program in Early Childhood and Primary Education was carried out (Ciesielkiewicz et al., 2021). They took part in a global service-learning project and evaluated their competencies in three areas stated in the education degree program: technology acquisition and usage, problem-solving, and global challenges using an electronic portfolio (ePortfolio). The integration of knowledge management in diverse domains was assisted by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) during the course of this project, which was conducted concurrently with comparative research of pedagogy used with engineering students (Ferrero-de-Lucas et al., 2021). In a different study, students who would later become physical education instructors had the preconceived notion that in order to teach well, they would need to understand several didactic techniques and subjects. However, it was discovered that the active-learning practice exercises for these students, who had no prior experience with face-to-face instruction, were crucial in giving the subject significance (López and Nardi, 2021). In line with this, this study examines design trends in educational programs, student and faculty demands for creative education, and opinions on the future of educational programs. Decision-makers, academics, curriculum developers, researchers, students, and social organizations with an interest in education programs will all benefit from this study. However, other disciplines in many fields might find the data interesting.

## 5. ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

Academic institutions have a responsibility to inform the campus community and beyond about the need of becoming major participants in achieving significant developmental interventions like the Sustainable Development Goal 3 (promote well-being and safeguard healthy lives for everyone at all ages) and the Millennium Development Goal 7 (guarantee environmental sustainability) (United Nations, 2022; World Health Organization, 2022). African higher education institutions have frequently been advised to have the ability to set up "a unit or an office to sensitize the institution about the importance of the MDGs and SDGs, to serve as a clearinghouse for information about the SDGs, to coordinate all activities related to the MDGs and SDGs, to ensure that the MDGs and SDGs are mainstreamed in all the activities of the institution, and to mobilize resources, whether national or international" (McCloskey, 2015). Universities and other research institutes have collaborated on most development projects and frequently participated in governance efforts to improve people's quality of life, both locally and globally. Higher education institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa conducted a survey on sustainable development, and the results show that while most universities do promote sustainable development, their efforts are rather "modest" (GUNI, IAU and AAU, 2011). It also calls for review and African Universities' repositioning to establish plans to play an added active function in development of nation. This study indicates that African Universities' involvement in development of nation is frequently below 5% (Bloom et al., 2006). They demand that in order to promote national development, African universities form alliances and networks with businesses and other organizations. In a similar spirit, Mazzoleni urges academics and policymakers to take direct action to support and contribute to competitiveness, growth, and development in addition to their crucial role as information creators (Mazzoleni, 2008). In fact, the study on sustainable development goals supports the initial hypotheses and comes to the conclusion that the current momentum is evidence of advancement that universities can use to guarantee environmental sustainability, promote healthy lifestyles, and ensure the wellbeing of all students at all ages.

## 6. RESEARCH METHOD

The research used a qualitative study methodology to collect and examine secondary data on the study objectives at the levels of national, local, and global. The review concentrated on publications on educational

interventions and policies that ensure equity, including books, reports, and peer-reviewed articles. The Constructivist paradigm, which served as the study's foundation, permitted the researchers to create senses by engaging with actual events (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2007). As difficulties or challenges highlighted in such papers can be the foundation and offer instructions further for selecting the research subject, collection of secondary data focused on unpublished and published materials offers valuable data for qualitative study (Merriam, 1998). This method was deemed appropriate in this study since government publications frequently detail environmental, mental health, and medical services, access, and outcomes in Ghana (development plans and policies). As said by Pawar, these records contained valuable info (Pawar, 2004). According to a study, the strategy also provided a thorough in-depth and summary study of every aspect of the phenomenon (Neuman, 2003). This study process includes three primary stages, specifically: literature search; reading, gathering, and interpreting the literature. These phases were carried out using step-by-step method by a group researcher to the standard review of literature. In short, the research procedure started with the identification of metrics for evaluating environmental and health education, as well as online mental health and medical services (Cronin et al., 2008). Additionally, the gathering of data centred on the indicators, the development of parameters and issue questions centred on the indicators, the parameters and issue questions centred on framework of Scott, the collected data's comparison with the indicators to gauge educational equity level, and references to address situations of recognised inequity of education. These assisted the authors in comprehending the issue under investigation, so they could effectively add to the creation and application of policy. The four main steps of the approach used to address the study's objectives are explained below.

