

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COUNSELLING NEEDS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS OF
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA: A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE
COUNSELLING SERVICE DELIVERY

BY
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Thesis submitted to the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the Faculty
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DECLARATION

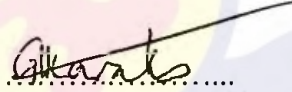
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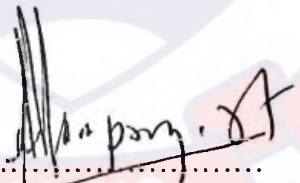
I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

Needs assessment is a pre-requisite for developing a comprehensive and relevant counselling service for students. This study assessed the counselling needs of distance students, focusing on the diploma students of the College of Distance Education (CoDE), University of Cape Coast (UCC). The explanatory sequential mixed methods design was adopted. The population of the study was 36,798 with a sample size of 1115, made up of 1110 respondents and five participants. Out of the 1110 questionnaire administered 1075, was retrieved and used. Purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.895. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) and inferential (independent samples t-test and ANOVA) statistics. However, the qualitative data were analysed manually using thematic approach. The study revealed that personal/social and practical needs were of greater concern to students than educational and vocational needs. Majority of the students indicated that non-availability of counsellors at their respective study centres was very challenging. Students differed significantly in their perception of their counselling needs on the basis of age, marital status, programme of study, and academic level, but not gender. The counselling services put in place by the College are not able to adequately meet the needs of the students. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the College's management should establish counselling offices with professional counsellors in all its regional study centres to provide effective counselling services based on the most important needs of students.

KEY WORDS

Counselling needs

Distance students

Educational needs

Personal characteristic variables

Personal-social needs

Practical needs

Vocational needs



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DEDICATION

To my husband and children.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
KEY WORDS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	8
Assumptions of the Study	12
Purpose of the Study	13
Research Questions	13
Research Hypotheses	14
Significance of the Study	15
Delimitation of the Study	17
Limitations of the Study	18
Operational Definitions of Terms	19
Organisation of the Study	19
Chapter Summary	20

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction	21
Conceptual Review	21
The Concept of Counselling	21
Requirements for Counselling	25
Components of Counselling	30
The Concepts of Needs	39
Components of Needs	46
Counselling Needs of Students	45
Counselling Needs of Distance Education Students	48
Meeting the Counselling Needs of Distance Students	49
The Need for Effective Counselling Programme for Distance Education Students	52
Theoretical Framework	58
Abraham Maslow's theory of need	58
Astin's Input-Environment-Outcome (I-E-O) model	64
Summary of Theoretical Framework	67
Empirical Review	70
Gender and Counselling Needs	70
Age and counselling needs	76
Marital Status and Counselling Needs	78
Programme of Study and Counselling Needs	81
Level of students and counselling needs	82
Students and their Counselling Needs in Terms of Broad Category of Needs	83

Students and their Counselling Needs in Terms of Specific Category of Needs	88
Distance Education Students and their Counselling Needs	90
Challenges Preventing Students from Accessing Effective Counselling Services	100
Chapter Summary	108
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS	
Introduction	109
Study Area	109
Approach to the Study	112
Research Design	113
Population	116
Sample and Sampling Procedure	120
Sources of Data and Data Collection Plan	125
Data Collection Instruments	129
Validity and Reliability of the Instrument	133
Ethical Consideration	136
Data Collection Procedures	138
Data Processing and Analysis	141
Chapter Summary	145
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
Introduction	146
Analyses of Descriptive Data	146
Analysis and Results Pertaining to the Quantitative Data of the Study	153
Testing of Hypotheses	172

Results Pertaining to the Qualitative Data of the Study	190
Discussion of the Results	204
Chapter Summary	232
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Introduction	233
Summary	233
Conclusions	238
Input variables	239
Priority Counselling Needs	240
Conducive Environment	240
Outcome	243
Contribution to Knowledge	244
Recommendations	245
Suggestions for Further Research	247
REFERENCES	249
APPENDICES	268

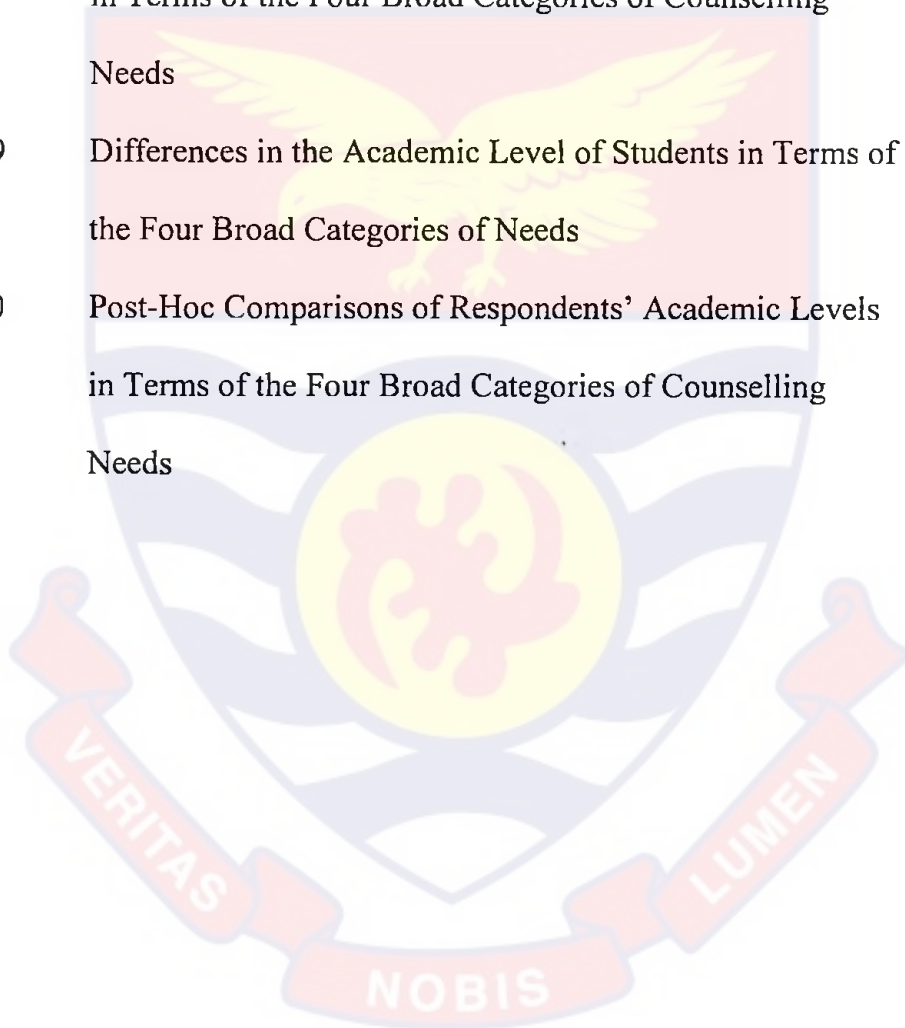
LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Distribution of Students Graduating Annually at CoDE, UCC: 2014-2018	9
2 Population Distribution of Diploma Students of CoDE, UCC	116
3 Distribution of Level 100 Diploma Students by Zone, Region, Gender and Programme	117
4 Distribution of Level 200 Diploma Students by Zone, Region, Gender and Programme	118
5 Distribution of Level 300 Diploma Students by Zone, Region, Gender and Programme	119
6 Sample Distribution of Diploma Students by Zones, Level, Gender and Programme	122
7 Distribution of Respondents by their Programme of study and Gender	147
8 Distribution of Respondents' Academic Level and Gender	149
9 Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status and Gender	150
10 Distribution of Respondents' Age by Gender	151
11 Distribution of Respondents by their Study Zone/Region and Gender	153
12 Prevalent Broad Categories of Counselling Needs of Diploma Students of CoDE, UCC	154
13 Respondents' View on Prevalent Specific Education/Academic Needs of Students	157

14	Respondents' View on Prevalent Specific Career/Vocational Needs of Students	159
15	Respondents' View on Prevalent Specific Personal-Social Needs of Students	161
16	Respondents' View on Prevalent Specific Practical Needs of Students	163
17	Respondents' View on the Extent to which Education/Academic Needs are Met at CoDE, UCC	165
18	Respondents' View on the Extent to which Prevalent Specific Career/Vocational Needs are Met at CoDE, UCC	166
19	Respondents' View on the Extent to which Prevalent Specific Personal-Social are Met at CoDE, UCC	167
20	Respondents' View on the Extent to which Prevalent Specific Practical Needs are Met at CoDE, UCC	168
21	Respondents' View on the Effectiveness of the Services Provided by the College	170
22	Challenges Confronting students in accessing effective Counselling Services Delivery in the College	171
23	Gender Differences in Four Broad Categories of the Students' Counselling Needs	172
24	Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Table on Age Group Differences among Diploma Students of CoDE, UCC Regarding their Counselling Needs	175
25	Post-Hoc Comparisons of Respondents' Age Group with regard to their Four Broad Categories of Needs	178

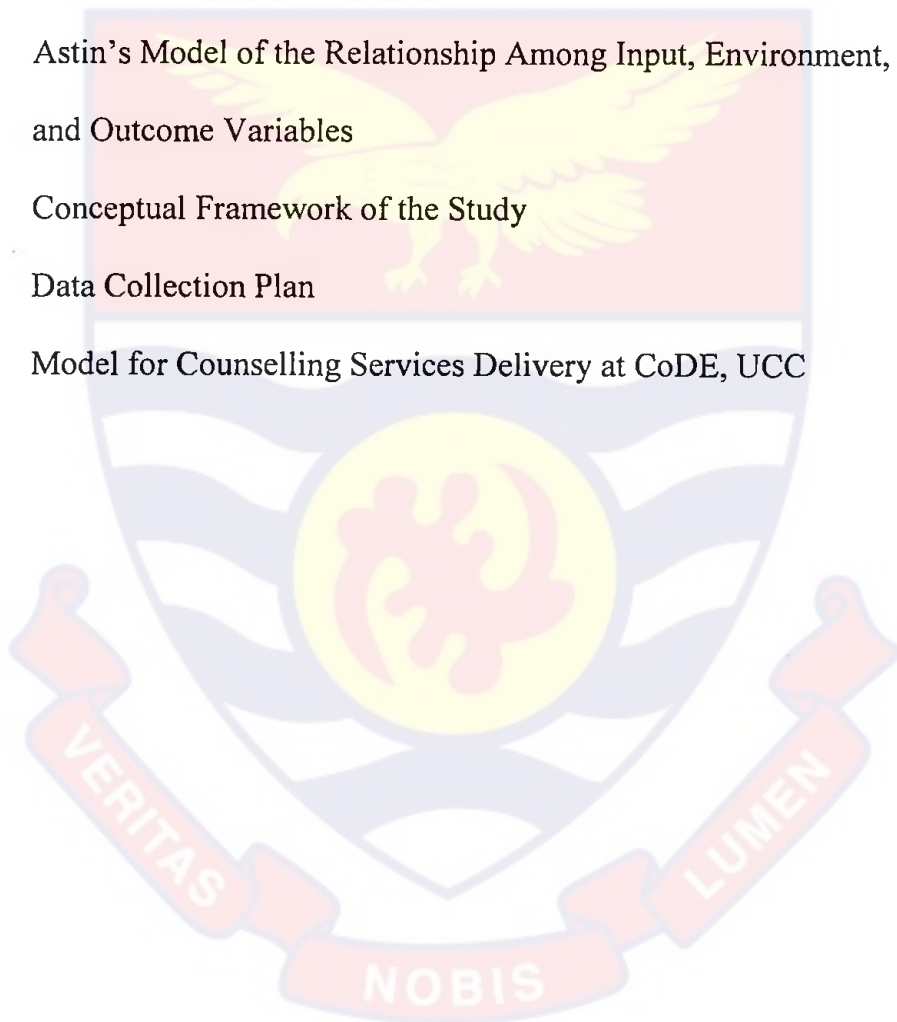
14	Respondents' View on Prevalent Specific Career/Vocational Needs of Students	159
15	Respondents' View on Prevalent Specific Personal-Social Needs of Students	161
16	Respondents' View on Prevalent Specific Practical Needs of Students	163
17	Respondents' View on the Extent to which Education/Academic Needs are Met at CoDE, UCC	165
18	Respondents' View on the Extent to which Prevalent Specific Career/Vocational Needs are Met at CoDE, UCC	166
19	Respondents' View on the Extent to which Prevalent Specific Personal-Social are Met at CoDE, UCC	167
20	Respondents' View on the Extent to which Prevalent Specific Practical Needs are Met at CoDE, UCC	168
21	Respondents' View on the Effectiveness of the Services Provided by the College	170
22	Challenges Confronting students in accessing effective Counselling Services Delivery in the College	171
23	Gender Differences in Four Broad Categories of the Students' Counselling Needs	172
24	Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Table on Age Group Differences among Diploma Students of CoDE, UCC Regarding their Counselling Needs	175
25	Post-Hoc Comparisons of Respondents' Age Group with regard to their Four Broad Categories of Needs	178

26	Effect of Marital Status on Diploma Students of CoDE, UCC Four Broad Categories of Needs	179
27	Differences in the Counselling Needs of the Students in terms of Programme of Study	181
28	Post-Hoc Comparisons of Respondents' Academic Levels in Terms of the Four Broad Categories of Counselling Needs	183
29	Differences in the Academic Level of Students in Terms of the Four Broad Categories of Needs	187
30	Post-Hoc Comparisons of Respondents' Academic Levels in Terms of the Four Broad Categories of Counselling Needs	190



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Hierarchy of Needs Diagram, Based on Maslow's Theory of Needs (Original five-stage model)	59
2 Hierarchy of Needs Diagram, Based on Maslow's Theory of Needs (The modified eight-stage model)	61
3 Astin's Model of the Relationship Among Input, Environment, and Outcome Variables	66
4 Conceptual Framework of the Study	69
5 Data Collection Plan	127
6 Model for Counselling Services Delivery at CoDE, UCC	239



LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CCE	Centre for Continuing Education
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CoDE	College of Distance Education
DBE	Diploma in Basic Education
DCO	Diploma in Commerce
DESAG	Distance Education Students Association of Ghana
DMS	Diploma in Management Studies
DPFE	Diploma in Psychology and Foundations of Education
DPU	Data Processing Unit
DSME	Diploma in Science and Mathematics Education
EFA	Education for All
GIT	Gusii Institute of Technology
GoG	Government of Ghana
IDL	Institute of Distance Learning
I-E-O	Input-Environment-Outcome
IRB	Institutional Review Board
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIT	Moi Institute of Technology
NAB	National Accreditation Board
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PASW	Predictive Analytic Software
SHS	Senior High School

SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSS	Student Support Services
SSSU	Student Support Service Unit
TAFS	Test Analysis for Surveys
TIVET	Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UEW	University of Education, Winneba
UG	University of Ghana
UN	United Nations
UPSHS	University Practice Senior High School
ZOU	Zimbabwe Open University



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The University of Cape Coast (UCC) is perceived to be the leading university in the delivery of distance education in Ghana. To achieve its core mandate, the University offers a number of support services to staff and students. One of such is counselling services. Counselling services are important in the life of every student, especially in the life of distance education students since it helps in boosting their adjustment in the distant environment and academic success meaningfully. It is against this background that the College of Distance Education (CoDE), UCC established a counselling unit in 2011 to help its students address their problems. It is believed that counselling will assist distance education students to remove barriers that prevent them from achieving academic success.

However, for counselling to be effective and serve the purposes for which they were intended, they must be based on the priority needs of the students. In other words, in order to provide relevant services, students' needs must be identified (Kangai, Rupande & Rugonye, 2011). This can only be done through a technique called needs assessment. The study, therefore, assessed the counselling needs of diploma students in CoDE, UCC with a view to making counselling services relevant and effective.

Background to the Study

Distance education has become one of the most rapidly growing fields of education in the 21st century (Carr, 2013). As a result, most countries are using it to provide opportunities for more students to reach their full potentials in the areas of educational, vocational, social and emotional development at

the tertiary level (Moore & Kearsley, 2014). According to Scott (2012), achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the “Education for All” (EFA) targets established by United Nations (UN) in the year 2000, to which African governments committed themselves, was a daunting task that required, among other initiatives, the use of distance education.

The term ‘Distance Education’ represents an approach that focuses on opening access to education and training, and freeing learners from the constraints of time and place (Tait, 2012). It also offers flexible learning opportunities to individuals and group of learners. For the purpose of accreditation, distance education is defined as a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place (National Accreditation Board of Ghana [NAB], 2015). Again, distance education can be seen as any educational process in which all or most of the teaching is conducted by someone away from the learner in space or time such that most of the communication between instructors and learners is through an artificial medium either electronic or print (Moore & Tait, 2002).

The rationale for distance education in its earliest days was to open opportunities for learners to study regardless of geographic, socio-economic or other constraints (Kangai et al., 2011; Sampson, 2013; Shearer, 2015). In Ghana, for the past 20 years or so, the universities in the country have had the unpleasant duty of turning away a large number of qualified applicants every year as a result of their inability to admit not even half of these applicants (Agyemang, 2014). This situation has been attributed to limited and deteriorating facilities. Coupled with these limited facilities is the rising cost

of education at the tertiary level. The government could not fund tertiary education all alone. There are many people in the country who still need to be trained or re-trained to update their knowledge and skills in one form or another to be able to cope with the demands of the changing times.

The government is thus hard pressed to provide adequate facilities in the various institutions of learning so as to meet the educational and training needs of these people. Unfortunately, access to education in Ghana has become problematic. The seriousness of the problem can be appreciated from the observation made by the Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference in July 1990 that the quality of education appears to be tied to the financial circumstances of parents (Barrell, 2015; Dankyi, 2016). Consequently, there is the tendency to prevent qualified applicants from getting the opportunity to go to school.

There is evidence that more and more qualified applicants failed to gain admission into the country's traditional university programmes. For example, data obtained from the Student Records and Management Unit (SRMU) of UCC show that out of some 13,676 qualified applicants who sought admission to UCC regular programmes in the 2014/15 academic year, only 5,319 representing 38.9 percent of the qualified applicants could be admitted (UCC, 2015). It is probable that applicants who failed to gain admission into other universities in the country may be more than the number that failed to gain admission into UCC.

From the large number of applications made to the universities every year and the small proportions of qualified applicants who get admitted, it is evident that there are many people desirous of pursuing higher education in Ghana. Unless this tendency is stopped, education at the tertiary level may be

unavailable to many citizens in the near future. As a result, the government has introduced distance education as a viable complement or alternative to the traditional or conventional residential and face-to-face teaching-learning context (Agyemang, 2014). This step is inspired by the vision that all Ghanaians would have access to education and training regardless of where they live.

Considering the challenges of education and development in Ghana, it is not surprising that distance education seems to be an important alternative approach and strategy that would make a significant contribution towards solving the problem of access, quality and equity in education. The indicated challenges show that it was appropriate on the part of stakeholders in education when they ensured that distance education formed part of our educational system since it is giving opportunities for those qualified students, workers and other professionals who cannot join the regular school system to have tertiary education (Agyemang, 2014; Dankyi, 2016; Wambu & Fisher, 2015).

In the view of Aderinoye, Siaciwena and Wright (2009), distance education attracts older women with families and jobs rather than younger ones. Milledzi (2010) supports the view that family commitments serve the most important reason for female teachers' reluctance to leave home for traditional education, whilst the difficulty in getting study leave with pay was the main reason for the teachers in private schools. Milledzi added that Ghana's basic school teachers prefer distance education for reasons which include less cost than the conventional system; flexibility to get higher educational qualification; less competition to gain admission; family

commitments which make it difficult for them to leave home; and difficulty in getting study-leave with pay.

In response to the need for distance education, some universities in Ghana such as University of Education, Winneba (UEW), University of Cape Coast (UCC), University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), and University for Development Studies (UDS) have commenced distance education. UCC started the distance education in 1997 with total enrolment of 750 students. There has been a tremendous increase in the enrolment of students in distance education in UCC. The enrolment stands at 48,622 as at 2016/17 academic year (CoDE, UCC, 2017a; 2017b).

Globally, the adjustment difficulties of distance education students have been an emerging issue, especially their ability to adapt to the existing university structures that were designed for regular students. Unlike regular students, distance education students are usually older, have jobs, family responsibilities and mostly might have been away from their books for a longer period which make adjustment very difficult (Somuah, Dankyi & Dankyi, 2014). Many studies have proved that the adjustment difficulties like appetite disturbance, concentration problems, stress and depression are most evident in freshmen (Akrofi, 2010; Sekyi, 2013).

In spite of the higher preference for distance education, distance education students in Ghana are bound to face various challenges including methods of learning, adjustment and management of time (Jannatul-Firdaos, 2014). Other characteristics of distance learners such as social and financial responsibilities take much of their time which would have been spent on their

studies (Agyemang, 2014; Badu-Nyarko, 2010; Wambu & Fisher, 2015). Sen and Kamat (2016) enumerated several challenges that characterise distance education system with respect to access, quality, equity and relevance.

To help distance education students in resolving their adjustment issues and challenges, many universities have made efforts in the form of establishing counselling as a support service to provide intervention to the students so that their social and psychological problems will not interfere with their academic performance and success, and to also bridge the gap of transactional distance (Dunn, 2015; Laryea, Saani & Dawson-Brew, 2014). As a result of that CoDE, UCC has put in place counselling services to help students adapt to the system and be able to learn effectively. The College believes that this will help students to achieve academic success by performing better in their academic activities.

In 2011, CoDE, UCC established a counselling unit to render counselling services to help students solve social, educational, and career problems and to also ensure successful completion of students' programmes of study. In 2012, all course tutors of the College in the various regions were given some training to enable them offer academic counselling to students and also to refer other issues that needed professional services to the Counselling Unit of the College.

Counselling service is a support service that strengthens students' choices and the power to make decision. According to Kauchak (2011), counselling service prepares students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and grow in their ability to understand and accept the results of their choices. Akinade (2012) considers counselling as a developmental

process by which individuals are assisted to understand, accept and use their abilities, aptitudes, interests and attitudinal patterns in relation to their aspirations. Counselling students is one of the basic functions of the school support programme.

However, Awabil and Akande (2013) posit that in many parts of the developing world of which Ghana is no exception, many school counsellors deliver guidance and counselling services based on assumed needs of students without conducting needs assessment. They tend to rely on reports from adults regarding students' needs instead of allowing students to report their own needs. Awabil and Akande are of the view that adults may not always be able to accurately perceive the counselling needs of students. Before any counselling service is rendered to students, there is the need to conduct needs assessment to find out about their most prevalent needs so as to make counselling services relevant and effective (Awabil & Akande, 2013).

The views of Awabil and Akande (2013) is in line with the assertions of Gibson and Mitchell (2008) who stated that:

The effective development of any counselling programme, regardless of the setting, is dependent first on an accurate and continuous assessment of the needs of the target population to be served. Such needs assessment is the key to the successful planning for goals and objectives. The accurate assessment of potential client needs is critical in establishing and maintaining programme relevance and as a basis for programme accountability and evaluation (p. 246).

Thus, the identification of students' counselling needs by school counsellors is crucial in the provision of relevant counselling services to

students in schools. Generally students' counselling needs are in four broad categories namely personal/social, career/vocational, educational/academic and practical needs (Apreko, 2010; Awabil & Akande, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Many students in distance education face academic performance problems (Owston, as cited in Milledzi, 2010). Distance education has long been associated with poor academic performance. This problem has been the biggest drawback facing this form of education all over the world (Carr, 2013; Moore & Kearsley, 2014). It must be pointed out that poor academic performance in a distance education programme may have negative consequences for the student, the institution and the society as a whole. Failure in a first year distance education course may prevent other students from enrolling in distance education courses. It also has a negative impact on the student's self-esteem and self-confidence. From the institutional point of view, it may be considered as a sign of inefficiency.

To help students deal with their academic performance challenges and adjustment difficulties, the College has put in place a number of interventions. These interventions are the use of modules as study guides for every course mounted in the semester, the face-to-face instructional sessions where course tutors guide the students, the two sessions for quizzes, provision of counselling services and the one week session solely for revision before end of semester examinations. With all these, one would expect that students will do well academically. However, academic performance of distance education students of UCC is abysmal and the graduation rate is not encouraging among

students (CoDE, UCC, 2017a; 2017c). Table 1 shows the graduation rate for diploma students for the past five years.

Table 1: Distribution of Students Graduating Annually at CoDE, UCC: 2014-2018

Year	Group	No. Due for Graduation	Number Graduated	% Graduated	% Not Graduated
2014	DBE	3603	1314	36.5	63.5
	DCO	711	375	52.7	47.3
	DMS	540	283	52.4	47.6
	DPF	1160	610	52.6	47.4
	<i>Overall</i>	<i>6014</i>	<i>2582</i>	<i>42.9</i>	<i>57.1</i>
2015	DBE	5834	3383	58.0	42.0
	DCO	534	455	85.2	14.8
	DMS	829	492	59.3	40.7
	DPF	795	627	78.9	21.1
	<i>Overall</i>	<i>7992</i>	<i>4957</i>	<i>62.0</i>	<i>38.0</i>
2016	DBE	3297	2653	80.5	19.5
	DCO	369	322	87.3	12.7
	DMS	431	360	83.5	16.5
	DPF	1216	1129	92.8	7.2
	<i>Overall</i>	<i>5313</i>	<i>4464</i>	<i>84.0</i>	<i>16.0</i>
2017	DBE	5960	2608	43.8	56.2
	DCO	487	288	59.1	40.9
	DMS	829	400	48.3	51.7
	DPF	3738	1912	51.2	48.8
	DSME	162	55	34.0	66.0
	<i>Overall</i>	<i>11176</i>	<i>5263</i>	<i>47.1</i>	<i>52.9</i>
2018	DBE	5960	4421	74.2	25.8
	DCO	487	228	46.8	53.2
	DMS	829	279	33.7	66.3
	DPF	3738	792	21.2	78.8
	DSME	161	24	14.9	85.1
	<i>Overall</i>	<i>11175</i>	<i>5744</i>	<i>51.4</i>	<i>48.6</i>

Source: CoDE, UCC (2018)

As indicated in Table 1, an average of 44.8% of students who are due for graduation every year do not graduate as a result of either low CGPA or still writing resit papers after their stipulated number of years for their various programmes of study. For instance, in the 2016/2017 academic year, statistics of diploma students of the College indicated that out of a total of 5,263 students who graduated, as many as 4,263 representing 80.99% percent had below barely satisfactory grade [CGPA<2.50] (CoDE, UCC, 2017a; 2017c). Also, at the end of the first semester examination of the 2017/18 academic year, over 4,000 students had failed more than two courses (CoDE, UCC, 2018). These percentages are very alarming and a critical look at the rate indicates there is an academic performance problem among students.

One can, therefore, say that the majority of the students at the diploma level have problems in academic performance as seen from the high percentage (80.99%) of students obtaining below barely satisfactory grades. The questions, therefore, are: Why are distance education students not doing well? Is their poor academic performance due to their inability to adjust to the system they are exposed to? Is it due to certain specific needs that the system is not meeting or addressing? Is it due to their time and work pressures? Most of these questions can be answered when the needs of students are assessed. Therefore, there is the need to assess the counselling needs of students in order to narrow or eliminate the challenges they face regarding their academic performance.

Researchers such as Barrell (2015) and Wambu and Fisher (2015) have indicated that students in the mainstream or conventional educational model are having some needs that institutions must design support services such as

counselling service to meet in order to boost their academic performance. If this is the case for students in mainstream education, how would it be for those in a non-conventional model of education such as distance education? According to Wambu and Fisher (2015), students' need assessment is one surest way to know the viability of an institution's support and counselling service programmes. This is so because effective provision of counselling service is dependent on needs assessment.

Basically, counselling services are designed to address the needs of students. However, according to Wambu and Fisher (2015), Gibson and Mitchell (2008), these needs must be identified and prioritised through a technique called needs assessment. The development of any accountable and relevant programme begins with the assessment of the needs of the target population. This need assessment is a technique for factually establishing programme goals and objectives (Gibson & Mitchell, 2008).

Awabil and Akande (2013) stated that experts in the field of counselling strongly believe that needs assessment is a prerequisite for effective development and practice of counselling in both educational and non-educational settings. Even though the College has a counselling unit mandated to help students, there is no empirical evidence indicating the needs of students on which the counselling service of the College is based. To be able to provide adequate support services in the form of counselling to distance education students there is the need to know their varied needs and put them into consideration when planning counselling services for them. If students' needs are identified and catered for it will in turn help in finding out the extent to which the services provided meet the needs of students.

Furthermore, in relation to distance education in Ghana, it appears there has been no specific study that has looked at the counselling needs of distance education students and also to find out if the existing counselling services are structured to meet the needs of students. This lacuna calls for the need to assess the counselling needs of distance education students in CoDE, UCC. It is against this background that the researcher decided to assess the counselling needs of diploma distance education students in CoDE, UCC.

In addition, there are few scholarly works (Apreko, 2010; Awabil, 2007; Awabil & Akande, 2013; Barrell, 2015; Nyarko-Sampson & Dabone, Okyere, Awabil & Nyarko-Sampson, 2015; Wambu & Fisher, 2015; Yakubu, Awabil & Forde, 2017) that have been done to identify counselling needs of students. These studies focused on Senior High School students, Polytechnics and University (regular and sandwich) students. However, on distance education students, no study has been done to assess their counselling needs, the extent to which these needs are met, the challenges militating against distance education students in accessing counselling service and the effect of distance education students' personal characteristics on their counselling needs. The main thrust of the present study, therefore, is to examine the counselling needs of distance education students of CoDE, UCC.

Assumptions of the Study

The study was carried out based on the following assumptions:

1. Students' responses on counselling needs and counselling services survey reflect their best effort and truthfulness.
2. Students can report on their own counselling needs.

3. Effective identification of students' counselling needs will help in designing appropriate counselling services to deal with the challenges students face with regard to academic performance.
4. The variables of interest to the researcher are normally distributed in the population.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to identify the most important counselling needs of distance education students, focusing on CoDE, UCC diploma students, in order to design a model to improve the delivery of counselling services of the College. Based on the main purpose of the study, the specific objectives of the study were to:

1. identify the priority counselling needs of diploma students of the College with respect to the four broad categories of students' needs;
2. identify the most prevalent specific counselling needs of diploma students under each of the four broad categories of students' counselling needs;
3. find out the extent to which the identified priority needs of students of CoDE, UCC are met;
4. identify the challenges militating against students in accessing counselling services; and
5. ascertain the influence of students' personal characteristics on their counselling needs.

Research Questions

Based on the first, second, third, and fourth specific objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of the study.

1. What are the priority counselling needs of students with respect to the four broad categories of students' needs?
2. What are the most prevalent specific counselling needs of students under each of the four broad categories of students' needs?
3. To what extents are the counselling needs of students are met at CoDE, UCC?
4. What challenges are militating against students in accessing counselling services at CoDE, UCC?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in order to examine the influence of certain demographic characteristics on students' counselling needs. The variables considered were gender, age, marital status, programme of study and level of students.

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of male and female students of CoDE, UCC.
- H_{A1}: There is a significant difference in the counselling needs of male and female students of CoDE, UCC.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students with respect to age.
- H_{A2}: There is a significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students with respect to age.
- H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC diploma students with regard to their marital status.
- H_{A3}: There is a significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students with regard to their marital status.

H₀4: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC diploma students in terms of programme of study.

H_A4: There is a significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students in terms of programme of study.

H₀5: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students in terms of academic level.

H_A5: There is a significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students in terms of academic level.

Significance of the Study

The study will identify the most prevalent counselling needs of students of CoDE, UCC. The findings of the study will be beneficial to institutions that are involved in distance education programmes, the counselling unit, distance education instructors and the distance education students themselves. The study is important because, in spite of the various efforts made by the various stakeholders in distance education as an alternative to traditional residential education, the problem of poor academic performance by distance education students seems to be rising in the country's universities. In this connection, the dissemination of research findings on the assessment of the counselling needs of distance education students could lead to a wider adoption of appropriate counselling strategies and in the long run student learning would improve through effective counselling services.

Furthermore, it is hoped that the findings of the study will inform policy making, practice and research. The findings could guide management of CoDE to see the need to establish well-resourced counselling units in each region. It is also envisaged that training programmes on guidance and

counselling would be instituted for course tutors. In practice, the findings may serve as the basis upon which effective and comprehensive counselling services could be designed. It would help counsellors in the various study centres to be more proactive and innovative to design very comprehensive educational programmes for students to enhance their learning adaptability to the system in order to yield better academic results.

The findings may further broaden intellectual horizon of counsellors and thereby sharpening their skills to render more effective counselling services to meet the counselling needs of students. This, in a long run, would boost distance education students' academic success. The findings may also be useful to course tutors who serve as academic advisors to the students in the College. For students in the areas where this study was conducted, the recommendations of the study would guide them to develop positive behaviour toward school counselling. Also, management would be able to formulate appropriate policy interventions that will help provide support for students in order to meet their identified counselling needs that would bring about improved academic performance. Findings of the study may also help course tutors to refer students who need counselling to the various designate centres. To researchers who will want to embark on similar study, this study will serve as a relevant literature.

Furthermore, the outcome of the study would be of immense help to CoDE distance education students in general to improve on their learning activities and study habits for better academic success. Besides, counselling as a support service would also be seen as very necessary in our distance education institutions and universities to bring about improved performance

among students. Lastly, the findings of the study will add to existing knowledge on the issue of counselling needs of distance education students and how the identification of these needs could be effectively applied in the distance education context by both management and counsellors in order to improve performance.

Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on assessing counselling needs of CoDE, UCC diploma students at the regional study centres. The diploma students of CoDE were chosen as the main respondents because they are the majority. For instance, the current population of the College as at 2017 stands at 48,622 out of which 36,798 (75.7%) are diploma students (CoDE, UCC, 2017c). Also, they are relatively younger and have challenging needs that would require prompt attention. There is also the issue of low and unsatisfactory academic performance among them as indicated earlier (Table 1).

Diploma students' unsatisfactory academic performance could be attributed to lack of pre-admission counselling and the needed support to meet their needs during their programmes of study, which leads to most students changing their programme of study. These differences give a strong indication of students' needs for counselling services. But the basic principle is that the actual needs of students cannot be met adequately when they are not known or have not been identified empirically. The programmes considered were Diploma in Basic Education (DBE), Diploma in Psychology and Foundations of Education (DPFE), Diploma in Science and Mathematics Education (DSME), Diploma in Commerce (DCO), and Diploma in Management Studies (DMS). The study again was delimited to four main components of

counselling needs of students. These are educational/academic needs, career/vocational needs, personal/social needs, and practical problems.

Limitations of the Study

The study would have been conducted to cover all distance education students in all the ten regions of Ghana. The researcher, however, was not in a good position to undertake such a venture due to limited time and financial constraints. The limited area of study coupled with the sampling procedure may affect the generalisation of the findings of the study to all distance education students since only diploma students were considered. Therefore, the results of the study can best be generalised to the target population of the study only.

Furthermore, the collection of the data was through the questionnaire. The questionnaire was given out to respondents to complete on their own. The likelihood that they would confer from each other could affect the quality of the study. In addition, the study assumed that the selected respondents with regard to the diploma students had sufficient knowledge and understanding of the concepts, issues and what is expected of them to answer the items in the questionnaire accurately and truthfully. However, this was not verified. Lastly, the findings and conclusions of the study may not be projected for the future since issues related to students' counselling needs keep changing with time and place. These limitations notwithstanding, resultant findings of the study would constitute a strong basis for generalisation, and also facilitate the provision of relevant counselling to distance education students.

Operational Definition of Terms

In order to have a common understanding of the terms used in this study, the following section provides a definition of terms as they have been expressed in this study:

Counselling needs refers to the personal/social, career/vocational, educational/academic, and practical problems or needs of students.

Distance education is a system of education in which students and tutors meet fortnightly at designated study centres for instructional purposes.

Distance education students are University of Cape Coast students who come for lectures on weekends in designated study centres across the country.

Effective service delivery is where students counselling needs are adequately met.

Needs assessment is a technique used in assessing the counselling needs of students.

Organisation of the Study

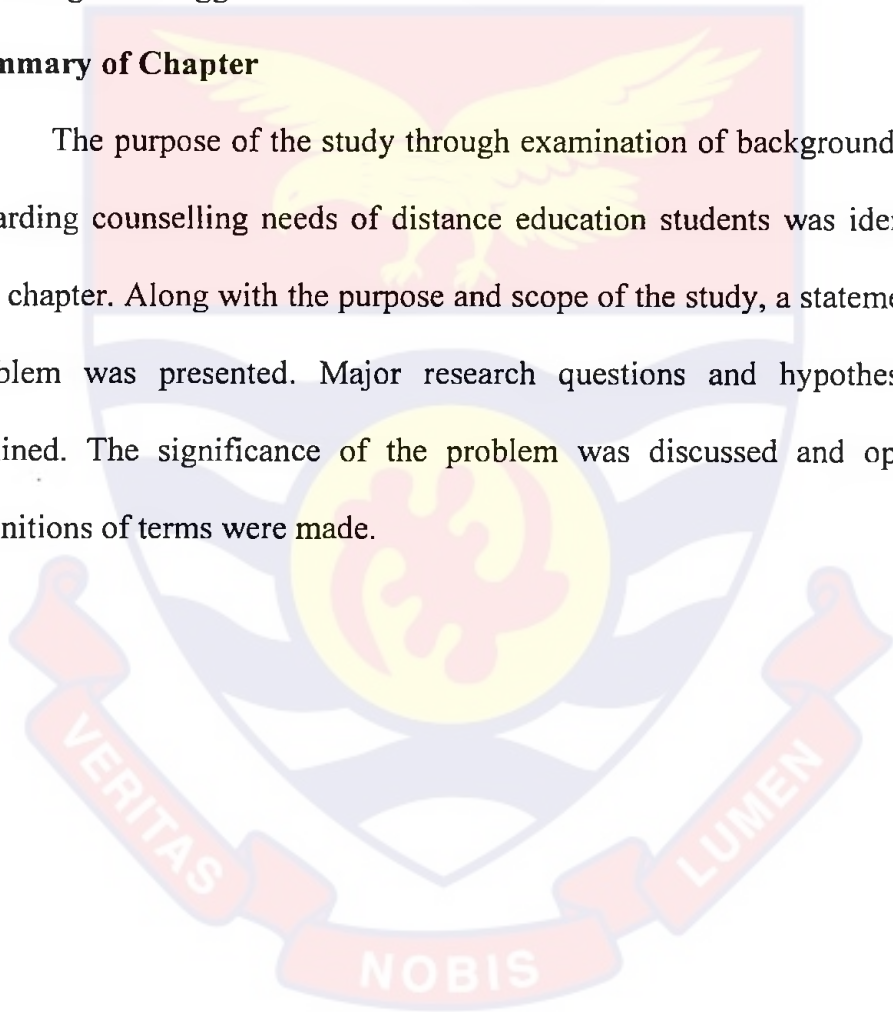
The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One is the introduction which covered the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions and hypotheses. The chapter further presented the significance of the study, delimitation, limitations, operational definition of terms as well as the organisation of the study. Chapter two focused on the review of related literature on the concept of distance education, the counselling needs of distance education students, and the challenges preventing students from accessing counselling services.

Chapter Three described the methodology that was employed for the study. The chapter covered the research design, population, sample and

sampling procedure, research instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument, ethical considerations, data collection procedure and data analysis. Chapter Four of the study concentrated on the results and discussion of findings. Chapter Five presented the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. It ended with the contributions of the study to knowledge and suggestions for further research.

Summary of Chapter

The purpose of the study through examination of background research regarding counselling needs of distance education students was identified in this chapter. Along with the purpose and scope of the study, a statement of the problem was presented. Major research questions and hypotheses were outlined. The significance of the problem was discussed and operational definitions of terms were made.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter mainly deals with the review of existing relevant and related literature on the concept of counselling needs of diploma students and counselling as a support service provided to students by CoDE, UCC. The conceptual review was presented first, followed by the theoretical and empirical review.

Conceptual Review

The conceptual review presents the ideas and concepts related to the study by critically reviewing them. The conceptual review first focuses on the concept of counselling and requirements for counselling. Also, components of counselling, the concept of needs, components of needs, counselling needs of students, counselling needs of distance education students, and meeting the counselling needs of distance education students were also reviewed. This subsection further reviews the need for effective counselling programme for distance education students.

The Concept of Counselling

Counselling is as old as society. In everyday life, counselling goes on at many levels. In a family set-up, parents counsel their children, doctors counsel patients, lawyers counsel clients and teachers counsel students. But all these are considered to be unprofessional and unscientific forms of counselling. Counselling occupies a very strategic position in any educational system of which distance education is no exception (Eyo, Joshua & Esuong, 2010; Taylor & Buku, 2006). Early guidance and counselling in Ghana is the

traditional type and took the form of advice-giving (Taylor & Buku as cited in Apreko, 2010).

Counselling is a scientific process of assistance extended by an expert to a person who needs help. It is scientific because it has a procedure to follow, it is not done anyhow. Counselling involves a relationship between two persons in which one of them (counsellor) attempts to assist the other (counselee or client) in organising himself/herself as to attain a particular form of happiness, adjusting to a life situation or in short self-actualisation (Appiah, 2013; Taylor & Buku as cited in Apreko, 2010; Mishra, 2014).

Generally, there are four types of counselling, namely; crisis counselling, preventive counselling, remedial counselling and developmental counselling (Forde, Arhin & Antiri, 2018). Crisis counselling refers to the methods used to offer immediate, short-term assistance to individuals who experience an event that produces intense emotional, mental, physical and behavioural distress or problems. Distance education students can experience this type of crisis when they fail all their semester courses and perceive they have exhausted all their coping skills, social support and their existence as students are threatened. The purpose of this type of counselling is to reduce the intensity of an individual's mental, emotional, physical and behavioural reactions to the crisis and to guide the individual to develop coping skills (Forde et al, 2018, Taylor & Buku, 2006).

Remedial counselling focuses on measureable weaknesses and tries to remediate them. The purpose of this type of counselling is to avoid any possible crisis in the life of that individual. This normally occurs when the individual finds it difficult to plan.