### 6.1 Step 1: initial review of pertinent documents on equity of education

This study is based on an interdisciplinary corpus of academic research on Ghana that focuses on medical services, online mental health care, and environment and health courses. a thorough desk-based examination of educational institutions and regulations to guarantee equity in students' access to medical and mental health care. The writers specifically assessed all English-language scholarly material on Ghana that was available for educational access. The Scopus database, Google Scholar, SPRINGER and SAGE Journals online, Taylor and Francis, and the Scopus database were the search engines utilized for the research. Search terms such environmental difficulties, health problems, mental health issues, and medical services were used to help find secondary data. The remaining were already-in-place methods for evaluating schooling as well as variables that have an impact on such monitoring and evaluation. This was found suitable given that the scholarship that was accessible lacked some of the information needed to complete the assessment. Even those that were available tried to accomplish a goal that had nothing to do with the goal of this investigation. In order for the writers to conduct a more thorough analysis of the issues, pertinent reports of government were gathered (as primary data) to complement those gained through journals of peer-reviewed. The authors synthesized the literature based on the major themes they identified by analyzing the main points of each article using a grounded theory technique.

### 6.2 Step 2: choice of Scott's framework and pertinent reports of government for analysis

Scott's framework was found suitable for carrying out the study based on the thorough review of materials on evaluating environmental hazards and health problems and enhancing mental health and medical services. The basis for the examination was combined with three important government policies, four reports, and Ghana. Their primary objectives or focus, methods of effectiveness and implementation of enhancing educational achievement, and ensuring equity in access to mental health and medical care were the main selection criteria employed. The papers used comprised:

- polices for example (i) 2010–2020 Education Strategic Plan; (ii) the Ghana Education Guidelines and Standard; and (iii) the ICT in Policy of Education.
- reports such as (i) Ministry of sustainability and environmental reports, (ii) Report of Ghana Education Sector, Research Consortium on Access to Education, (iii) Ministry of health, (iv) Tertiary counselling unit

### 6.3 Step 3: Assessment criteria for educational equity

In this step, Scott's framework was identified and examined to serve as the assessment standard by which the education reports and policies reviewed were assessed. The following criteria were used to structure this



paper's discussion section:

- Sustainability of the environment;
- Expand inclusiveness and access;
- An equal chance to learn;
- Accountability for schools;
- Equitable resource allocation.

#### 6.4 Step 4: Obtained documents analysis (policies and reports)

The chosen educational reports and documents underwent a qualitative review. The data collected underwent content analysis for analysis. A few cases were counted, and key goals related to environmental issues, health issues, mental health, and medical services were identified. This gave the researchers the chance to assess the importance of fostering educational sustainability and access to education in the papers. The absence of pertinent data for every topic made it difficult to apply every issue question centred on Scott's methodology. However, the authors made sure that the requirement for equal access for all pupils to environmental issues, health issues, mental health issues, and medical services was covered. The qualitative analysis helped to identify adopted strategies or approaches for increasing mental health and medical services and improving outcomes throughout Ghana. It also helped to justify the design of the policies and reports that were gathered.

### 7. FINDINGS

Investments in education are known to have considerable net returns that support development (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2009). In the pursuit of sustainable development, governments have so demonstrated a commitment to ensuring and enhancing formal education access. Most people agree that having access to education is a "right" that is justified by modernity and the enlightenment ideology's forms (UNESCO, 2014; Christie, 2010; Christie, 2010). This right has been affirmed by numerous international treaties, including Human Rights' Universal Declaration, International Covenant on Economic, Cultural, and Social Rights, International Bill of Human Rights, and the Convention on the Child's Rights. It is also asserted in Sustainable Development Goals and Millennium Development Goals (UNESCO, 2017). Therefore, equitable, high-quality education has implications for eliminating poverty and income inequality among the world's people (Serneels et al., 2017). Problems with the environment and health affect everyone. My starting point is that, if environmental issues are to be resolved over the long term, education that supports the growth of students' capacities to influence local and global environmental issues—that is, education that fosters the development of students' capacities to take action, or action-competence—is required. Two distinct societal tendencies present two distinct challenges to this educational endeavor. Environmental issues are causing more concern than ever. However, at the same time, there is a growing sense of helplessness in the face of widespread technical and social advancements, which presents itself in activities that are narcissistic and introverted. The most crucial challenge for environmental education in schools is where these two trends clash: starting with students' opinions, worries, and anxieties and working methodically to turn their helplessness into a desire and capacity to act. As a result, e-learning can provide equal access for all students to environmental and health courses as well as to medical and mental health services.