Preventive counselling, on the other hand, has its main focus on anticipation and avoidance of problems in the future. The counsellor tries to avoid the anticipated problems from happening. This is mainly done by educating the individuals about dangers of certain activities. For instance, it can be highly anticipated that distance education students, because of their characteristics as adults, workers, married men and women, need to have a study timetable so that they can make time to learn. If this is not done, they may find it very difficult to make time to study which in the long run will result in poor academic performance (Rashid, 2015; Forde et al, 2018; Taylor & Buku, 2006).

Developmental counselling occurs throughout one's life time. This is where the counsellor attempts to aid individuals of all ages to develop and grow in a relaxed, non-pressured and non-crisis atmosphere (Forde et al, 2018). It is to assist the individual to be aware of future possibilities of which the individual might not have control over. These possibilities may be as a result of age and stage in life. For example, it is important to note that retirement from formal work is inevitable. There is therefore the need to plan towards it. Distance education students by their age (18-40years) are on sixth stage (Intimacy vs Isolation) of the Erikson's stages of psychosocial development (McLeod, 2018).

Erikson's psychological developmental theory indicates that during this period, the major conflict centres on forming intimate, loving relationships with other people. Successful completion of this stage can result in happy relationships and a sense of commitment, safety, and care within a relationship. The reverse is to develop isolation, loneliness, and sometimes

depression. Looking at the nature of distance education where it is characterised by isolation, there is the need for counsellors to equip students with coping skills to develop intimacy.

Counselling can also take the form of group or individual counselling. Individual counselling is one to one relationship that is highly personalised, private and confidential. It is a professional relationship which is usually between a trained counsellor and a client (Forde et al, 2018; Taylar & Buku, 2006). This is where the current system of CoDE counselling suffers distress. Students who cannot travel to the head office in Cape Coast find it very difficult to benefit from individual counselling since there are no offices and counsellors at the various study centres of the College.

Group counselling is where the counsellor assists a group of students who have similar challenges. The counsellor assists clients to express their feelings, explore them, clarify their views, attitudes and understand themselves. This provides a social forum for clients to learn new behaviours (Forde et al, 2018). Counselling service in CoDE can make use of the group counselling approach since challenges of students are similar in nature. Littrel and Peterson (as cited in Forde et al, 2018) believe that the size of the group should depend on the nature and purpose of the group. I share this view because looking at the large numbers and nature of CoDE students, group counselling cannot be organised for students on the other recommendations such as six numbers in the group.

According to Schmidt (2008), determining the group size for group counselling depends on the purpose, age of group members, the number of sections scheduled and the nature and severity of the problems for discussion.

In counselling, the counsellor is expected to use techniques such as verbal and non-verbal skills, acceptance of self and others, listening, questioning, reflection of content and feeling. However, the first element of any counselling session is to establish a strong counselling relationship with the client (MacDonald, 2016; Ivey & Ivey, 2007).

Requirements for Counselling

A comprehensive school counselling programme cannot operate without the needed resources. There are a number of resources needed to make the counselling service successful. Resources for a school counselling programme refer to people as the primary resources. Other resources also include materials, equipment and space available to the counsellor (Schmidt 2008). Schmidt is of the view that without adequate human support all other elements make little difference. The researcher shares the view of Schmidt (2008) because if you have an air conditioned office fully equipped with all the needed logistics without a counsellor, there cannot be any counselling.

Equipment such as typewriters, computers, modems, recorders and telephones enable counsellors and their support staff to provide efficient and effective service. In all these resources, emphasis is on the human resource and the space within which the individual can operate. It is important that counsellors at CoDE work effectively through management to get enough human resource. That is they should have counsellors at the various study centres. Space for counsellors to operate should be given the necessary priority (Schmidt, 2008).

The provision of counselling services in Ghanaian schools is not effective due to lack of required resources which include professional

counsellors, office accommodation and funds. (Essuman, 2001; Awabil, 2007a). In addressing counselling needs of students, Schmidt (2008) lends support to the assertion that the resources are key in the delivery of comprehensive counselling programmes for students. Schmidt (2008), Oladele (2007) and Awabil and Akande (2013) identified the following resources as required for the delivery of effective counselling services in schools:

Human Resource

Human resource is the most valuable asset of any organization in the delivery of its core mandate. It is the human resource component of any institution that makes all other structures and facilities work. Schmidt (2018) asserts that facilities, materials and equipment provide the physical structure and resources for the delivery of counselling programmes but it is the people in the programmes who determine its true value and potential. It is therefore imperative for institutions desiring to offer counselling services to resource its counselling centre with professional counsellors, teachers and clerical staff (Awabil & Akande, 2013). This may be the justification for the ineffectiveness of the counselling services provided by the College to its students.

The College operates in all the ten regions in Ghana in 83 study centres with five counsellors. Three of the five counsellors are at Cape Coast which is the Headquarters, one at Greater Accra, and the other one left is also in Eastern Region; leaving the students in the rest of the regions and centres in the hands of centre co-ordinators who are not professional counsellors.

Office Complex

In the delivery of counselling service, confidentiality is paramount. This can only be achieved when school authorities provide counsellors with

fully furnished office accommodation. The design and furnishing of the counselling centre and its interior layout should be dependent on the level of institution and the counselling needs of the students. Provision should be made for both individual and group counselling services delivery. The centre should be conducive for clients to feel comfortable in accessing the service.

According to Oladele (2007), the arrangement in the counsellors' offices should be in good order to allow easy storage and retrieval of relevant records. The location of the centre should be accessible to all manner of students, taking into consideration the plight of the disabled. The centre's location should be a no-miss place with adequate directional signs where necessary to the centre. Schmidt (2008) posited in support to this assertion that the counselling centre's location should enhance its visibility, facilitate communication between all groups in the school and invite people to enter and use its facilities.

Equipment

To deliver effective counselling services, there is the need to provide necessary equipment and tools needed for counselling. The provision of equipment to support the counselling office should include computers, printers, high speed internet connection, digital recording gadgets, telephones and television sets.

Materials

Materials that support effective counselling delivery should be made available to the centre. Oladele (2007) asserted that the counsellor should build a library that will support his/her work. Literature in the library should cover what can help provide the counsellor with answers to students. The

materials should include psychology related materials such as journals, magazines, psychological tests and inventories, leaflets, books and stationery (Awabil & Akande, 2013).

Finance

The counselling centre like any other institution needs to pay bills as they fall due and also make purchases relevant materials to support in rendering services. Awabil and Akande, (2013) are of the view that the counselling centre needs funding to meet its recurrent expenditure and for that matter adequate budgetary allocation should be made available to the centre to cater for hospitality for guests at the centre, purchase of journals, books, install and maintain equipment and teaching aids.

Time

Time is of essence in the preparation and delivery of counselling services. Counsellors at the counselling centre need to plan their time well to make room for research and organise the needed materials for counselling sessions. Much time is needed for record organisation in the office and administrative arrangements.

The counselling process is structured and organised around the felt needs of the counselee or client. The objective of counselling should be based on the needs of the counselee and not the counsellor (Beaty, 2010; Odeleye, 2017; Johnson as cited in Wunpini, 2015). It is appropriate for counsellors or institutions rendering counselling services to find out the exact needs of clients and not what the counsellors or institutions think should be provided (Beaty, 2010; Jumana & Meera, 2016). Basically, the objective of guidance and counselling is that institutions, especially schools, should promote the efficient

and happy lives of individuals by helping them to adjust to social realities (Heyden, 2017).

Counselling centres in most public universities in Ghana offer counselling services for students in the form of colloquia. Counselling service is also offered to students to help them improve their performance at interviews and write applications for jobs. Career and educational information are also disseminated to students. Preventive, placement and orientation counselling programmes are also organised for students (Essuman as cited in Apreko, 2010). These services are usually rendered to regular students to enrich their performance and successful completion of the programmes of study.

However, these services should also be rendered in multiples to distance education students because of their characteristics but it is rather the reverse. Most institutions provide significant guidance and counselling services to their regular students but fail to do same to their students under the distance programme. However, distance education students are those that may need more guidance and counselling services since they encounter more social, family, economic and geographical problems (Anderson & Dron, 2010; Hannay & Newvine, 2016; Mishra, 2014). This shows that it is appropriate for institutions running distance programmes to understand the various components of counselling with regard to distance education students in order to provide appropriate guidance and counselling services to them. The next issue to consider therefore is the components of counselling.

Components of Counselling

Students as individuals are characterised by traits, social relations, roles and also belong to social groups in the society. Their identities can be focused on the past (what used to be true of one) and the present (what one wishes to be). Self-understanding on the part of the individual student is the beginning of all wisdom. Thus, if students know themselves well it gives them a good foundation on which to build their life. However, this ideal situation normally fails to occur, which calls for various guidance and counselling interventions. As a result, there are various components of counselling that help counsellors to meet the needs of individuals.

The student life is getting complex day by day. Help is needed for optimal achievement and adequate adjustment in these varied life situations. The areas of counselling are very vast. The following are some of the important areas of guidance. This study was delimited to four components: educational/academic, career/vocational, personal/social, and practical problems which are synchronised in the following components. Components considered include vocational guidance, educational counselling, vocational/career counselling, personal/social counselling, and practical needs.

Vocational/Career Counselling

Bread and butter aims are one of the main aims of education. Due to advancement in science and technology and consequent changes in industry, occupations have emerged. There are thousands of specialised jobs/occupations in this globalised scenario. Vocational counselling is a process of assisting the individual to choose an occupation, prepare for it, and enter upon it and progress in it. It is concerned primarily with helping individuals make

decisions and choices involved in planning a future and building a career (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013; Rivera & Pelliteri, 2012). According to France, Huang, Si and Zhang (2013), in vocational counselling, counsellors need to deal with issues like study habits, difficulty in understanding lecturers/course tutors, inability to concentrate in class, inadequate learning materials and failure in examinations.

Vocational guidance exposes the student to the facts on the nature and prospects for employment in different occupations. The student is guided to understand his/her personal requirements such as the skills and knowledge required to perform the work. Students are also guided to acquire and understand their personal characteristics. These include the abilities, interests and values needed to perform the work. Students are also guided to understand certain experience and job requirements. That is, the training and level of licensing and experience needed for the work. Job requirements focuses on the work activities and context, including the physical, social, and organisational factors involved in the work (Abiri, 2013).

Vocational guidance also incorporates placement in its activities. Placement is a service rendered to students to place them at the appropriate educational setting. It is also to ensure that people are in the right place at the right time. It has to do with helping people to find a place that will contribute to their physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, health and well-being (Isaken & Mink, 2013; Narsolis, 2012). Placement can be done in terms of course such as DBE, DPE, DCO, DMS as well as the group an individual should belong to, (mixed ability, all male, all female and many more). Study centre placement, region and zone placement are all part of the services which the distance

education counsellor is supposed to be performing under vocational guidance. Vocational counselling is concerned with problems of selection, training and adjustment to occupations. Vocational choice is important for the development of every individual as the happiness of each individual is in his/her career development. The happy individual constitutes a happy and productive nation (Oladele as cited in Ogwokhademhe, Ajibola, Kayode & Sheu, 2014).

Personal/Social Counselling

Personal/social counselling is necessitated by the myriads of problems that emerge as a result of inferiority complex, self-concept, individual differences, lack of information, money, food, all which are personal and inter personal conflicts. These are issues that have to do with the individuals' personal life where sometimes even sharing becomes a problem (Wahl & Blackhurst, 2013). Bayless (2012) added that personal and social guidance is the process of helping an individual to know how to behave with consideration towards other people. Primarily, personal and social guidance helps the individual to understand himself, know how to get on with others, learn manners and etiquette, pursue leisure time activities, practice social skills, develop family and family relationships, and understand social roles and responsibilities (Wambu & Fisher, 2015).

Basically, personal and social guidance can be seen as the process of helping the clients to adjust and live happily with the members of his/her environment regardless of indifference, rules and regulations. Some of the components of personal/social problems enumerated by researchers include family/marital concerns, friendship difficulties, difficulties with other students, problems with members of staff, disappointment in live, loss of loved ones,

financial problems, and accommodation problems (Apreko, 2010; Awabil & Akande, 2013; Barrell, 2015; Bayless, 2012; Dogar et al., 2011; Thompson et al., 2013). Furthermore, Awabil and Akande (2013) also listed the following as the components of the practical needs of students: school fees, transport facilities, facilities for disabled and medical facilities.

Personal and social guidance implementation is where the professional skills of the counsellor are necessary to enter the personal world of the individual. This is the self-world, the world of me. It is the self of the person and contains elements which are largely not shared with other people. Its distinctive character has to do with the self-identity of the individual. The implication here is that, the counsellor has to enter the personal world of the individual before any meaningful counselling can be done (Essuman, 2015; Barrell, 2015).

Educational/Academic Counselling

Educational/academic counselling is related to every aspect of education, the curriculum, the methods of instruction, other curricular activities, disciplines and ways of being a successful student. It comprises guiding learners to adopt or adapt appropriate study skills, time tabling, note taking and so on. Learning is the most important activity of human beings, but unfortunately human beings learn how to do almost everything (dancing, eating, singing, swimming and many more) except learning how to learn (Awabil, 2016). Awabil is of the view that for anyone to be a successful student, he/she has to learn and put in essential study skills which he/she agrees to.

According to Obeng (2013), techniques such as effective study plan, time tabling and note taking can help to improve learning. It is extremely important that students plan their learning throughout their studies. This to him will help the individual cover all the subject material needed before examination as well as the use of acronyms and other mnemonics to learn. In relation to time tabling, Awabil (2016) indicated further that there is the need for students to develop formal time schedule and a personal study time-table, so that they can regulate their movements.

Moreover, the tendency to procrastinate students' work until the last moment and only work under pressure can be avoided. Time-tabling will also help students to treat study times as serious commitments and to respect times for home chores and recreation (Mapolisa, 2012). This is particularly important for women who are required to do household chores every day (Awabil et al., 2013). This is because when time is not consciously controlled, old habits will control time and set limits on achievements. The first two crucial steps in taking control of time are establishing goals and following a schedule (Jones, Steffire & Steward, 2015).

As distance education students who are characterised by work, social responsibilities and students at the same time they need to manage their time well before their habits control their time. One of such effective time management can be in the area of note-taking. To be able to take very good and useful notes there is the need for the student concerned to listen carefully to the teacher, be physically and mentally alert and keep an open and curious mind (Obeng, 2013; Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 2012). Where students do not agree with points raised by the teacher, they should not reject the idea but

rather explore. It is also very important to take notes in an outline form, to help one to distinguish between major and minor points. All notes must be dated and titled carefully.

In note taking there is the need to record, or write down examples to illustrate points, because they may help you to remember them. If a teacher uses study aids such as hand-outs, maps, or an overhead projector, take note because they indicate that the material is important. One needs to listen for emphasis because repetition, writing on the chalkboard, or extended comments, usually mean that the point is important. Take time after class to add comments or thoughts on your notes, to make them as clear as possible.

Practical Counselling

Generally, one of the major difficulties of mature students is the area of finances. According to Chauhan (as cited in Apreko, 2010), adolescents need money to meet their recreational and other demands and that they become emotionally disturbed when they fail to meet such demands. On the part of the adult learner, he/she need to feed the young ones, provide and cater for them as well. All these put pressure on the adult learner which require practical counselling to mitigate the effect.

According to Chuenyane (2013), there are many problems that affect maximum academic performance of students, especially adult. Most of such problems that affect university students relate to lack of classroom space, accommodation, and the burden of students' financial responsibilities. Also, there is the need for adequate and quality food to be made available to students, especially those at the pre-tertiary level. This is so because without adequate and good food, students cannot function comfortably in academic

and non-academic activities (Mbera, 2013). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that inadequacy of food could be an effective source of students' unrest.

On financial problems, Apreko (2010) posits that the burden of students' financial responsibility cannot be borne by universities. However, universities can recommend students for financial assistance to government and other charitable organisations. Apreko (2010) added that financial aid, whether gifts, loans, or part-time employment, is an excellent means of teaching the student social and economic responsibilities, efficiency in the use of their resources and practice in dealing with practical economic problems that they will continue to face in their lives.

Students need accommodation to afford them the opportunity to integrate their academic disciplines outside the classroom. According to Denga (as cited in Apreko, 2010), students' housing should ideally be a place where students are introduced into a true campus way of life. This shows that hostels used by students should be a place where those who come to learn are welcome into the membership of those who are there to teach, a place where formality of the classroom is forgotten and where the students can speak freely with mates and masters. In UCC, senior members have been assigned to the various halls, programmes and levels of study with the aim of providing residence counselling to students. Residence counselling is essential to instil some patience and tolerance among students (Barrell, 2015).

In almost all Ghanaian public universities, infrastructure is not enough to cope with the increasing demands of tertiary education delivery. The government of Ghana and the institutions are vigorously pursuing physical

basis of their moral development. Hence, they will be provided with socially desirable and culturally valuable moral support, proper guidance and counselling at any cost.

Another component is health counselling. Health is regarded as wealth. Total health i.e. preventive and curative is the goal of health counselling. The health counselling may be a cooperative effort of principal, doctors, counsellor/psychologist, teachers, students and parents. Health counselling may be done through rehabilitation. Rehabilitation is the process of assisting a client who has suffered a catastrophe and has lost money, part of his/her body which render him/her hopeless to reinstall hope in him/her and help to maximize the remaining potential in him/her. The essence of rehabilitation counselling is to discourage begging but encourage independent and effective being so the client can contribute his total ability to community development (Audu, 2012; Cherry & Gear, 2017).

In the case of crisis counselling, focus is on single or recurrent problems that are overwhelming or traumatic (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). If a trauma or crisis is not resolved in a healthy manner, the experience can lead to more lasting psychological, social and medical problems. Crisis counselling provides education, guidance and support. Crisis counselling is not a substitute for individuals who need long term psychiatric care. Crisis counsellor can help people face and move past distressing and traumatic events in their lives.

In relation to preventive counselling, the search for efficacious interventions to prevent psychological disturbance, physical ailments, and human distress has produced major initiatives and discoveries in the 20th

century. The mental hygiene and vocational guidance movements early in the century, the discovery of polio vaccines at mid-century, and programmes to prevent drug and alcohol use and social violence in more recent years represent major attempts to reduce emotional and physical distress through prevention (Audu, 2012; Cherry & Gear, 2017).

Facilitative counselling, on the other hand, helps students to correct mistakes and solve problems and plan for their future (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). It is used primarily to help the client to deal with negative feelings that arise during implementation of plans. For most clients this stage is uncharted territory and can be quite stressful and threatening. Counselling services are provided to the distance education students with the view of meeting their psychosocial and emotional needs. The next issue to review is the concept of need. This will help us understand the concept of need and how counselling can help meet the various needs, particularly academic needs, of the distance student.

The Concept of Needs

Need, as a concept, has different definitions and dimensions. Generally a need is a motivating force that compels action for its satisfaction. Needs are things we cannot do without. Oladele (as cited in Awabil, 2007a) defined a need as the lack of something that if present would further the welfare of the organism. Human beings have certain inborn needs which they strive to fulfill and that every need arises from an imbalance between what human nature deems necessary for a person and what environment provides (Awabil, 2007a). Needs range from basic survival needs to cultural, intellectual, and social needs (Dogar, Azeem, Majoka, Mehmood & Latif, 2011).

Basic survival needs are common to all human beings and are satisfied by necessities. However, cultural, intellectual, and social needs vary from place to place and age group to age group, and are satisfied by necessities. According to Bayless (2012), need in general term is something that is necessary for an organism to live a healthy life. However, psychologically it is a psychological feature that arouses an organism to action toward a goal, giving purpose and direction to behaviour (Bayless, 2012).

One of the simplest explanations is that a need is the difference, or gap, between what is and what should be or what is reasonably possible (Richardson, 2016). According to Beaty (2010), need is the measurable discrepancy existing between a present state of affairs and a desired state of affairs as asserted either by an “owner” of need or an “authority” on need. The owner of need here signifies a need from the client or student point of view and an authority on need looks at need from the institution’s point of view. Beaty (2010) described owner of need as a motivational need, while an authority on need is described as a prescriptive need. This simply means that anytime a need is identified from the students’ point of view it becomes a motivation for the students to achieve set goals once those needs are identified and satisfied. On the other hand if the institution decides to think and reason for the students, then the need becomes a prescriptive need which is the instance of CoDE. It must be noted that adults may not always be able to accurately perceive the guidance and counselling needs of students.

Awabil (2007) in his study found that there were significant differences that existed between students perception of their own needs in seven out of eight broad categories of student’s needs that he investigated. The

first function of guidance is to understand the individual and discover the real needs and problems of individuals and to explore the possibilities of personality development within the context of the educational process (Thompson, Loesch & Seraphine, 2013). Thompson et al. (2013) further posit that guidance helps to aid the development of individuality by giving educational, vocational and personal assistance to people so that they develop in their own way. The discrepancy between the current condition and wanted condition must be measured to appropriately identify the need. A need can be a desire to improve current performance or to correct a deficiency.

However, in order to diagnose a particular need as present in a person, one must observe equivalences of meaning in his or her initiating or reacting inner state (Thompson et al., 2013). One must also observe perception of the external situation, imagined goal or aim, directionally of associated movements and words and the produced effect, if any. In general, needs are not static; they are aroused by real or imagined deprivation. When aroused, they exist as tension in the individual leading to instrumental behaviour, which if successful, brings about the goal state.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a description of the needs that motivate human behaviour. In 1943, Abraham Maslow proposed five different kinds of human needs, beginning with the most basic: survival. Physiological needs, such as food and shelter, are followed by needs related to safety. Next, there are needs of love and belonging. Fourth, humans have needs of esteem, such as the need for being respected. The final need in the hierarchy is the need for self-actualisation (fulfilling one's potential). The hierarchy suggests that basic needs must be met prior to less basic needs; for example, a starving person

will seek food before self-actualisation (Hiebert, Kemeny & Kurchak, 2013). However, these basic needs are categorised into various components which are discussed in the next subsection.

Components of Needs

Needs have been categorised differently by different researchers. Some of the common need components are social-emotional, physiological, security, social and esteem needs. The first to be considered is social-emotional needs. These are needs that gifted and talented students have along with their thinking (cognitive) needs. According to Vassilou-Papageorgiou and Vassala (2012), social-emotional needs may include sensitivity, intensity, high expectations of themselves or others, a strong sense of justice, perfectionism, or underachievement. Barrell (2015) posits that Erickson's eight stages of development focuses around emotional and social needs individuals have at certain points in their lives. These stages includes trust vs. mistrust (0 – 1 year), autonomy vs. shame (1 – 3 years), initiative vs. guilt (3 – 6 years), industry vs. inferiority (6 – 12 years), identity vs. role confusion (12 – 17 years), intimacy vs. isolation (young adulthood), generativity versus stagnation (middle adulthood), and ego integrity vs. despair (older adulthood).

In each stage the person confronts, and hopefully masters, new challenges. Each stage builds on the successful completion of earlier stages. The challenges of stages not successfully completed may be expected to reappear as problems in the future. At every stage the needs of each individual has to be identified and satisfied or live to bear the consequences of unsatisfied need (Erickson as cited in Barrell, 2015).

Looking at the age range of distance education students, one may argue that most distance education students have social-emotional needs that are falling in between intimacy vs isolation (young adulthood) and generativity versus stagnation (middle adulthood). Therefore, there is the need for distance education institutions to put in place measures that will meet these needs. For instance, the young adult who needs intimacy and finds him/herself in a distance education where there is geographical, physical and social distance between the institution of study and peers, if measures such as regular face-to-face, forming study groups, meeting the counsellor are not put in place, the reverse of Erickson's stage which is isolation is likely to emerge (Cherry & Gear, 2017).

The second component of need to be considered is physiological needs. These needs include the most basic needs that are vital to survival, such as the need for water, air, food, and shelter (Sampson, 2013). Maslow (as cited in Cherry & Gear, 2017) believed that these needs are the most basic and instinctive in the hierarchy because all needs become secondary until these physiological needs are met. Once this need is met the individual then move ahead to strive for security needs.

The next to be considered is *security needs*. These needs include the needs for safety and security, things such as steady employment, healthcare, safe neighbourhoods, and shelter from the environment. The needs become a bit more complex at this point in the hierarchy. Now that the more basic survival needs have been fulfilled, people begin to feel that they need more control and order in their lives. According to Chuenyane (2013), a safe place

to live, financial security, physical safety, and staying healthy are all concerns that might come into play at this stage.

In relation to social needs, they are seen as needs that relate to the way in which people in groups behave and interact and their quest for social belongingness. Social needs include needs for belonging, love, and affection. Maslow (as cited in Drefs, 2012) described these needs as less basic than physiological and security needs. Relationships such as friendships, romantic attachments, and families help fulfil this need for companionship and acceptance, likewise involvement in social, community, or religious groups. There is the need to guide distance education students on how they can satisfy this need, since this will help them concentrate more and better in their esteem needs.

After the first three needs have been satisfied, esteem needs become increasingly important. At this point, it becomes increasingly important to gain the respect and appreciation of others. People have a need to accomplish things and then have their efforts recognised. People often engage in activities such as going to school, playing a sport, enjoying a hobby, or participating in professional activities in order to fulfil this need. Satisfying this need and gaining acceptance and esteem, helps people become more confident. Failing to gain recognition for accomplishments, however, can lead to feelings of failure or inferiority. This is one of the needs that motivate most adult learners to enrol in distance education (Litoiu & Oproiu, 2012).

The last to be considered is self-actualising needs. This is the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Self-actualising people are self-aware, concerned with personal growth, less concerned with the opinions of others,

and interested fulfilling their potential. Through effective counselling strategies, institutions can help students to meet and satisfy most of their needs. The next sub-topic to consider is the counselling needs of students.

Nature of Distance Education Students

Distance education students are generally adult students between the ages of 25 to 50 years (Omito & Kembo, 2015; Somuah et al., 2014). However, in recent times there are relatively younger students who also enrol on distance education. Majority of this category of students are employed, but they are commonly motivated to invest time and money in study by the prospect of career progression. Some also want professional development in their current fields, while others wished to broaden their career prospects beyond their current vocation (Colorado & Eberle, 2010; Duc, 2012; Omito & Kembo, 2015).

Distance education students generally have some work experience and in most cases are married with children as dependants (Brown, Hughes, Keppell, Hard & Smith, 2015; Milledzi, 2010). They are mostly overburdened with financial expenses since they have the responsibility of paying for their own educational cost as well as that of their dependents. Most older distance students have also stayed away from their books for a longer period while their younger colleagues have also just completed senior high schools where their activities were regulated. They were told when to get up from bed, perform morning duties, and attend classes and when to go back to bed. Adjustment, therefore, becomes a problem for both the old and young. Because of these characteristics such as being adults, married and workers

they most often have challenges with time management and study habits (Rurato & Gouveia, 2014; Somuah et al., 2014).

Distance education students are often characterised with other challenges such as how to combine their work with their studies, manage family and social activities (Dankyi, 2016). They are often misunderstood, isolated and finally drop-out from the programme they embark on. They also feel burdened with studies and do not know where to turn for help (Herr, 2017; Owusu-Boateng & Essel, 2011). This is the very reason why there is the need to identify these needs and cater for them. This will help distance learners to be successful in their academic endeavours.

Counselling Needs of Students

Human beings have varied needs which differ from one individual to the other. Some human needs include: need for self-understanding, that is knowing your strength and weakness as individual, awareness of one's opportunities, special aptitude, interest and other personal traits which are required for personal development and adjustment in life, need for help in finding a suitable and gainful employment. Other needs include need to relate to colleagues and others in the cultural environment in order to enhance personal adjustment and relationship, need to develop skills and improve performance in areas of specialisation, need to develop the ability to make independent choices among alternatives and be able to take responsibilities for such actions, need to build up a positive image of oneself after taking into consideration one's strengths and weaknesses, and need to select appropriate courses based on the needs, interest and abilities of the individual in order to aid educational progress and adjustment (Clack, 2013). There is also the need

to have adequate information on career opportunities within the environment so as to serve as a guide in the choice of a vocation that is suited to one's interest, aptitude and traits (Rashid, 2015).

Distance education students in the various universities exhibit different characteristics and problems that suggest a diversity of need among students in the area of career counselling and guidance programmes (Chuenyane, 2013; Jannatul-Firdaos, 2014). Research has consistently shown that almost one-half or more of university students' desire help with educational and vocational planning (Awabil, 2007a; Litoiu & Oproiu, 2012; Wambu & Fisher, 2015). West (2015) also identified common counselling needs among students as academic problem, adolescence/identity crisis, family problems, emerging life challenges like HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. In his view all the problems that students face are needs. This is not far from the truth, because if you have problems with your academics you certainly need counselling to equip you.

Other researchers like Awabil and Akande (2013), Apreko (2010), Yakubu, Awabil and Forde (2017) in the field have also grouped the counselling needs of students into four broad categories: namely practical, vocational/career, personal/social and educational/academic. This study adopts this classification to assess the counselling needs of distance education students of CoDE, UCC, and Ghana. The classification into four broad categories is in order because it encompasses all other needs. It appears every single need will fit into one of the four broad categories. The next issue to consider is counselling needs of distance education students.

Counselling Needs of Distance Education Students

Students in distance learning systems face not only the problems of conventional students, but also those generated by the system itself. Robinson (as cited in Kangai et al., 2011) categorises the problems as follows: those relating to study techniques and learning difficulties which may or will increase in complexity with the range of media digital interactive television, video-conferencing, audio-conferencing, worldwide web/internet, video/audio tapes, telephone/fax and CD-ROM being used. Other problems include those arising from an individual trying to interact with a distant and sometimes impersonal institution and personal problems which affect the student's work. Mau and Jepsen (2017) also identified Chinese and American distance education students' needs to be: transportation, social, academic and financial. They have similar characteristics as distance education students.

Kangai et al. (2011) further grouped students' needs into three stages: pre-entry, during the programme and exit stages. At the pre-entry stage, students need information on programmes, courses, entry requirements, and application procedures, structure of the programme, and rules and regulations of the institution. During the programme stage, students need guidance and information on study skills, learning from media, overcoming personal and technical problems, and completing a given task. In relation to the exit stage, students need information on certificate and advance programmes for further studies. Kangai et al. (2011), however, indicated that distance learning students are usually older compared with typical students engaged in campus-based programmes. Hence, they encounter more psycho-social problems

which might affect their academic progress, necessitating the need for counselling in order for them to pursue their studies unhindered.

Furthermore, Owusu-Boateng and Essel (2011) also indicated that distance education students face many challenges that militate against their studies. The challenges include how to combine their work with their studies, manage family and social activities. They are often misunderstood, isolated and finally drop out from the programme they embark on. They also feel burdened with studies and do not know where to turn for help (Owusu-Boateng & Essel, 2011; Herr, 2017). This is the very reason why there is the need to identify these needs and cater for them. This will help distance learners to be successful in their academic endeavour.

Academic success in this context does not mean passing their various course of study with only good CGPA but also to acquire the necessary skills for life and the world of work. Successful students will always have the desire of coming back into the institution that trained them. Therefore, there is the need to understand the strategies that can be put in place to meet the counselling needs of distance education students. The next sub-section focuses on that.

Meeting the Counselling Needs of Distance Education Students

Generally, for distance education students to be able to successfully go through their studies, they should be able to face and overcome the numerous challenges that confront them. According to Owusu-Boateng and Essel (2011), the challenges could be personal, social or academic as well as practical needs. Badu-Nyarko (as cited in Sekyi, 2013) stresses the role of the teacher and faculty in helping the student to learn. In his view the distance student should

not be left in isolation but should be contacted and supported physically, psychologically and emotionally as well. This means that the distance education institution should put in place support services such as counselling to meet these needs of students.

Counselling in distance education can take the form of counselling through correspondence, counselling through audio-cassette, counselling through telephone, face-to-face counselling, counselling through broadcasting (radio/ television), counselling through internet and counselling through self-instructional materials (Kangai et al., 2011; Mishra, 2014; Rashid, 2015). In the media, students can be reached but that will be guidance and not counselling. For instance, how can counselling be done effectively on radio since counselling is more personal, intimate, private and more confidential? The best media could be telephone counselling, face-to-face which is the ideal and counselling through the internet. This can also be only effective where network systems are very efficient.

Owusu-Boateng and Essel (2011) suggested the following to meet the counselling needs of distance education students. First, they suggested that education providers should teach the new students time management and encourage the students to draw private timetables and discuss them with their counsellors. Again, all students should be assigned tutors and should be given the opportunity to contact them at any time they encounter any problem, be it academic, personal or job related. Another factor that facilitates effective combination of work with study is the ability to relate concepts and ideas learnt in the books to everyday reality. The facilitators at distance programmes should encourage the students to relate whatever they learn to the work they

do and their experiences. Owusu-Boateng and Essel (2011) added that students should be encouraged to form study groups and get in touch with their study group members through the e-mail and mobile phone whenever they are in need. Students living in the same vicinity should be encouraged to meet occasionally for discussions and studies.

In addition, facilitators at distance education should be taught how to give diagnostic and prescriptive feedback. The facilitators should return marked assignments on time with the appropriate comments or feedback. In so doing the students could monitor their progress through the programme and make the necessary amends (Owusu-Boateng & Essel, 2011). Sekyi (2013) also had these implications for consideration. Effective face-to-face tutorial system with competent tutors well motivated to deliver is needed. This entails explaining difficult concepts and issues interspersed with few quizzes. A call for counselling students on career choices, subject selection, learning habits and styles while at the same time directing students to relevant information are necessary.

The study also provides evidence that the Ghanaian student need motivation to learn and excel. This is manifested in the fact that preparations of brochures describing study techniques, the setting up of residential course centres, the dispatch of audio-visual aids and the provision of quiet study rooms in public buildings, can all keep the student overcome his/her difficulties and improve dialogue. This shows that effective guidance and counselling programme for distance education students is relevant to ensure that these students meet their needs. The next subsection focuses on the

relevance and the need for guidance and counselling programme for distance education students.

The Need for Effective Counselling Programme for Distance Education Students

Generally, running distance education in a society that is deeply rooted in conventional system of education poses a very serious challenge because the general notion is that this mode of learning is second rate (Ward, Peters & Shelley, 2014). Running effective guidance and counselling services in distance learning, therefore, poses another greater challenge because of the peculiar system, which is not the usual face-to-face conventional system. In times past and recent times, emphasis and the need to address this issue has not been taken into consideration (Garrison, 2014). However, the current trend of events in the Ghanaian educational system is such that presently it requires guidance and counselling services for distance education students.

Every student needs guidance and counselling in their educational endeavour. Through guidance and counselling, students are provided with information regarding operations of distance learning. Also, students are assisted to make their choices and adjust to new learning environment through orientation. Assisting distance education students to acquire effective learning skills through learner-learner, tutor-learner and instructional media learner systems help them to meet their expectations through successful study vis-à-vis reduction of examination anxieties/tension, alleviating the fear of studying alone and provision of handbook with hints to develop effective study guides (Carey, Carey, Hatch, Lapan & Whiston, 2016). This will help them cope with

their studies, despite the inconveniences that impact on their studies most often.

According to Carey et al. (2016), resolution of complaints/requests vis-à-vis helping distance education students to come to terms with themselves and to appreciate their strengths and weaknesses help in boosting their adjustment to the distance academic environment. It also helps in bridging the gap which affects their studies and their main decisions that will not mar their career and the steps to take when they need clarifications/advice/briefs regarding their programme of studies. For example, request for transfer of study centre from one region to another (inter/intra-regional transfer), transfer from other institutions, correction of names, change of names, omission of names, deferment of admission (studies)/resumption, deferment of semester/resumption, withdrawal/re-admission, guide on change of course and other briefs, other complaints/requests as the need arises.

Again periodic visitation to study centres and provision of group counselling as the case may be: information dissemination via circulation of handbills, students' handbooks, information booklets, newsletters, circulars, etc. as a medium of communication to students, field centres, tutors/facilitators and supervisors/managers. Also, vocational guidance helps in providing occupational information on the general nature of teacher-education, continuous professional development and career advancement opportunities. In addition, vocational counselling helps in solving emotional, social, health, interpersonal and family (domestic) problems militating against their studies as well as the provision of pre-admission guidance, on suitable courses and their relevance to current job as well as future prospects times (Smith, 2017).

A well-organised programme of guidance services is very essential for the maximum development of students, particularly distance education students. Some of the important benefits or needs of guidance and counselling programme is that it makes it possible to put proper persons at the proper place, in the proper manner and at the proper time (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). Some of the benefits include to cultivate essential life skills in students, maximum use of resources both human and material, to enable the students to make proper choices at various stages of their educational career, to minimise the mismatching between education and employment and help in the efficient use of man power, and to understand the individual responsibilities and to adapt themselves with their environment and make them to become an efficient citizen of the society and nation (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013).

Other benefits or needs of guidance and counselling programme are to minimise the incidence of indiscipline and anti-social activities, help students make the best possible adjustments to the situations in the school as in the home, check wastage and stagnation, ensure the proper use of leisure time and motivate them to develop creative hobbies, and develop all aspects of personality of the students. Ramakrishnan and Jalajakumari (2013) added that it equip students in understanding the variety, depth, and breadth of personal experiences, the opportunities available, and the choices open to them by helping them recognise, strengths and facilitate, interpret, and act upon their personal resources.

Guidance and counselling services help students get to know themselves better and find effective solutions to their daily problems. They

also help students improve themselves in all areas and be full-functioning individuals. Counsellors monitor students' development and according to their needs they give students necessary support such as helping them to understand themselves and their needs, to solve their problems, to make realistic decisions, to improve their abilities and skills, and to adjust themselves to their environment in a healthy way (Makinde, 2014). According to Sen and Kamat (2016), majority of students possess clear perception about guidance and counselling and its relevance in the present day. Guidance and counselling programmes help students develop life skills needed to deal with problems before they occur, and enhance personal, social and academic growth. It also tries to identify cases involving domestic abuse and other family problems that can affect their academic development (Jumana & Meera, 2016).

The discussion so far shows that guidance and counselling services are essential for all students, particularly distance education students. It enables the students in enriching the perspective and promoting the attitude towards resolving educational, vocational and personal problems. The world of work continues to change as the result of escalating economic globalisation and technological advancements. As a result, the transition from school to work continues to become more difficult as the range of skills and dispositions needed to compete for desirable occupations increase. The consensus reached was that guidance and counselling should be an integral part of the education of students.

Fuster (as cited in Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013) points out the goals of counselling as facilitating behaviour change, enhancing coping skills, promoting decision-making, improving relationships and facilitating the

client's potential. It is a personalised and individualised process for helping the individual to learn and acquire habits, skills, attitudes and interests which make him/her a normally adjusted being. Therefore, it is evident that the process and goals of guidance and counselling is to help the client move towards a greater level of self-understanding and self-acceptance.

Rapid changes in every aspect of living cause many strains and stresses on the individual. The youth may then inadvertently and unconsciously respond with the problems. They may feel disempowered and overwhelmed by the current system of education. In this rapidly moving complex society, the students are struggling for the better adjustment and existence (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). If they are not getting proper guidance they may engage in anti-social activities. The age of the students during adolescence is sensitive and highly inflammable. They experience conflicts between themselves and the society and even within them.

Selecting an appropriate career is a critical task that faces all undergraduate students who are not yet in the labour market, particularly distance education students. The selection of a career by unemployed distance education students is among the most critical decisions in their lifetime (Onyejiaku, 2014). This decision has a far-reaching impact on their future in terms of lifestyle, status, income, security and job satisfaction. The selection of a wrong vocation can lead to unhappiness and ultimate failure, because the occupation that the person follows is not merely a means of earning a livelihood. All persons are not equally suited for all vocations.

Every vocation requires certain educational and professional qualification and preparation and only those having them will succeed in it

(Wong & Kwok, 2016). While selecting an occupation a person should not be taken in merely by the ambition of his/her parents but its suitability to his/her own inclinations and aptitudes. But the task of finding the true inclinations and aptitudes of a person and helping him/her to select a right occupation is not easy. So distance education students who are not yet employed have to be helped in developing an integrated and adequate picture of themselves and their role in the rapidly changing occupational world.

In the case of most distance learning institutions like CoDE, UCC, career guidance is provided by the counselling unit to assist students to easily select an appropriate occupation or education which goes well with their capabilities, skills and interest. In CoDE, UCC, it is essential for the unit to help and guide students to worthwhile channels through the introduction of guidance and counselling services on a universal scale in the institution.

Unfortunately, most of the distance learning institutions do not have proper counselling facilities in this area and do not put appropriate mechanisms to assess the counselling needs of students regularly (Awabil & Akande, 2013; Cherry & Gear, 2017; Hiebert et al., 2017; Wong & Kwok, 2016). As a result of this challenge, these distance education students are forced to turn to their peers or other media for support and guidance or they live with their problems. Under these circumstances it becomes essential that the educational institutions should come forward for equipping the students properly for cultivating life skills, moulding personality and promoting capacities to choose right vocation according to their aptitude and interest through an organised programme of guidance and counselling.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study was made up of two related theories that were critically reviewed and analysed to form a theoretical structure that supported the argument of this study. These theories are interconnected ideas that condense and organise knowledge about the problem. It forms a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories used to explain distance education students' counselling needs and the extent to which the existing counselling services are meeting the needs of students. This theoretical framework helped the researcher to see clearly the construct and argument of the study. It also provided the researcher with a general framework for data analysis. The theories reviewed were Abraham Maslow's need theory and Input-Environment-Output (IEO) model of Astin.

Abraham Maslow's Theory of Need

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) was an American clinical psychologist and a pioneer in the development of need theory. MASLOW'S THEORY IS A VERY POPULAR THEORY AND MOST FREQUENTLY USED MOTIVATIONAL THEORY. THE THEORY IS intuitive in nature (awareness of emotions). It is this strength that supports practitioners in the area of counselling and psychology in using the theory despite the lack of supportive evidence (O'Connor & Yballe, 2007). The theory has suffered some criticisms such as focusing on biased sample of self-actualised individuals, unscientific approach and theory being extremely difficult to be empirically tested (McLeod, 2016). The original five-stage model of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is presented in Figure 1.