Additionally, Ghanaian institutions must improve their student and medical support services so that local communities and areas outside of academia can consistently monitor and implement health practices. Due to the pandemic's global trends, higher education must give priority to the career-counselling, academic, and even medical programs and services that must be available to learners both online and on-campus. Health is without a doubt essential for the long-term advancement of humanity. It is a fundamental human right and a driving force behind the development of society's economy. "State of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not only the absence of disease or disability," is how health is described. The economic, social, and physical environment, as well as a person's unique traits and behaviors, are some of the factors that influence health. They specifically comprise elements including socioeconomic standing, education, the physical environment, social support systems, genetics, access to healthcare, and gender. One of the 17 goals that compose Sustainable Development's 2030 Agenda captures these global drivers (World Health Organization, 2022). SDG 3 aims to guarantee everyone's health and wellbeing. It aims to address all general health issues, such as narcotic and substance abuse, lifestyle or degenerative diseases, reproductive and sexual health, communicable diseases, health financing, and the health care infrastructure and system, as well as enhancing nations' ability to take action against the risk of trans-border diseases (World Health Organization, 2022). Universities are one example

of an institution that has been acknowledged as a major player in enhancing sustainable growth in the health sector. Universities have an impact on communities, society, and graduates through teaching, learning, and research. Universities have also strengthened efforts toward sustainability through institutional strategies, services and outreach, funding, and partnerships. While some universities have achieved spectacular results, others in Africa have made only modest strides toward sustainability (GUNi, IAU Report 2011: x).

#### 7.1 Empowering Higher Education

The prospects for higher education to address issues on education brought on by COVID-19 are presented in this essay centred on improvement need in delivery of instructional in the Ghanaian environment.

#### 7.2 Integrate Environment and Health Courses in the Curriculum

Courses on health and the environment should be included in higher education programs. Making the curriculum as subtle to the world's requirements at the present time is very crucial. Given that everyone works with environmental and health issues, all university students should have access to the integration of fundamental environmental and health courses (Türkoglu, 2019). According to a study, environmental literacy-focused learning materials can likewise be created for use in classroom education and for societal training of a larger audience (Türkoglu, 2019). Citizens who are literate environmentally and who can represent environmental health issues for social action can be produced via environmental science education programs (Keselman et al., 2011). This is done in order to adjust to the actual problems that the world is facing, raise awareness among students, improve their attitudes, strengthen educational health practices, and put in place efficient environmental education policies (Türkoglu, 2019). Teachers may encounter obstacles as a result of integration, including time restraints, pressure from enforced rules, and a lack of expertise in teaching environmental health, among other things (Keselman et al., 2011). However, environmental health is highly valued around the world, particularly in light of the current global pandemic. Future environmental challenges may be addressed by this educational project. All educational levels need to improve their environmental hygiene procedures. Beginning with the education of students in schools, society becomes more responsive. Universities face a challenge in educating students about societal issues, particularly health issues. Environmental hygiene must be a top focus in schools in order to stop infectious diseases' outbreak and spread in the future, as the pandemic has led to schools' closure globally. Additionally, knowledge and behavioral guidelines for the prevention of infectious diseases should be provided to students. The pupils can be provided with health management tools so they can practice the proper protocol until it becomes part of the school's culture. The institution must develop a policy to manage the virus's primary means of transmission if it is to accomplish its objective. As a result, sound environmental and health policies ought to be developed and built around a university's sustainable environmental framework.

#### 7.3 Integrate an Online Medical and Mental Health Services

There must be many principles and values that take into account the expressed needs of a higher education enterprise's stakeholders, especially the students (Ludeman et al., 2009). Schools must improve their student and medical support services so that local communities and areas outside of academia can constantly review and apply health practices. Due to the pandemic's global trends, higher education must give priority to the career-counselling, academic, and even medical programs and services that must be available to learners both online and on-campus. Actually, the demand for university mental health services has received a lot of attention as a result of mental diseases' rising prevalence among college learners (Dalky and Gharaibeh, 2018; Pedrelli et al., 2015). Students should have easy access to free online services of health from representatives of medical staff and licensed health professionals like guidance counselors and psychologists even when they are away from the centers. These services include medical counseling, teleconferencing of mental health, and other associated health services online. According to a study, among a variety of health services, primary care services (98%) and health promotion (90%) have the highest availability (McBride et al., 2010). The care services online would speed up the evaluations and offer sufficient support for improved outcomes for Ghanaian students seeking care and participation. Since mental health is a component of overall wellness that is linked to academic success of students, other services of health-related like services of mental health likewise require the construction of their flow chart management and promotion of this agenda (Dalky and Gharaibeh, 2018). Because students are active on social media, institutions can advance in promoting services of health for them, particularly once done through dissemination online.