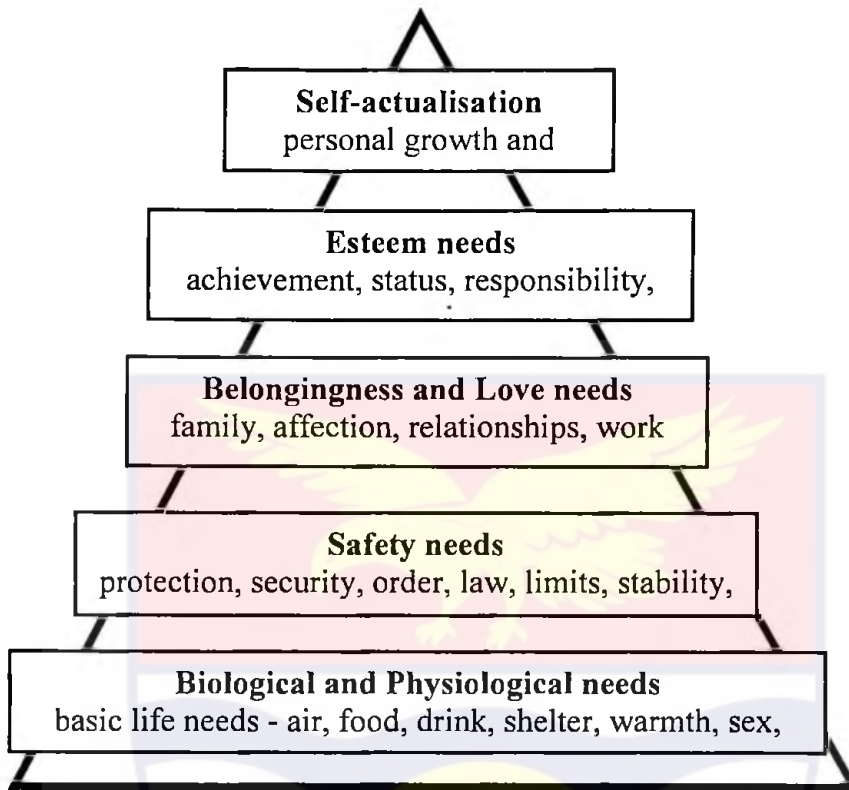


Figure 1: Hierarchy of Needs Diagram, Based on Maslow's Theory of Needs (Original five-stage model)
Source: Maslow and Herzberg (1954)

However, contemporary research by Tay and Diener (2011) has tested Maslow's theory by analysing the data of 60,865 participants from 123 countries representing every major region of the world. The survey was conducted from 2005 to 2010. The result of the study support the view that universal human needs appear to exist regardless of cultural differences. However, they were not in agreement with the ordering of the needs within the hierarchy (Tay & Diener, 2011; Cherry & Gear, 2017; Hiebert et al., 2017; Vassala, 2015).

This study reviews Maslow's theory on the basis of the reassurance of universal human needs that exist regardless of cultural differences. Maslow's need theory states that human needs are arranged in a hierarchy and as one general type of need is satisfied, another higher order need will emerge and

become operative in life (Lutz, 2014). According to Lutz (2014), Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five tier model of human need, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Maslow stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates our behaviour. Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us, and so on (McLeod, 2016).

As shown in Figure 1, Maslow's theory was initially five stage model which could be divided into deficiency needs and growth needs. The first four levels are often referred to as deficiency needs. According to Maslow (as cited in Maslow & Herzberg, 1954), the deficiency needs are said to motivate people when they are unmet. Also, the need to fulfil such needs would become stronger the longer the duration they are denied. The top level is known as the growth needs. Maslow is of the view that one must satisfy lower level deficit needs before progressing to meet higher level needs. When deficit need has been satisfied it will go away and activities become habitually directed towards meeting the next set of needs that are yet to be satisfied. Maslow's theory of need was revised from five to eight hierarchical facets of needs as depicted in Figure 2

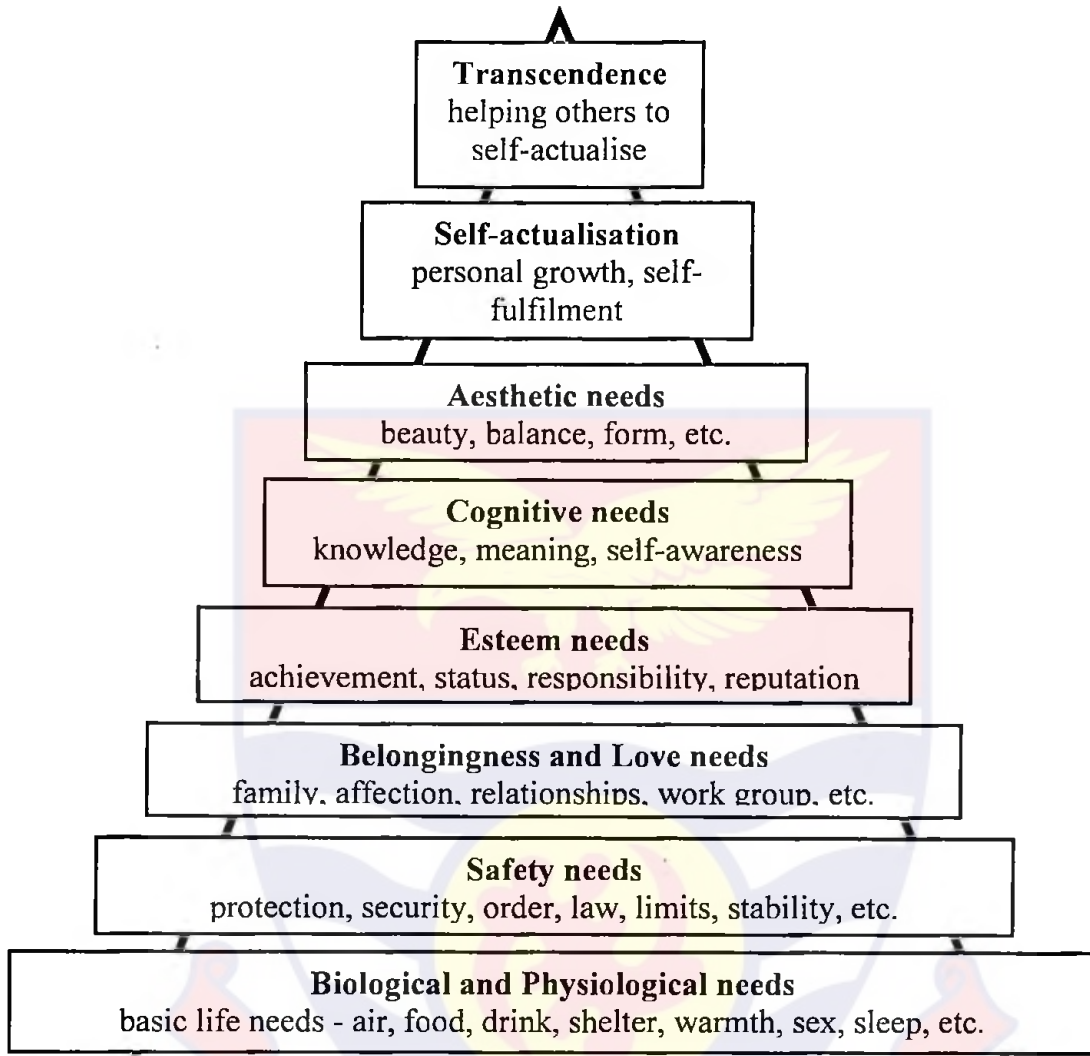


Figure 2: Hierarchy of Needs Diagram, Based on Maslow's Theory of Needs (The modified eight-stage model)

Source: Maslow and Herzberg (as cited in Mbera, 2013)

Biological and physiological needs include anything of fundamental requirements that a person has. For example; breathing, excretion, food, water shelter, warmth, sex, and sleep. The longer a person goes without food the more hungry they will become and this decreases the students' motivation.

Safety needs are important for survival, but they are not as demanding as the physiological needs. According to Cherry (2014), examples of security needs include a desire for steady employment, health care, safe neighbourhoods, and shelter from the environment.

Belongingness and love needs help us to avoid problems such as loneliness, depression, and anxiety. It is important for people to feel loved and accepted by other people. Personal relationships with friends, family, and lovers play an important role, in other groups that might include religious groups, sports teams, book clubs, and other group activities.

Esteem needs are based on desires for appreciation and respect that begin to motivate behaviour. Without esteem needs, students may not concentrate on their lessons. Esteem needs include issues of personal worth, social recognition, accomplishment, self-esteem, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, and managerial responsibility.

Cognitive needs are the expression of the natural human need to learn, explore, discover and create to get a better understanding of the world around them. Maslow believed that humans have the need to increase their intelligence and thereby change knowledge. Gautaam (2017) states, this growth need for self-actualisation and learning, when not fulfilled leads to confusion and identity crisis. Also, this is directly related to need to explore or the openness to experience.

Aesthetic needs: Based on Maslow's beliefs, it is stated in the hierarchy that humans need beautiful imagery or something new and aesthetically pleasing to continue up towards self-actualisation. Humans need to refresh themselves in the presence and beauty of nature while carefully absorbing and observing their surroundings to extract the beauty that the world has to offer. This need is a higher level need to relate in a beautiful way with the environment and leads to the beautiful feeling of intimacy with nature and

everything beautiful. These include appreciation and search for beauty, balance, form, and so on.

Self-actualisation needs are very important part of the hierarchy and they are the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Bamuhigire (2009) posits that the state of being without a system of values is psychopathogenic, we are learning. The human being needs a framework of values, a philosophy of life, a religion or religion-surrogate to live by and understand by, in about the same sense he needs sunlight, calcium or love. Self-actualisation can take many forms, depending on the individual. These variations may include the quest for knowledge, understanding, peace, self-fulfilment, meaning in life, or beauty.

For instance, the aesthetic person operating on this level may feel physically ill when driving past an ugly array of fast-food restaurants with garish neon signs. But the need for beauty is neither higher nor lower than the other needs at the top of the pyramid. Self-actualisation needs are not hierarchically ordered. To become self-actualised, Maslow said we need two things, inner exploration and action. An important existential problem is posed by the fact that self-actualising persons occasionally live out-of-time and out-of-the-world even though mostly they must live in the outer world. These include realising personal potential, self-fulfilment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.

According to Lutz (2014), Maslow's theory predicts the needs that will drive a person's behaviour, based on consideration of which needs have been satisfied and which remains to be satisfied. Lutz (2014) states that a key hypothesis of the needs theory is the satisfaction-progression hypothesis,

which proposes that a satisfied need is no longer a motivator and that once a need has been satisfied another emerges to take its place.

The implication is that distance education students have a need to achieve academic success, to progress and also to gain recognition which is self-esteem on Maslow's hierarchy. However, other needs such as safety, security and elimination of the fear of not being able to succeed academically need to be satisfied first. For instance, if safety and security are not satisfied by the College, they will serve as a motivation for students to even decide not to attend face-to-face tutorial session put in place as a form of support service for students by CoDE, UCC. This will then prevent students from moving to the next level of need which is self-esteem through academic success. These needs can be addressed by the institution only when they are identified. The varied characteristics of distance learners such as marital status, employment status, income level have to be taken into consideration when needs are assessed. These varied characteristics make Astin's model of Input-Environment-Output (I-E-O) worth considering here. The next theory to consider therefore is the Astin's Input-Environment-Outcome model.

Astin's Input-Environment-Outcome (I-E-O) Model

Astin (1991) first developed the I-E-O model in the early 1960s through his work with John L. Holland. The two studied why certain colleges and universities graduated more students who pursued doctoral work than others. In their investigation, Astin (1962) found that characteristics of entering first-year students were far more important predictors of advanced education than any institutional environmental factor, a finding contrary to previous research. Three lessons emerged from Astin's (1991) early work with

Holland: (a) to measure educational impact, the researcher must evaluate outcomes relative to student input measures; (b) the researcher must consider all input variables that may influence the outcome; and (c) input and outcome data are more instructive when considered against elements of the educational environment (pp. 17-18). These observations led Astin (1991) to create the I-E-O model, a “very simple, yet...powerful framework for the design of need assessment activities and for dealing with even the most complex and sophisticated issues in need assessment and evaluation.

The core concepts of Astin’s theory are composed of three elements, which are input, environment and output. Astin’s I-E-O model provides a framework for understanding the interdependence between the individual and the environment. For the purposes of the I-E-O model, input refers to student characteristics at time of college entry; environment refers to institutional interventions, including educational programmes, policies, facilities and student experiences; and outcome refers to student characteristics after exposure to the environment, example: achievement, development, or growth (Astin, 1991; Miller, Bender & Schuh, 2012). An asset of the I-E-O model is the ability to measure the relationship between the institutional environment and the educational outcome, while controlling for differences in students’ personal qualities (Miller et al., 2012). Outcome looks at the student characteristics after exposure to the environment. The model provides a framework for understanding the interdependence between the individual and the environment. Inputs and outputs refer to the individual and are examined at two different points in time through the understanding of environmental influences. (Antonio as cited in Hodge, 2015).

In other words, using the I-E-O model allows the researcher to account for student background characteristics that otherwise exert influence on outcomes, thereby isolating the environmental variables of interest in order to measure their educational impact (Hodge, 2015). For the purposes of this study, the input variables refer to the background characteristics of the students. The outcome or output variable is meeting students' needs. The environmental variables consist of counselling as a support service provided by the College. By adopting the theory of Astin into the study, it is assumed that inputs become the characteristics of the students before any formal interactions with the College. For instance their region of study, their gender roles, and age become their inputs.

The study argues that if these inputs interact with the environment which in the case of this study, the environment becomes effective provision of counselling services. Also, the output variable focuses on meeting the counselling needs of students through effective provision of counselling service. This will adequately meet the needs of students. According to Plessner (2014), Astin's I-E-O model provides a superior methodology for measuring and evaluating the impact of CoDE, UCC support services. Figure 3 presents the framework of Astin's I-E-O model.

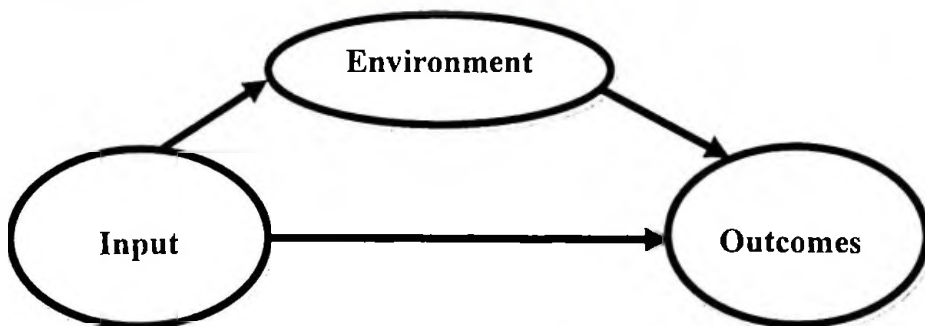


Figure 3: Astin's Model of the Relationship among Input, Environment, and Outcome Variables

Source: Astin (1991)

It seems fitting that any researcher whose objective is to understand which factors lead to or predict certain educational outcomes would build upon the I-E-O model. Astin (as cited in Plessner, 2014) posits that the focus of I-E-O-based research is on understanding the impact of educational interventions on outcomes. The study is particularly interested in learning about environmental experiences that can be controlled or changed, since it is these experiences that offer the possibility of improving outcomes in the future.

The theory, however, is not without flaws. It fails to acknowledge the effort of the learner. Favourable environments cannot yield a desirable output without the conscious effort on the part of the learner. The favourable environment is to rather strengthen the effort of the learner which will in turn yield the desirable outcome. It is also worth noting that to be able to provide a very good environment that will result in effective and productive outcome of students' academic work, it is imperative to identify the needs of students in relation to their input variables. If this is done, then, an ideal environment which in the context of the study is the effective and comprehensive design and delivery of counselling service is assured.

Summary of Theoretical Framework

As indicated earlier, the theoretical framework of the study was made up of two related theories: Abraham Maslow's need theory and Input-Environment-Output (IEO) model of Astin. Abraham Maslow's need theory was used to shape the argument of the study. These identified needs as indicated earlier must be met by the College by putting in appropriate interventions. This can be done through meaningful counselling services

delivery. The inter-relationship between the needs of students and the personal characteristics can be explained using Astin's I-E-O model. Astin's model postulates that student academic achievement is directly affected, or is a function of a student's social, physical, and psychological involvement in college (Hodge, 2015). Therefore, it is appropriate to link intended student outcomes to the programme's ability to elicit sufficient student investment of effort and energy to achieve the desired result. Virtually every institutional, administrative, instructional, and curricular policy and practice can affect the manner and amount of effort, time, and energy a student expends in the institution or programme (Plessner, 2014).

Theoretically, this may mean that the input variables will affect the needs of students and the kind of environment that will interact with both the input and needs will also determine the output, either positive or negative. However, these needs cannot be catered for when they are not known. This call for the need to assess the various counselling needs of students in order to develop, design and implement appropriate counselling intervention to support them in order for them to meet these counselling needs. Based on the concepts of the study and the two theories a conceptual framework was designed to shape the study. The conceptual argument of the study is depicted in Figure 4

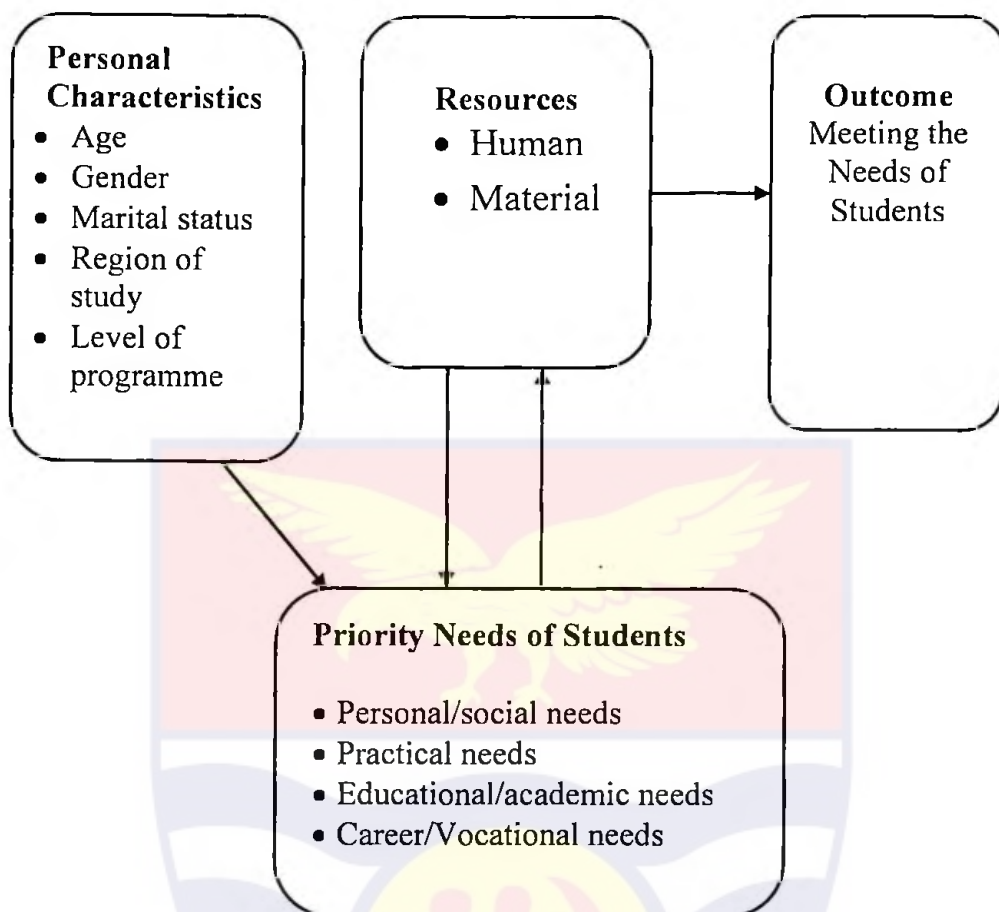


Figure 4: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Author's construct (2019)

The argument of the study is that, the identified personal characteristics of the students, which are treated as input and independent variables, determine the various needs of students. The needs of students also influence resources and vice versa. With effective counselling services delivery (environment), the needs of the students can be identified and met. It must be emphasised that, counselling service cannot meet the needs of students without the needed resource. With the needed resource the Counselling Unit of the College can meet the needs of students by identifying them, bearing in mind the significance of the personal characteristics. This implies that the counselling services provided to students must go along with the needs of students as well as the personal characteristics. However, the

various counselling needs of students must first be identified in order to design and develop appropriate interventions that will assist in meeting these needs

Empirical Review

To understand the current concepts and issues under study much better, the study reviewed the current study empirically. This helped in gaining better knowledge on the issues by means of direct and indirect observation or experience of previous researchers or studies. The record of other researchers' observation or experience were critiqued and analysed quantitatively and qualitatively to gain more information about the concept under study. The review of empirical studies concentrated on the effect of students' background characteristics such as gender, programme of study, level of respondents, marital status and age of respondents on their counselling needs. These variables were treated as inputs. Output variable was effective service delivery to aid in meeting students counselling needs.