#### 7.4 Strengthen Research Efforts, Evidence-Based Practices, and Data Monitoring

Institutions of higher education are predictable to show stakeholders that

they are responsive. The standards that governmental organizations, accrediting bodies, and other stakeholders are setting for higher-level institutions' functioning have raised expectations. Because stakeholders want institutions to provide evidence to back up their claims of excellence and effectiveness, higher education must show efficacy and efficiency in educational administration. A lot more proof is required to decide how institutions of higher education must react to the economic, educational, and job issues because of the way that the world is evolving right now, including how the pandemic has altered how educational systems should operate. Reports of research on the effects of the COVID-19 on the nation's system of education are even more urgently needed. Higher education institutions must take advantage of these chances to improve data collection, evidence-based procedures, and documentation for the student programs and services that are provided. Higher education has produced many novel programs, but these advances have not undergone thorough evaluation. For instance, there is minimal published research on the use of counseling centers in colleges (Hinderaker, 2013). More scientific information on mental health treatments' provision in campuses of college nationally and locally is required, even in Ghana. So, the three key components of student success are research, evaluation, and strategic planning. The difficulties in the future of providing information that is essential for accountability and openness can be met by these research endeavors. Even in the pandemic face or other viruses' potential spread in the years ahead, faculty, professionals, and researchers in higher education must intensify and engage their efforts in research, strategic planning, and evaluation to increase practices of evidence-based, document best practices, and enhance student learning in Ghanaian universities.

## 8. DISCUSSION

Evidence from the literature suggests that online learning and e-learning have a wide range of educational advantages. More importantly, e-learning has advantages for both teachers and students (Maikish, 2006). Evidently, e-learning can enable learners at institutions of higher education to finish their education whereas also pursuing personal obligations and their employment without having to worry about busy schedules (Borstoff and Lowe, 2007). A startling rise in online courses can be attributed to the advantages realized for both students and institutions (Karth, 2006). According to study, among other researchers, many students found it challenging to transition to an online learning environment because they lacked access to computers, laptops, and tablets (Maphosa, 2020; Aboagye et al., 2020). The university's ICT directorate's lack of infrastructure support will be a major hindrance to the successful deployment of online courses in environment and health, mental health, and medical services. It has been discovered that providing users with timely support and training can help them successfully transition to and integrate e-learning with their studies (Alhabeeb and Rowley, 2018; Solangi et al., 2018). Management at universities will need to pay close attention to internet data cost in order to support online learning and teaching. In order to provide steady and dependable internet data for use, institutions may need to demand a fee online from students in addition to their tuition expenses (Adarkwah, 2021). According to high data costs in Malaysia prevented students from completely engaging in learning online (Ramli et al., 2020). According to a study, students found it difficult to pay for internet data to assist e-learning because many parents were temporarily unemployed as a result of COVID-19 restrictions (Aboagye et al., 2020).

Services that promote self-care and lower stress mirror the fact that mental health is intimately linked to general well-being (The Jed Foundation and Clinton Foundation, 2014). Most colleges provide some kind of social support to disadvantaged groups, in addition to initiatives that encourage involvement of campus and foster a positive climate on campus. Health services (involving well-being/mental health) can be made more accessible through peer or student-to-student health educator initiatives (Kirsch et al., 2014). These courses teach students how to spot those who are in need and what resources are available to them (Kirsch et al., 2014). Although there is proof that learners who interact with peer teachers are more probable to drink alcohol less, have fewer negative effects of alcohol-related, and engage in less hazardous behaviors, only a small fraction of institutions provide training for peer health educators (White et al., 2009). Peer support programs that have been put in place, such the Student Support Network (SSN) at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in the US, have shown promise. The SSN is a program that informs leaders of students about the services available on campus for mental health and on lowering the stigma associated with asking for help. Since the program's start, there has been a notable rise in the number of "students of concern" and the general student population that counseling centers consult. While this would initially put a strain on services, it might prevent more serious problems of mental health in the long run (and, most probable, more expensive pressures on counseling services) (Kirsch et al., 2014). As a result, offering online mental health and medical services to students is something that should be supported more widely throughout Ghana and Africa.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Under certain circumstances, the school and students can serve as catalysts for changes in the community, the school, the students' own lives, and their families that will improve the environment and students' health. To encourage, stimulate, and challenge students and their ideas, teachers need to possess high-quality abilities and pedagogical competencies. Additionally essential are sincere dedication and a constructive attitude on the part of those involved in local administration. The influential members of the neighborhood must take students and their interests seriously. When it comes to delivering higher education, e-learning should be an option, especially in Ghana and other countries where COVID-19 has been a pain in the neck. Due to the peculiar circumstances at hand, it is strongly advised that higher education institutions in Ghana and around the world include environmental and health courses in the curriculum for every college student and offer learners with easy access to medical and mental health services in a well-thought-out manner until COVID-19 and any upcoming pandemics have been effectively managed and physical contact can once again be tolerated. This would guarantee that the objectives of education for development are realized in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

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