Gender and Counselling Needs

Gender mainly differentiates human beings. Gender is about roles, and these roles are determined by society. In our part of the world and other patriarchal societies, the male gender is deemed superior. This is realised in our language, proverbs and our way of life. Gender in this context will therefore affect the needs of students. Establishing counselling programmes in schools and incorporating gender responsiveness in the context of counselling programmes in education are vital to the achievement of larger education objectives (Sahaya & Chamundeswari, 2013; Obeng, 2011).

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Metropolis. Two research questions and four hypotheses were raised to guide the study and a descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used. The target population for the study was made up of all students in forms two, three and four in the UPSHS in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Proportional stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 300 students from UPSHS for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and chi-square were used to analyse the data pertaining to the research questions while inferential statistics such as one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test were used to analyse data regarding the hypotheses.

The results that emerged from Obeng's (2011) study showed that study habit, educational information, career information, employment and self-understanding were the greatest needs of adolescent students. A significant difference existed between male and female students with respect to essay writing skills on the study habit scale. Again, a significant difference existed among students with respect to employment, educational information, drug information, and financial information needs. However, Obeng (2011) failed to examine the impact of age and level of students. Since the students were from three levels of class, it would have been appropriate to examine that because they are likely to have difference needs. Obeng (2011) further failed to look at the various support services in the school in order to see whether these services are able to meet the guidance needs of students.

Apreko (2010) also assessed the needs of polytechnic students in Ghana, focusing on Ho Polytechnic students. The findings that emerged from Apreko's (2010) study revealed that there was no significant difference

between male and female students in terms of their problems. This suggests that male and female students experience similar problems and needs in Ghanaian polytechnics. Again, findings that emerged from a joint survey research undertaken at the Fern Universität, West Germany, and Open University, UK (Kikup & Prummer as cited in Kangai et al., 2011) suggests that men and women students have different needs with respect to the support services provided during their distance study. Thus distance educators have argued for the importance of providing distance education and support services suitable to women's needs.

Furthermore, Dogar et al. (2011) also assessed the guidance and counseling needs of students. In the study, they specifically investigated the counselling needs of girls in secondary schools in five areas, i.e. educational, vocational, social, emotional and behavioural problems of students. The results of the study indicated that matriculation level of girls had more problems of carrier choice (45%) than of emotional nature (40%). The study recommended vocational and emotional counselling programmes for them (Dogar et al., 2011). The situation of diploma students is likely to be same. This is because there has been a paradigm shift in the characteristic of diploma students in Ghana, especially education students.

Before the introduction of diploma into colleges of education, majority of the Colleges' diploma students were products from the training colleges (i.e. Cert. 'A' holders). These categories of students were already in their field of work and only needed to upgrade themselves. Since 2004 where teacher training colleges were upgraded to colleges of education with diploma, students who enrolled in distance education at the diploma level are mostly

people teachers (non-professional teachers) and SHS leavers who were not able to enrol onto the conventional system of schooling. This characteristic makes them vulnerable to career indecision and emotionally unstable.

Furthermore, Sahaya and Chamundeswari (2013) also examined psychological counselling needs and academic achievement of students at the secondary level. In their study, they found that there were statistically significant differences that existed between the concerns of male and female students with respect to the guidance needs they studied. Unlike Sahaya and Chamundeswari (2013) and Gökhan and YalçÖna (2014), Awabil (2007), France et al. (2013) and Chuenyane (2013) discovered that gender was not a factor in students' perception of their needs. Thus, no significant differences existed between the guidance needs of male and female students.

In a study conducted by Mbera (2013) also looked at the importance of guidance and counselling on the education of girls in secondary schools, focusing on Sameta Division, in Gucha District, Nyanza, Province, Kenya. A sample size of 128 was used. It was found that minority of the sampled girls, that is, 11.7 percent agreed that guidance and counselling was important in their academic performance. However, 37.5 percent of the girls agreed that guidance and counselling was important in their retention in school while 18.8 percent agreed that guidance and counselling was important in their attitude towards education. There appears to be inconsistency on students' views on the importance of guidance and counselling. This is because students had varied views on what the importance of guidance and counselling was. In the same study whiles 11.7 percent agree that guidance and counselling was important in their academic performance, 37.5 percent were of the view that

guidance and counselling was important for their retention. This variation will be manifested in their need for the guidance and counselling service as well.

Gökhan and Yalçın (2014) investigated the counselling needs of educational sciences students at the Ankara University. In their study they specifically examined the major and least prevalent counselling needs of 400 undergraduate students in Ankara University in Turkey. They discovered that gender was a factor in students' perception of some of their needs.

Brouzos, Vassilopoulos, Korfiati and Baourda (2015) also conducted a study to examine the counselling needs of a sample of secondary school students in Greece. Moreover, the effect of age, gender, and academic performance on such perceived counselling needs was also investigated. The sample consisted of 931 students made up of 433 girls and 498 boys. Seventy closed-ended items were used to develop the questionnaire, which was administered to assess participants' perceived needs in various areas. The findings indicated that Greek adolescents perceived that they needed counselling support in the areas of learning skills, vocational guidance/development, and social values. The study further demonstrated that students' counselling needs varied according to their gender, age, and level of academic performance. This suggested that these variables had effects on students' self-reported counselling needs.

These findings may hold implications for the development and implementation of comprehensive guidance and counselling programmes in most countries. School counselling can help adolescents address their personal, academic, and social needs in a constructive way. However, as it stands, counselling in most secondary schools in West Africa remains limited

and largely focused on career guidance and development (Carey et al., 2016; Eyo et al., 2010; Obeng, 2011; Onyejiaku, 2014). What is more, such guidance is still offered mainly as a 'teaching subject' at the tertiary level to only education students (i.e., as part of the curriculum that aims to provide somewhat superficial vocational information and advice to students). This shows that there is the need to move past advice and guidance for school students towards providing counselling services designed specifically to address their particular needs.

At the moment, there are no officially established or government approved counselling programmes in the educational system that could offer services other than career counselling to students. Thus, there is an urgent need for the Ministry of Education in Ghana and other countries to design and implement comprehensive school-based programmes that will address the various counselling needs of students appropriately.

Yakubu, Awabil and Forde (2017) investigated the counselling needs of students in the University of Health and Allied Sciences in Ghana at Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana. They used a sample size of 320 students, made up of 196 males and 124 females. The findings indicated that there was no significant difference in the educational, personal/social and vocational/career counselling needs of students on the basis of gender. This finding is in line with that of Okyere et al, (2015) who in their study on assessment of the counselling needs of students in the University of Energy and Natural Resources in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana also, revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female students in terms of their counselling needs.

However, Awabil and Akande (2013) in assessing the counselling needs of polytechnic students in the Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria revealed that students differed significantly in their counselling needs on the basis of gender. All these studies did not consider students marital status as having influence on their needs. However, marital status of an individual can influence the need of a person since marriage comes with its own challenges, privileges and responsibilities.

Age and Counselling Needs

Many researchers are of the view that age has a significant effect on students counselling needs. Specifically, the findings of Forde (as cited in Obeng, 2011) reveals that significant differences exist between the guidance needs of mid and late adolescents. Nyarko-Sampson and Dabone (2016) also revealed that there is a significant difference among the ages of undergraduate students on sandwich programmes of Institute of Education, University of Cape Coast with respect to their counselling needs. In contrast to these findings, Awabil's (2007) survey of Senior High School (SHS) students in the Balsa and Kassena-Nankana Districts in the Upper East Region of Ghana recorded no significant difference between the concerns of mid and late adolescents with respect to the eight guidance needs that he studied.

Knowles (as cited in Crişana, Paveleab & Ghimbuluţ, 2015) posits that educators need to focus on the needs, interest and desires of adult students. However, in fulfilling these attributes educators first, have to understand who these adult learners are, how they learn, why they learn, and why they enter the learning process. According to Dankyi (2016), these adult learners are mostly full time workers, married with family responsibilities. Distance

education students of UCC do not have good study habits (Dankyi, 2016) indicating the need for the institution to provide guidance and counselling services to its students in order to meet their needs. Adult students come into the programme with numerous challenges, battling with these challenges without counselling services hinders the development of their full potentials and their ability to adapt to newer roles. It has been established that distance education students are mostly adults between the ages of 20-50 with 40-49 being the majority (Dankyi, 2016; Kangai et al., 2011).

Age influences the needs of individuals, this Maslow and Erickson have established (Gautam, 2017). However, if needs are not satisfied as at the time they are supposed to, then the individual either do not move on to the next hierarchy of need, as Maslow posits or develop a deficiency as posited by Erickson. As a matter of fact, age cannot be left out when considering the needs of distance education students. Wong and Kwok (as cited in Webb, Brigman & Campbell, 2017) found that coordinating childcare and studies, as well as job and studies was a major concern of college women aged above 25 years. Early adults, according to the study, have more vocational/career problems than late adults.

In distance education, the age of the student is very important. Whilst Coggins (as cited in Kangai et al., 2011) has argued that students who are younger and have a higher level of education are more likely to complete a distance education course, Holmberg (as cited in Kangai et al., 2011), on the other hand, argues that older mature, better-qualified students are self-directed and are more likely to have the strong motivation that is necessary to succeed at a distance. With regards to support services, young students are likely to

need general academic advice whilst older students seem to need individualised counselling services since they may experience more personal problems as they try to balance their studies with work and family responsibilities (Kangai et al., 2011).

Awabil and Akande (2013) on the other hand assessed the counselling needs of polytechnic students in the Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria. Specifically, they identified and prioritise the counselling needs of students, and also determine whether the counselling needs of students depended on age. Four broad categories of counselling needs were considered: practical, vocational/career, personal/social, and educational/ academic counselling needs. The study revealed that there was no significant difference in the counselling needs of students with regard to age.

Marital Status and Counselling Needs

Under family counselling, it has been observed that most married women in developing countries are more stressed than their partners (Anyan & Pryor, 2012). This may be as a result of the patriarchal nature of such societies. Nyarko-Sampson and Dabone (2016) in their work on assessing the counselling needs of undergraduate students on multiple-site sandwich programmes of Institute of Education, University of Cape Coast, found that there is significant difference among the marital status of students. Anyan and Pryor (2012) indicated in their study that the stressors of interest among married women offering distance education programme are occupational stress, family responsibility stress, academic activities stress, financial stress, cultural roles stress, religious roles stress and programme generated stress. The findings of Anyan and Pryor (2012) revealed significant differences in the

level of stress experienced by married female workers when compared with their male counterpart and unmarried women under the distance programme. That is, stress was experienced differently among the female distance education students. However, a great number (79.5%) experienced it. The number that experienced it highly (9.5%) is a matter of concern as it affected homes.

This may mean that the counselling needs of married and single women under the distance programme vary since they face different level of problems in the family. Generally, the results that emerged from Anyan and Pryor's (2012) study imply that women had high and positive expectations of benefits after the programme like the attainment of higher educational degrees and improved social status as they went through the stressful conditions of receiving education. Based on the findings, Anyan and Pryor (2012) recommended that young married female should delay participation in the rigorous sandwich or distance programmes. Since the years in marriage and level on the programme were significant, interested newly married women should wait for some years into their marriage before embarking on the programme.

Also, married female undergraduates should be counselled to develop coping methods to care for their various roles as married women on the programme (Rashid, 2015). This is where it is prudent to identify the needs of these students in order to provide them effective and comprehensive counselling services regarding how to combine their academic work with their varied status such as, marital duties as Africans with family responsibilities couple with career.

How can newly married woman wait when the world of work is not waiting for them? Counselling should be intensified and structured along the needs of students and not the perceived needs of students. Counselling when organised according to the needs of students will definitely address the needs of students and also becomes motivational. According to Wong and Kwok (as cited in Apreko, 2010), higher percentage of married students with children experience difficulties in specific areas, particularly in relation to time constraints and study difficulties than single students and those married with no children. Mature full-time students, according to Sen and Kamat (2016), experience more difficulties in the area of finance and a variety of circumstances related to study, work, family and social life. It was also found that married students have more educational/ academic problems than students who are single.

Furthermore, Kangai et al. (2011) examined students' perceptions on the quality and effectiveness of guidance and counselling services at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). They found that majority of ZOU students are married with three children and three dependents. This means most students have family commitments that may negatively affect their studies. For example spouses and children may demand time and attention. The size of the family and the number of dependents may stretch the budget. Students with families often experience difficulties in balancing their academic demands with their family and social commitments (Brigman & Campbell, 2017).

According to Brigman and Campbell (2017), the stress of multiple roles has been mentioned by researchers as one of the major constraints that

hinder students from persisting in a distance education programme. Adult learners assume multiple responsibilities at home, in society and in their workplaces. They spend a great deal of time and energy on fulfilling their family, social, and occupational responsibilities. This may drastically reduce the time and energy which could otherwise have been used for learning activities. The difficulty of the programme and lack of appropriate counselling services could also negatively affect the student's persistence in distance education (Kangai et al., 2011). The multiple roles of adult students must, therefore, be considered when planning the provision of guidance and counselling to ODL students.

Programme of Study and Counselling Needs

There are different programmes of study so far as education and distance education is concerned. Some of the programmes in distance education of UCC include: DBE, DMS, DCO, DSME, and DPF. Dankyi (2016) examined the study habits of UCC distance education students, focusing on students at the Cape Coast study centre. One of the specific objectives of the study was to establish whether or not differences exist in the study habits of distance business and education students of the university. The results of the study revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between distance education students with regard to those reading business and education programmes. Also, with regard to study skills, the needs of students in terms of programme were the same.

Webster and Hackley (2017) also assessed distance education students counselling needs and its effect on their academic performance in Mathematics, comparing science and arts students. The counselling needs examined were

attitudes, study methods and test taking skills related to mathematics performance. The study found out whether statistically significant differences existed between psychological intervention requirements and mathematics counselling needs among the secondary school students. The findings that emerged from the study show that secondary school student had mathematics counselling needs in relation to attitude, study methods and test taking skills for which psychological intervention was necessary. The finding further showed that there was a statistically significant difference between science and arts students with regard to their performance in mathematics and counselling needs. This gives the indication that counselling needs of students may defer in terms of programme of study.

Level of Students and Counselling Needs

In relation to grade level or form of students, most studies concluded that grade levels have no statistically significant effect on students counselling needs. Awabil (2007) examined the guidance needs of senior secondary school students in the Balsa and Kassena-Nankana District, Upper East Region of Ghana. The findings of Awabil (2007) revealed that the guidance needs of secondary school students do not depend on grade level. Furthermore, Apreko's (2010) study revealed that there was no significant difference in the needs and problems of 2nd and 3rd year students. This probably suggests that both academic levels experience similar problems and in the same magnitude. However, Gökhan and Yalçın (2014) in their study of 400 undergraduate students at the Ankara University discovered a significant grade differences in some of the counselling needs they tested among students.

Sen and Kamat (2016) also investigated student support services in open and distance learning institutions for achieving education for all. They found out that in India, ODL system of education has been accepted as one of the most significant means of educational justice. It meets the diverse needs of maximum number of people in the country easily. ODL system of education was capable of ensuring the democratisation of educational opportunities of higher education to the disadvantaged group and poor section people across the country. They however, found out that most of the support services provided by the distance learning institutions do not meet the needs of the students in all the levels adequately. This means, the class or level of a student has no effect on his/her needs. This shows that they should have assess the needs of the students first in order to find out which support services are appropriate for them. This study therefore assesses the counselling needs of students in order to examine the appropriateness of the various support services provided by CoDE, UCC.

Students and Their Counselling Needs in Terms of Broad Categories of Needs

As indicated in the conceptual review, there are many categories or components of counselling needs of students. However, the study focused on four: educational/academic, career/vocational, personal/social, and practical. Awabil (2007b) assessed the counselling needs of students in selected senior high schools in Upper East Region of Ghana. Specifically, Awabil (2007b) examined the extent to which students' needs were met, and the reasons given for students not having their needs adequately met. He also examined the influence of age, grade level, and school type on students' guidance needs.

Eight broad categories of guidance needs were used by Awabil (2007b). These are interpersonal relationship, drug information, study habits, sexual information, self-understanding, career information, employment, and educational information. A total sample size of 358, made up of 300 students and 58 teachers, was used for the study. The respondents were selected using proportional stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Questionnaire was the instrument used in collecting data. Descriptive statistical tools such as means, standard deviations, frequency and percentage distributions were used to analyse the data.

The findings that emerged from Awabil's (2007b) study show that five guidance needs of students were adequately met, while three were not adequately met. Specifically, the study indicated that students ranked first interpersonal relationship, followed by drug information, study habits, and sexual information. Also, self-understanding, career information, employment and educational information were rated fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth respectively. The work of Awabil (2007b) again collected data from teachers in order to triangulate the views of the students which one a valid and reliable approach. The study found out that teachers' ranked first study habits as students' guidance needs that have been met adequately. Interpersonal relationship was rated second, while drug information was rated third. These were followed by sexual information, self-understanding and educational information. Career information and employment were ranked seventh and eighth respectively.

The results that emerged from Awabil's (2007b) study further showed that lack of qualified guidance co-ordinators, lack of offices, and lack of funds

were the major reasons why students' needs were not adequately addressed. Also, the study discovered that students did not differ significantly in their perceptions of their guidance needs. Based on the key findings that emerged from the study, Awabil (2007b) recommended that Ghana's Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports should put in place the physical facilities, funds, and human resources required for addressing the guidance and counselling needs of students.

Apreko (2010) also examined the needs assessment of polytechnic students in Ghana by focusing on Ho Polytechnic. The purpose of the study was to explore the major problems faced by students, and the support received by students studying in Ho Polytechnic, Ghana. Just like this current study, Apreko (2010) made use of four broad categories of counselling needs that students are likely to have problem with regard to the extent to which these needs are met. These are educational/academic, career/vocational, personal/social, and practical counselling. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Year two and three students of the polytechnic formed the population of the study. The number of students used for the study was 300. Stratified random sampling procedure was used to select the respondents. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Statistical tools such as means, standard deviation, frequencies, percentages, and t-test were used to analyse the data.

The findings that emerged from Apreko's (2010) study were that practical and vocational/career problems are the greatest problems faced by polytechnic students followed by personal/social problems and then educational problems. The study also found that support for students in times

of difficulties came from the informal network like family members, friends and spouses, and that little support was sought from the formal network like polytechnic counsellors, chaplains and lecturers. It was therefore, recommended among others that government enacts an Act that will recognise guidance and counselling as an essential part of activities in the polytechnics. Also, polytechnic administration should have a good perception of guidance and counselling (Apreko, 2010)

According to Awabil and Akande (2013), experts in the field of counselling strongly believe that needs assessment is a prerequisite for the effective development and practice of counselling in both educational and non-educational settings. In accordance with this belief, Awabil and Akande (2013) assessed the counselling needs of polytechnic students in the Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria. Specifically, they identified and prioritise the counselling needs of students, and also determine whether the counselling needs of students depend on gender, age, and academic level. Four broad categories of counselling needs were considered: practical, vocational/career, personal/social, and educational/ academic counselling needs. The broad categories of counselling needs used in this current study are in line with that of Awabil and Akande (2013).

Awabil and Akande's (2013) study was guided by the descriptive survey design. The study population was all students in the polytechnic. A sample size of 250 students was used for the study. Proportional stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used to analyse the data. It was found that practical and vocational/career needs were

of greater concern to students than personal/social and educational problems. The study further revealed that students differed significantly in their counselling needs on the basis of gender. However, there were no significant differences in the counselling needs of students with regard to age and academic level. Awabil and Akande (2013) recommended that a counselling centre should be established in the polytechnic based on the relevant needs of the students. Awabil and Akande's (2013) study failed to mention specifically who should establish the counselling centres in the polytechnic and how it should be done. In all, the study was able to assess the broad categories of counselling needs of students of the polytechnic.

Okyere, Awabil and Nyarko-Sampson (2015) also investigated into assessment of the counselling needs of students in the University of Energy and Natural Resources in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. The sample size for the study was 335 students made up of 286 males and 49 females. The study looked at the four broad categories of needs, that is practical, vocational/career, personal/social and educational/academic. The study revealed that practical and vocational/career needs were the most pressing needs of students. Okyere, Awabil and Nyarko-Sampson's (2015) study did not look at the influence of age, marital status and academic level of students even though all these personal characteristics can have influence on the needs of students.

Yakubu, Awabil and Forde (2017) in the field of counselling have also grouped the counselling needs of students into four broad categories: namely practical, vocational/career, personal/social and educational/academic. The findings emerged from their study indicated that educational/academic,

personal/social, vocational/career needs were of greater concern to students than practical needs. The assumption is that, the Government of Ghana has constructed lecture halls, libraries and hostel facilities at the University of Health and Allied Science to enable the University to function well.

Students and their Counselling Needs in Terms of Specific Category of Needs

This study focused on four broad categories of needs namely; practical needs, personal/social, vocational/career and academic needs. However, there are specific needs of students under each broad category. Awabil and Akande (2013) in their study on the assessment of the counselling needs of polytechnic students in Nigeria: implications for resource mobilization, sort to find out the most prevalent specific counselling needs of students with regard to each of the four broad categories of student needs. It was revealed that under practical needs students were worried about school fees, inadequate transport facilities, poor facilities for persons with disability and inadequate medical facilities.

On vocational/career needs, students needed information on how to prepare and attend job interviews, need for information about occupations or career and need to visit an industry. With respect to personal/social needs, self-understanding was the most significant because students wanted to know more about their interest and potentialities in order to make realistic career and educational decisions and choices. Their study also revealed that students' specific educational needs was difficulty in discussing problems with lecturers, difficulty coping with course work loads and difficulty coping with style of teaching in the polytechnic (Awabil & Akande, 2013).

Another study by Okyere, Awabil and Nyarko-Sampson (2015) on the assessment of the counselling needs of students in the University of Energy and Natural Resources in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana also found out the specific needs of students under the four broad categories. The study revealed that specific practical needs that were of great concern to students were inadequate lecture room space and high user fee charged by the university. This need may not be different from that of distance education students of Code. This because most of the study centres are SHS rented premises and so there is the likelihood that the lecture halls may be inadequate and unconfutable with higher user fee as well.

With regard to career needs students expressed interest on the need for more information on occupations or careers, need for information about how to prepare and attend interviews and the need to find placement for industrial attachment. The results of their study also showed that under the personal/social category, students greatly desired self-understanding, how to resolve interpersonal conflict. The study further revealed that student did not desire any specific educational needs (Okyere, Awabil & Nyarko-Sampson, 2015).

Yakubu, Awabil and Forde (2017) research on the counselling needs of students in the University of Health and Allied Sciences in Ghana, the results showed that students' specific needs under the category of education were study skills, examination taking skills, time management and memory retrieval strategies. With regard to personal/social category, students' needs were difficulty in making new friends, problem coping with disappointment, problem dating and freedom at home. Under vocational/career needs, choosing

programme and confusion about kind of job placement were the most significant needs. Student had no specific practical needs.

Distance Education Students and their Counselling Needs

Distance learners need counselling services from their first point of entry into any educational institution through to graduation. Students' needs include financial, academic, psychological, and social issues which have to be addressed through counselling services (Kabate, 2016). Kabate (2016) in her study on "counselling service for students' sustainability in open and distance learning system: a case of Ilala Regional Centres of the Open University of Tanzania", the study employed exploratory qualitative research design. The target populations for the study included three (3) administrative and nine (9) academic staff. Purposive sampling technique was applied in getting the respondents. Data were collected through structured and unstructured interview. Among the objectives of the study was the potential of counselling services to distance learners.

The findings indicated that both administrative and academic staff at the centre reported of seeing the importance of counselling service to students in attaining their academic goals. These include enabling students to gain more self-understanding and self-direction studying through ODL, remove negative attitudes towards studying with the Open and Distance learning System, builds in the students a belief on what is provided through ODL, and build in students a strong relationship between students and staff. Kabate (2016) indicated that distance learners have special needs: the need of information to help learners to relate to the institution and to understand the system, advice on how to study and the need for support on good study techniques.

Ghazi, Malik and Safdar (2013) also in their study on addressing psychological problems of distance learner through guidance and counselling, they outlined the functions of guidance and counselling to include: guidance and counselling to enable a student to face and work through personal difficulties and provision of accurate and appropriate information to students.

Mapolisa (2012) examined the ODL learners' perceptions of the quality of provision of research support services to the ODL learners by tutors. It focused on the ZOU Bachelor of Education (Educational Management) research students' experiences. It was a qualitative multiple case study of four of the 10 Regional Centres of the ZOU. It purposively sampled 40 out of 160 research participants because they possessed desirable research characteristics for this study. The study was deemed significant in influencing tutors and policy makers to consider their research students' supervision experiences as a basis for improving the quality of services for future research supervision practices and research projects. The study was guided by a twofold theory namely, the facilitation theory and the nurturing theory. Both theories advocate for the need of the supervisors to give their students a big heart. In terms of research supervision services offered by tutors, the study indicated the time students were offered to meet research supervisors, prompt returns of marked work, and tutor student motivation and counselling as key services.

In connection with the joys about research supervision, the students highly regarded: the manner in which tutors motivated them, tutors guidance in choosing research topic, tutor mentorship during research supervision and provision of workshops to polish up their research skills (Mapolisa, 2012). In

line with the challenges to the provision of research support services, three categories of challenges emerged.

First, student-related challenges included: lack of time, lack of money, lack of library facilities, lack of motivation and commitment to do research, lack of adequate theory in the area being researched on and family problems. Second, supervisor-related challenges included: too little direction, too little practical help given, too few meeting with students, no interest in topics and with students, lack of research skills and experience. Third institution-related challenges included: lack of adequate statistics and research course sat undergraduate levels, lack of adequate courses in research methods and paradigms, exposure to research skills and experiences to name a few (Mapolisa, 2012).

Mapolisa (2012) further found out that in a bid to revamp the provision of research services, students suggested the need to improved library facilities, install computers in the library, hire internet services and photocopy relevant research material to name a few. Mapolisa (2012) concluded that tutors provided average research support services to ODL learners. Students tended to enjoy research supervision if they are exposed to academically nourishing experiences. Research support services were undermined by student-related, supervisor related and institution related challenges. Students failed to visit their supervisors, libraries and also failed to purchase research materials due to lack of money. Students in rural areas do not have access to library facilities in their localities.

Based on the findings that emerged from the study, Mapolisa (2012) recommended that tutors need to be trained, and indicated staff developed in

the research support services area. ZOU needs to set up mobile libraries and internet facilities to provide service for students in remote areas. ZOU needs to move its research support services a gear up by exposing students to time management skills. Even though the study try to link the support services provided to the various needs of the study, it failed to examine the impact of students' background characteristics on their needs. Since ODL differ in terms of age, gender, level and programme of study, it would have been better for the study to assess the impact of these background characteristics on students' counselling needs.

Sampson (2013) also investigated how the needs of distance education students can be met. Sampson's (2013) study draws on the experience of a cohort of 22 multinational and multilingual students enrolled in a Master in Education distance learning programme administered by a British university. The purpose was to locate the aims and philosophies of distance learning within the experiences of actual distance education students in order to see if learners' needs were being met by the programme and to obtain a fuller understanding of core aspects of distance education. The study found that students were on the whole, satisfied with the course materials, the choice of modules, assignment feedback, and length of time given to complete the assignments. But significant problems surfaced regarding issues of student support, and access to and provision of resource materials. Arguably, these are issues intrinsic to the successful provision of distance learning courses, and raise some interesting questions regarding the provision of distance education and its ability to meet the needs of learners. Assessing the needs of distance

education students will help in providing appropriate support services that will meet their needs.

Alarming complexity of modern society poses a variety of complicated problems leading to conflicts, frustration, and unhealthy rivalry that result in value crisis and serious maladjustment among adolescent children. In such a complex society, the individual has to face many problems in life for a better adjustment in a social structure. Globalisation processes and information technology have significantly changed the way people work. Thus the students counteract problems and situations in all walks and phases of life. The students are not matured enough to critically evaluate baffling situations they continuously faced (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). They need somebody to help in the solution of problems and thus avoid tensions and conflicts. The need for guidance and counselling in modern times has increased because of the multiplicity of problems that the individuals have to face in the various domains of life.

According to Ramakrishnan and Jalajakumari (2013), in the context of the changing socio-cultural scenario, the repertoire of guidance and counselling has been increasing at an unexpected speed. In these circumstances, it is essential to help and guide the youth to worthwhile channels through the introduction of guidance and counselling services on a universal scale in our educational institutions. Again, Ramakrishnan and Jalajakumari (2013) also failed to examine the effect of background characteristics such as gender, age, level and programme of study on students counselling needs.

Sekyi (2013) also posits that the introduction of the distance education programme at UCC has over the years widened access to higher education to many, especially those who hitherto would not have had the chance in the conventional education system. Student numbers have grown tremendously to about 30,000 in the 2012/2013 academic year. To ensure the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, some student support services are being operated. Common support services for students include face-to-face tutorial, learning materials, guidance and counselling as well as administrative support. A multi-staged approach comprising purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques was used by Sekyi (2013) to select respondents from the CoDE, UCC programme. This was done to ensure that the results were more representative of the target population. The instrument used for collecting information from respondents was the questionnaire. In all, 144 students and 20 tutors were interviewed at three study centres.

Findings from Sekyi's (2013) study revealed that generally, while support for students in terms of face-to-face tutorials and learning materials were seen as satisfactory, there was more room for improvement with regards to guidance and counselling and administrative support services. In sum, it was evident from the study that the role of support services in facilitating learning by distance education students help in ameliorating the challenges they face. UCC's provisions are satisfactory in terms of face-to-face tutorial support and learning material support but inadequate with regards to guidance and counselling and administrative support services to students. The study however, failed to assess the needs of students and as a result may not be able

to identify appropriate support services required by students since their needs influence the kind of support services they require.

In the case of Barrell (2015), the counselling needs of middle school students were examined. Specifically, the academic, personal/social, and career needs of 56 middle school students in grades 6-8 in a rural Western New York school were examined. A survey was used to collect the data measuring the amount of help needed on specific items. Results showed that although the top needs were predominately personal, social and emotional in nature, the top need with each grade level was academic. Middle school students are unique beings that have a unique set of challenges during their time in school. Their academic, personal, social and career needs must be addressed in order for them to find success in schools. If these needs are not addressed, students are likely to develop more negative outcomes.

Barrell (2015) further found out that the needs of students are not always obvious to the personnel that may be providing the intervention. In order to provide effective support, remove obstacles, and have students be successful in the school the students must be asked about their perceptions of what they need. A needs assessment is a simple, data driven method to establish accountability and assess student needs. The survey must be created carefully and logically, covering each possible aspect of the middle school student's life. Furthermore, the results of the survey must be considered within the context of each student's life and as a result, interventions will be more appropriate and meaningful to the student. This will foster success for the student and ultimately the school. Even though Barrell (2015) assessed the needs of students, it fail to look at the effect of background characteristics

such as gender, age, marital status, level and programme of study on students counselling needs.

The growth of distance education options at the post-secondary level has led to a need to reassess how student services are provided to distance education students. Dunn's (2015) study used qualitative thematic analysis to examine the experiences of student service directors in Canadian postsecondary institutions when providing counselling and advising services to distance education students. Some of the key considerations and challenges for service planning that emerge from Dunn's (2015) study were the need for increased accessibility to services, new modes of communication, and the need to consider the unique expectations and qualities of distance education students. This study examined services provided but failed to look at the needs of students. However, the needs of students must influence the kind of services to provide for students. Also, the study did not consider the effects of gender, age, marital status, level and programme of study on counselling and advising services provided to distance education students.

Wambu and Fisher (2015) examined school guidance and counselling in Kenya by looking at its historical development, current status, and future prospects. Wambu and Fisher (2015) propose a paradigm shift from the way guidance and counselling has been conducted in Kenyan schools for the past years and recommends the implementation of organised comprehensive guidance and counselling programmes that addresses the needs of all students. Implications for the future training and practice of school counsellors were also addressed. They indicated that counselling needs are what determine

counselling services. Therefore, providers of counselling service must first assess the needs of students in order to know the kind of service they require.

However, the provision of counselling services must be based on certain defined principles. There are many principles of guidance and counselling in schools. The basic ones outlined by most researchers can be seen in the outline of Sim and Laura (2016). According to Sim and Laura, guidance services must be made for all, they are for all school levels, must be voluntary and not by force, and must aim primarily at preventing problems than solving them. They added that guidance services do not provide solution to all human problems, they must ensure the security and confidentiality of all personal information revealed either directly by the client during the counselling interview or through data-collection process, and guidance services should be rendered on a continuous basis as it is a life-long process. Furthermore, guidance services should recognise the worth and dignity of the individual client, they must be based on the total development of mental, vocational, emotional and personal/social aspects of an individual, and must be a systematic and well-organised activity (Sim & Laura, 2016).

Sen and Kamat (2016) also examined student support services (SSS) in ODL institutions for achieving education for all. The objective of ODL system of education is to develop capacity within and across the region to organise distance learning effectively in order to address the educational challenges and opportunities, particularly in higher education. This 'non-conventional' system is slowly trying to dominate and may soon replace the conventional and full-time contract education system especially in the field of higher education all over the world. But these SSS plans, policies and strategies are not devoid of

drawbacks and therefore, cannot be regarded as a yardstick measurement and standard for the Open University's non-traditional ODL education. Sen and Kamat's (2016) study was an attempt to present some of the drawbacks of the SSS and its interaction related to the students' academic development. It also offers some suggestions in academic improvement in the ODL system of education in the Open Universities. Overall, Sen and Kamat (2016) examined the rationality and the scope of applicability of SSS in the related areas in our country for open and distance learning.

In Ghana and other developing countries, enhancing the quality and quantity of education delivery in the context of social and economic dimensions present major challenges and opportunities, especially in the field of higher education. The conventional and full-time contract traditional educational institutions are not able to meet tremendous pressure of democratising higher education all over the world. It requires non-conventional educational system through introduction of well-equipped ODL programmes (Sen & Kamat, 2016). Today, in Ghana, ODL system of education has been accepted as one of the most significant means of educational justice. It can easily meet the diverse needs of maximum number of people in the country. ODL system of education is capable of ensuring the democratisation of educational opportunities of higher education to the disadvantaged group and poor section people across the country.

Academic guidance and counselling is emerging as a crucial aspect of students' support services especially for distance education students. The current debate on SSS in general and counselling in particular, has now shifted the attention of researchers from questions like: "do distance education

students need counselling?” and “should a distance education institution provide counselling services to its students?” to “what are the counselling needs of distance education students?” and “what counselling services should a distance education institution provide and how?” (Kangai et al., 2011).

The primary purpose of the Kangai et al. (2011) study was to demonstrate how an ODL institution can develop and provide quality and effective guidance and counselling services to its students through the use of a four-step model. Data for the present study was collected from a random sample of 200 students registered at the ZOU for the academic year 2010, through a survey that employed questionnaire and interviews. Major findings of the study were that although ZOU has institutionalised guidance and counselling as a key support service for ODL students by setting up a Student Support Service Unit (SSSU), the majority of students (80%) of whom live and work in the rural areas, needed quality and effective guidance and counselling and general academic support in the following areas: distribution of learning materials (modules), management of coursework (assignments), tutorials, processing of examinations, communication, and individualised counselling. Again, the Kangai et al. (2011) study did not look at the counselling needs of students. However, the needs influence the services being provided by the institution. Therefore, it is appropriate for future studies to assess counselling needs of students.

Challenges Preventing Students from Accessing Counselling Services

Literature on factors that inhibit students' ability to access guidance and counselling services delivery in both national and international arena are discussed. In broad terms, some basic factors have been more or less

established in research as inhibitors to the effective and efficient access of student to the delivery of guidance and counselling services in the school system. According to Arko-Achemfour (2017), students face challenges in accessing support services put in place by their various institutions. His article investigated the access challenges that students face in their ODL mode of study in terms of students support services. In his study on student support gaps in an open distance learning context, a mixed method approach using focused group and a set of questionnaire were applied to solicit the views and experiences of students on the challenges they face in accessing the support services the university offers.

The result indicated that although most of the support services were in place and students also clearly indicated the importance they attach to learner support in their studies. This notwithstanding, the high needs gaps for all the learner support services items surveyed indicated that there are serious problems for students in accessing the services. The challenges that students face in accessing the support services included economic constraints, social factors, physical barriers, transactional distance on the part of Unisa in the form of academic, effective and administrative problems (Arko-Achemfour 2017).

Again, Arko-Achemfour indicated that most of the support services are in place at the institutions and its regional offices, some of the students, most especially those in the rural areas are not able to access the support services adequately which impact negatively on their studies and learning experience. According to Owusu-Boateng and Essel (2011), majority of distance education students are adults. Such people have many responsibilities; they have

families, jobs, social life and other commitments. The ability to manage and co-ordinate their enormous activities will determine how successful they would be in their studies. The primary role of the student is to learn, pass and obtain the certificates in their various disciplines. The purpose of Owusu-Boateng and Essel's 2011 study was to find out the challenges faced by the students pursuing distance programmes at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and how they are able to effectively manage them. To enable the students achieve this challenging task requires motivation, planning, and ability to analyse and apply the information being taught. Questionnaire was used to elicit information from a sample size of 120 students pursuing undergraduate and post graduate programmes at the Institute of Distance Learning (IDL), KNUST.

Distance education students face many challenges that militate against their studies. The findings that emerged from Owusu-Boateng and Essel's (2011) study revealed that the challenges facing the students include how to combine their work with their studies, manage family and social activities. They are often misunderstood, isolated and some are contemplating dropping out from the programme they embark on. They also feel burdened with studies and do not know where to turn for help that's either there are not aware of the support for them or the student support services are simply not in place. Those who manage and co-ordinate their activities very well, receive constant feedback from facilitators and course mates as well as support from employers and family members are able to successfully complete their programmes.

Schlosser and Anderson (2012) also reviewed the challenges facing distance education students. According to Schlosser and Anderson (2012), the

challenges facing the provision of guidance and counselling services includes lack of adequate guidance and counselling training for teacher-counsellors, inadequate resources, and lack of requisite support to guidance and counselling programmes among other challenges. This case is not different from that of CoDE, UCC. In the case of inadequate resource, CoDE has 73 study centres across the ten regions of Ghana but has five counsellors. The counsellors at the headquarters do not have counselling room let alone study centre coordinators getting an office for guidance and counselling. There is absolutely lack of requisite support for the University management.

In another scenario, Wanjala (2013) conducted a study of the factors that hinder the effective implementation of career guidance and counselling programmes in public secondary schools in Vihiga District in Kenya. The target population was 5,200 form three students and 82 career teachers. The sample of the study was 357 respondents, comprising 336 students and 21 career teachers. Six research questions were formulated to guide the study. Research question one sought to assess the teachers' attitude towards implementing career guidance and counselling programmes in schools. Research question two sought to establish whether public secondary schools career teacher/teacher counsellors possessed the necessary training and skills. Research question three sought to determine whether there were enough resources availed in schools for providing career guidance and counselling to students. Research question four was aimed at establishing the time allocated for guidance and counselling programmes in schools to effectively implement career guidance and counselling. Research question five sought to establish what activities the teachers have developed in order to effectively provide

career guidance and counselling services in Vihiga District and the last research question sought to identify factors that hinder effective implementation of career guidance and counselling in schools in Vihiga District.

The data collection instrument used by Wanjala (2013) was questionnaire. There were two sets of questionnaire designed for this study, one for the career teachers and the other for the students. Both questionnaire sought information on career teachers' and students' opinion on factors that affected effective implementation of career guidance and counselling services in schools. It also sought information on die areas teachers and students feel need to be improved on so as to enhance effective provision of career guidance in schools. The findings revealed that a significant number of teachers were unwilling towards being assigned responsibility of being career teacher counsellor could be a hindrance towards effective implementation of career guidance and counselling programmes in schools. Lack of training in career guidance and counselling was a hindrance to proper implementation of career guidance counselling programme in schools. Lack of enough duration of training was a hindrance to proper implementation of career guidance and counselling in schools. Also, most schools did not have special rooms for guidance and counselling which hindered proper implementation of career guidance and counselling in schools.

Other challenges revealed by Wanjala's (2013) study were that lack of occupational information to the students was a hindrance to proper implementation of career guidance and counselling in schools. Lack of adequate time, funds and resources were the major problems that hindered

career guidance and counselling services in schools. Lack of appraisal and follow-up programmes for students and school leavers respectively was also a hindrance to proper implementation of career guidance and counselling to schools. Based on the findings, Wanjala (2013) concluded that there were various factors which hindered proper implementation of career guidance and counselling in schools. Therefore, there is need for addressing those factors to ensure that career guidance and counselling was well implemented in schools.

Students studying in institutes of technology in Nyanza province display a host of problems ranging from poor academic performance to low self-esteem, which drive them to open drunkenness, skipping of classes, stealing other people's property, sexual misconduct and actual or attempted suicide (Nyarangi, 2013). The problems exist despite the fact that guidance and counselling programmes are in place in these institutions. The purpose of Nyarangi's (2013) study therefore, was to establish the challenges facing effective implementation of guidance and counselling programmes in the Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TIVET) institutions in Nyanza province. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. It was carried out in Moi Institute of Technology (MIT) and Gusii Institute of Technology (GIT). The target population were the principals, the teacher counsellors and the students of the two institutions. Each institution had two teacher counsellors. MIT had 600 students and GIT had 1800 students making a total of 2400. The sample size was made of two principals, four teacher counsellors and 240 students.

Purposive sampling was used to select the principals and the teacher counsellors. Stratified random sampling and simple random sampling were

used to select the student's sample. Data was collected using questionnaire and it was analysed using descriptive statistics, aided by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme. The results of Nyarangi's (2013) study indicated that the major challenge facing effective implementation of guidance and counselling programmes in the Institutes of Technology was lack of sufficient facilities due to poor support by the principals and Board of Governors. Nyarangi (2013), therefore, recommends that there is need for all principals of Institutes of Technology in Nyanza to be taken through a thorough and informative training on the importance of giving full support to guidance and counselling programmes in their institutions. There is also need to work to change the negative attitude towards guidance and counselling held by some students.

Alemu (2013) also assess the provision and perceived importance of guidance and counselling. The study used survey design and 336 participants participated in the study. Chi-square, independent sample t-test, Kruskal-Wallis test and percentages were used as data analysis techniques. The result indicated that the school community had poor awareness about the presence of guidance and counselling services at their schools. Male students' utilisation of the services was significantly higher than their female counter parts. Fear of asking help was the reason for underutilisation of the guidance and counselling services by female students. The schools guidance and counselling programmes did not have written plans, specific roles, responsibilities and private counselling rooms. There was loose coordination among principals, teachers, and guidance and counselling programmes.

Furthermore, the result of Alemu's (2013) study indicated that the school community had poor awareness about the presence of guidance and counselling services: lack of written plans, specific roles and responsibilities, private counselling rooms and loose coordination among principals, teacher-counsellors. Also, most counsellors and teachers had no plans to provide leadership in the development, promotion, facilitation and dissemination of school counselling research demonstrating the connection between school counselling programmes and students' success. Lack of resources, in-service training in guidance and counselling, planning by counsellors and non-counselling duties performed by school counsellors were also some of the challenges affecting the delivery of guidance and counselling services.

Wunpini (2015) assessed the challenges facing counsellors in SHS in the Tamale Metropolis, in the Northern Region of Ghana. A sample of 52 school counsellors was administered with questionnaire. The results indicated that lack of clear policy on guidance activities, too much work load for counsellors, lack of support from principals/teachers, lack of equipment like public address system, lack of professional development training for counsellors were the major challenges facing the delivery of guidance and counselling services in SHS in the metropolis. Wunpini (2015) further found out that insufficient time allocated to guidance and counselling programmes, inadequate number of trained counsellors, lack of funds and office accommodation were the major challenges facing the provision of guidance and counselling services in the schools.

A study conducted by Zakaria (2016) on the evaluation of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in the Upper West Region of

Ghana revealed the challenges and constraints affecting school counsellors. These are lack of office accommodation, work overload, lack of funds, lack of in-service trainings for counsellors, and fear of revealing secrets. Furthermore, Zakaria (2016) found out that due to the lack of finance, counsellors in senior high schools are not able to organise career conferences and embark on field trips to industries and factories to expose students to various vocations.

Summary of Chapter

The chapter review literature related to the work. The review of the literature focused first on the concepts of counselling and needs. The review also focused on the counselling needs of students, viz, study habits, their need for educational and career information, employment, self-understanding, drug information, interpersonal relationships, sexual information and financial support. Theoretically, Abraham Maslow's needs theory and Input-Environment-Output (IEO) model of Astin were discussed and linked to the argument of the study. They underpinned the position of this work.

Empirically, a comparison of students' guidance needs in terms of variables such as gender, age, marital status, grade level and programme of study were established. Also, studies that examined students counselling needs and support services were critically examined quantitatively and qualitatively. The review show that much work has not been done regarding the counselling needs of distance education students, not to mention the influence of their personal variables on the broad categories of students' counselling needs. Therefore, this study will help in filling this gap.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter describes the procedures that were used in conducting the study. The goal is to assess the counselling needs of diploma students of CoDE, UCC. The chapter looks at the study institution, research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument, and ethical issues considered in the study. In addition, the chapter covers the data collection procedures and data processing and analysis.

Study Area

The College of Distance Education (CoDE), University of Cape Coast (UCC) formerly Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), was established in 1997 as one of the departments under the then Faculty of Education, now College of Education Studies of UCC (CoDE, UCC, 2017a). The Centre was later upgraded to a college status on 1st of August, 2014. Currently, CoDE, UCC has three departments, namely: Department of Education, Department of Business Studies and Department of Mathematics and Science Education. Also, there are several units that serve as auxiliary departments or units to the main departments and the College as a whole. One of such units is the Counselling Unit. This unit is there basically to help students address their academic, personal/social, vocational problems and to also adjust to their academic environment. The unit is also, to help students resolve all forms of challenges that may confront them to ensure successfully completion of their various programmes of studies through counselling so that they can make

informed choices and decisions on their academic, career, personal- social, and practical issues. The Counselling Unit also provides help to all the various categories of staff of the College who may need it.

The concept of distance education in Ghanaian public universities came about as a result of the feasibility study report submitted to the Government of Ghana (GoG) by a team led by Prof. Kwabong, the former Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana (UG) in the late eighties. Based on the recommendation of the report, all public universities in Ghana, including UCC, were directed to embark on distance education programmes with the primary aim of increasing access to university education. In response to this directive, UCC, under the leadership of Prof. S. K. Adjapong, established a unit for distance education, called Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) and CoDE subsequently. An ad hoc committee, under the leadership of Prof. Nathaniel Kofi Pecku, was formed to work out the modalities of the distance programmes for take-off in 1991. After some years, Mr. Albert Kwabena Koomson was introduced into the scene by the then Vice Chancellor, Prof. Adow Obeng due to Prof. Nathaniel Kofi Pecku's promotion as a Principal of the then University College of Education, Winneba, now University of Education, Winneba (CoDE, UCC, 2017a).

The Centre started with an initial student enrolment of 750 in 2001. Currently, the College has an enrolment of 48,622 undergraduate students in 73 study centres across the ten regions of Ghana and 1,427 postgraduate students in five regional centres (CoDE, UCC, 2017a). It runs programmes in education and business leading to the award of Diploma, Bachelor's and

Master's degrees. In all, the College currently runs 27 programmes (UCC, 2016).

CoDE shares the vision of the University of Cape Coast “to be a University with a world-wide acclaim that is strongly positioned for innovative teaching, research, outreach and professional development.” As part of the vision, CoDE wants to become a reference point for the delivery of quality distance education in Ghana and beyond (UCC, 2014; 2015). It also has a mission to pursue excellence in the delivery of innovative, demand driven, customer-oriented and cost effective distance education programmes aimed at assisting individuals in overcoming geographical, economic, social and cultural barriers to learning. According to UCC (2014), currently, the College is made up of the Board, the office of the provost, office of the College registrar, office of the College finance officer, heads of academic departments, coordinators of administrative units, zonal coordinators, regional resident tutors, and study centre coordinators.

The College provides students support services in order to help students meet their guidance and counselling needs, and also be able to cope, adjust and adapt to the distance academic environment. The rationale behind the provision of support service to students is to create an academic environment that ensures that students' academic as well as psychological, social and emotional wellbeing are at a state of bliss for academic success. It is also to ensure that students complete their programmes of study successfully with no challenges. The support services that are currently available at the various units under the Students Support Service are guidance and counselling, career services, enrolment services, registration and tutorial or

face-to-face (CoDE, UCC, 2017a). The main building of the College can be located at the North Campus of UCC, Cape Coast. In addition, the College now has offices in all the ten regions of Ghana which are being headed by the various regional resident tutors of the College.

Approach to the Study

The study adopted the mixed method which makes use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative approach emphasized on the measurement whereas qualitative emphasized on words. The qualitative and quantitative research differs with respect to their epistemological and ontological orientations. Both designs are interpreted as positivism and interpretivism. Qualitative research is multi-method in focus and involves interpretive, naturalistic and phenomenological approaches to its subject matter (Creswell, 2015; Kumar, 2014). The adopted approach created room for the researcher to assess counselling needs of distance education students of CoDE.

In this study the researcher viewed qualitative study not just as lack of counting but also as a perception of the world that is guided by certain postulates about the nature of truth and how it can be known. The researcher also believes that, complementing qualitative with quantitative data help strengthen the results of the study as it makes sense to quantify the enumerable aspects of qualitative life (Creswell, 2014; Yates, 2014). Integrating the two approaches in a single study enabled the researcher not only to triangulate the data, but also to engage in multi-dimensional analysis of the phenomena investigated (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug, 2015). Also, the researcher perceived counselling needs of students as social constructions which are

premised on certain social values which are necessarily affected by multiplicity of factors. Thus, in this study the researcher worked on the premise that reality in terms of the phenomena under investigation is multiple, and is perceived and interpreted differently by students.

With regard to the quantitative approach adopted for the study, it was used where data were numerically measured. The study was largely quantitative in nature; however, the qualitative was used to provide further and better information on the issues studied. The core assumption of mixed methods approach is that the combinations of quantitative and qualitative data provide a more complete understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2014; 2015; Neuman, 2014). The choice of the mixed methods approach was influenced by the purpose of the study, use of questionnaire and interview guides. This approach helped the researcher to collect large, appropriate and reliable data from a relatively large population. It also helped the researcher to analyse the data with ease.

Research Design

The study adopted the explanatory sequential mixed methods design in order to fuse both qualitative and quantitative stand points to explore reality from another perspective which is known as pragmatic paradigm. As the study aimed at assessing counselling needs of distance education students of CoDE, UCC, it was appropriate to consider a mixed method approach. According to Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen and Razavich (2010), explanatory sequential mixed methods design appeals to individuals with a strong quantitative background or from fields relatively new to qualitative approaches. It involves a two-phase project in which the researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase,

analyses the results, and then uses the results to plan (or build on to) the second, qualitative phase. The quantitative results typically inform the types of participants to be purposefully selected for the qualitative phase and the types of questions that will be asked of the participants.

Mixed methodology can be seen as the corner stone of research within education studies that is experienced within everyday life. Mixed methodology is described as being “the third paradigm”; a “third methodological movement; and includes two (or more, or both) quantitative and/or qualitative approaches (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). It no longer restricts the researcher to particular paradigms that have been traditionally the case and is considered a legitimate means of undertaking research in social and human science (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014).

This approach normally uses the qualitative data to confirm or disconfirm the quantitative data and also to fill the gaps left by the quantitative data (Babbie, 2013; Malhotra & Birks, 2007). This design helped the researcher to use the qualitative data to explain in more detailed the initial quantitative results. The designed involved collecting survey data in the first phase, analysing the data, and then following up with qualitative interviews to help explain the survey responses.

The adoption of explanatory sequential mixed methods design helped the researcher to address broader questions providing a more expansive and creative approach to assess the counselling needs of distance education students of CoDE, UCC. The adopted design again helped the researcher to triangulate each of the faces of the data into a third phase where quantitative data provided general patterns and width while qualitative data reflected upon

experience and depth of the study. In addition, this design created room for the findings from the qualitative data to help contextualise and enrich the quantitative findings, increase validity in the interpretation of the data, and generate new knowledge.

Furthermore, using this design helped the researcher to understand the topic area in greater depth, increase confidence in the findings, and provided more evidence while offsetting possible shortcomings from using a single approach. Whereas undertaking research using explanatory sequential mixed methods design can be time consuming it can help to address broader questions adding insight that could have otherwise have been missed (Creswell, 2014; Yates, 2014).

The adopted design again created room for the researcher to study the phenomena in their natural settings in order to make sense of or integrate phenomena in terms of the meanings people give to them. Furthermore, the study believed that complementing qualitative with quantitative data helps strengthen the results of the study as it makes sense to quantify the numerable aspects of qualitative life. In fact, complementing qualitative studies with a quantitative dimension will not just be a question of choice as the social phenomena under investigation are predisposed to quantitative analyses. Thus, integrating the two approaches in a single study sequentially enabled the researcher not only to triangulate the data, but also to engage in multi-dimensional analysis of phenomena investigated (Best & Kahn, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011; Neuman, 2014).

The study, therefore, understood the situation at CoDE with regard to the counselling needs of students and the extent to which the needs are met

The study worked on the premise that reality in terms of the phenomena under investigation is multiple, and is perceived and interpreted differently by people in the institution and to some extent by people holding different positions and wielding different forms of power in the society. Therefore, it was appropriate to adopt the explanatory sequential mixed methods design to assess the counselling needs of distance education students of CoDE, UCC, and Ghana.

Population

The target population for the study was all students of CoDE, UCC, as at the end of 2016/2017 academic year (48,622) while the accessible population was all diploma students of CoDE, UCC as at the same academic year. The total population of diploma distance education students of the College was 36,798 (CoDE, UCC, 2017b). The distribution of the diploma students of the College by programme of study and level is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Population Distribution of Diploma Students of CoDE, UCC

Level of Students	Education			Business		Total
	DBE	DPFE	DSME	DCO	DMS	
Level 100	6104	2894	132	525	728	10383
Level 200	9017	2245	131	571	834	12798
Level 300	10465	1923	101	462	666	13617
Total	25586	7062	364	1558	2228	36798

Source: CoDE, UCC (2017b)

The population distribution of students was further segregated to represent the zones, regions, gender, programmes of study and levels of study. The distribution is presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5. The first to consider is distribution of level 100 diploma students by zone, region, gender and programme of study. This is depicted in Table 3

Table 3: Distribution of Level 100 Diploma Students by Zone, Region, Gender and Programme

Zone	Region	Sex	Education			Business		Total	
			DBE	DPFE	DSME	DC	DM		
			x			O	S		
Southern zone	Greater	M	372	397	51	158	149	1127	
	Accra	F	667	394	5	83	196	1345	
	Volta	M	131	69	0	23	8	231	
		F	173	39	0	8	17	237	
	Central	M	440	396	12	75	62	985	
		F	496	293	0	23	73	885	
	Western	M	291	137	11	35	38	512	
		F	313	77	1	14	46	451	
	Sub-total			2883	1802	80	419	589	5773
	Middle zone	Eastern	M	282	148	6	14	16	466
		F	52	104	1	9	16	182	
Ashanti		M	554	265	29	36	25	909	
		F	611	191	2	11	31	846	
Brong-Ahafo		M	310	157	5	16	7	495	
		F	195	96	0	3	8	302	
Sub-total				2004	961	43	89	103	3200
Northern zone		Northern	M	279	36	7	1	9	332
		F	199	17	1	2	1	220	
	Upper	M	141	35	0	6	7	189	
	East	F	158	25	0	5	3	191	
	Upper	M	213	12	1	3	7	236	
	West	F	227	6	0	0	9	242	
	Sub-total			1217	131	9	17	36	1410
	Grand Total			6104	2894	132	525	728	10383

Source: CoDE, UCC (2017b)

Where M = Male and F = Female

Table 3: Distribution of Level 100 Diploma Students by Zone, Region, Gender and Programme

Zone	Region	Sex	Education			Business		Total	
			DBE	DPFE	DSME	DCO	DM S		
Southern zone	Greater Accra	M	372	397	51	158	149	1127	
		F	667	394	5	83	196	1345	
	Volta	M	131	69	0	23	8	231	
		F	173	39	0	8	17	237	
	Central	M	440	396	12	75	62	985	
		F	496	293	0	23	73	885	
	Western	M	291	137	11	35	38	512	
		F	313	77	1	14	46	451	
	<i>Sub-total</i>			2883	1802	80	419	589	5773
	Middle zone	Eastern	M	282	148	6	14	16	466
		F	52	104	1	9	16	182	
Ashanti		M	554	265	29	36	25	909	
		F	611	191	2	11	31	846	
Brong-Ahafo		M	310	157	5	16	7	495	
		F	195	96	0	3	8	302	
<i>Sub-total</i>				2004	961	43	89	103	3200
Northern zone	Northern	M	279	36	7	1	9	332	
		F	199	17	1	2	1	220	
	Upper East	M	141	35	0	6	7	189	
		F	158	25	0	5	3	191	
	Upper West	M	213	12	1	3	7	236	
		F	227	6	0	0	9	242	
	<i>Sub-total</i>			1217	131	9	17	36	1410
Grand Total			6104	2894	132	525	728	10383	

Source: CoDE, UCC (2017b)

Where M = Male and F = Female

As indicated in Table 3, with regard to level 100 diploma students of the College, there were more students in the Southern zone (5,773) as compared to those at the Middle (3,200) and Northern (1,410) zones.

Also, the programme of study of most of the level 100 diploma students (6,104) in all the three zones was DBE. The next distribution considered was that of level 200 which was also presented with the same characteristics or background characteristics variables. This is presented in Table 4

Table 4: Distribution of Level 200 Diploma Students by Zone, Region, Gender and Programme

Zone	Region	Sex	Education			Business		Total
			DBE	DPFE	DSME	DCO	DMS	
Southern zone	Greater Accra	M	425	349	62	126	135	1097
		F	681	280	3	93	202	1259
	Volta	M	263	79	5	15	10	372
		F	254	35	1	12	15	317
	Central	M	670	439	10	86	85	1290
		F	706	252	0	27	86	1071
	Western	M	684	82	0	34	39	839
		F	579	35	0	16	82	712
Sub-total			4262	1551	81	409	654	6957
Middle zone	Eastern	M	240	79	9	17	19	364
		F	259	58	0	12	22	351
	Ashanti	M	769	105	30	31	28	963
		F	758	32	2	31	41	864
	Brong-Ahafo	M	556	175	1	22	7	761
		F	425	44	8	7	16	500
	Sub-total			3007	493	50	120	133
Northern zone	Northern	M	229	21	0	8	4	262
		F	178	5	0	1	12	196
	Upper East	M	408	110	0	15	4	537
		F	311	34	0	7	16	368
	Upper West	M	392	24	0	5	7	428
		F	230	7	0	6	4	247
	Sub-total			1748	201	0	42	47
Grand Total			9017	2245	131	571	834	12798

Source: CoDE, UCC (2017b)

The last to consider under population distribution is that of level 300. Table 5 presents distribution of level 300 diploma students with regard to zone, region, gender, programme of study

Table 5: Distribution of Level 300 Diploma Students by Zone, Region, Gender and Programme

Zone	Region	Sex	Education			Business		Total
			DBE	DPFE	DSME	DCO	DMS	
Southern zone	Greater Accra	M	1083	476	6	107	113	1784
		F	446	211	2	60	170	889
	Volta	M	240	49	0	13	15	317
		F	242	29	0	12	11	294
	Central	M	889	294	14	53	51	1301
		F	876	153	0	20	60	1109
	Western	M	373	89	7	40	40	549
		F	373	77	0	26	63	539
	Sub-total		4522	1378	29	331	523	6783
Middle zone	Eastern	M	300	77	5	14	17	413
		F	287	34	0	6	12	339
	Ashanti	M	1417	64	49	28	23	1581
		F	1309	20	2	15	25	1371
	Brong-Ahafo	M	861	157	14	16	13	1061
		F	573	43	2	11	11	640
	Sub-total		4747	395	72	90	101	5405
Northern zone	Northern	M	149	17	0	7	5	178
		F	118	1	0	0	5	124
	Upper East	M	324	87	0	17	11	439
		F	265	24	0	7	7	303
	Upper West	M	185	18	0	5	4	212
		F	160	3	0	5	10	178
		Sub-total		1196	150	0	41	42
Grand Total			10465	1923	101	462	666	13617

Source: CoDE, UCC, (2017b)

As presented in Table 5, majority (6,783) of the level 300 diploma students were studying in the Southern zone. Similarly, with regard to level 300, there were less number of students (1,429) studying in the Northern zone. In addition, majority of the level 300 diploma students (10,465) in all the three zones programme of study was DBE. The data presentation from the three tables (Tables 3, 4 and 5) shows that there were some level of similarities in

the population distribution of level 100, 200 and 300 diploma students in the three zones and the selected regions for that matter. That is, majority of the diploma students' programme of study was DBE. Also, most of the students' study centres were in the Southern zone. The distribution reflects the case in Ghana where most students pursuing their education at the tertiary level are doing so in the southern sector.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size for the study was 1115, made up of 1110 students and five key informants. The informants were three regional DESAG presidents, the national DESAG president, and the Coordinator for the Counselling Unit of CoDE, UCC. The need for sampling in research is to select a portion of the population that is most representative of the population. Researchers, such as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), Best and Kahn (2012), Creswell (2014), and Kumar (2014) are of the view that the most used approach for determining the sample in a descriptive study is to specify the precision of estimation desired and then to determine the sample size necessary to ensure it. Researchers usually sample from an accessible population and hope to generalise to a target population. Based on the precision principle, Kumar (2014) recommended that in a descriptive study, it is appropriate to use a sample size of two to five percent of the study population. In line with the recommendation of Kumar (2014), it was appropriate to use a sample size of 1115. This is so because the sample size selected represents 3.016 percent of the study population which is consistent with the recommendations.

Using a recommended percentage of sample size by Kumar (2014), the minimum required sample size generated was 1115. According to Bryman

(2012), a sample size does not necessarily need to be large but how it truly represents most of the characteristics of the elements in the accessible population is what one must look at. The proportional sampling procedure was used to allocate three percent (3.0%) of each of the study population to the various strata of the study with regard to each of the regional centres by gender and level that were selected.

The purposive sampling technique was used to select the five key informants who were participants of the study. These five key informants were considered because they were perceived to have further and better information regarding the counselling needs of students. Again, the purposive sampling technique was employed to pick one region from each of the three Zones. The regional capitals (Greater-Accra, Ashanti and Northern Regions) of each of the zones were purposively sampled because not all regions under the various zones offered DSME and also all the regional capitals have all the characteristics of the other non-picked regions of a zone. The characteristics include: age group, marital status, gender and level of study. Therefore, it was appropriate and meaningful to pick these regional capitals in each zone. All study centres in these regions that run diploma programmes were used for the study (Appendix A for the various study centres that offer diploma programmes in the various regions of Ghana). The distribution of the respondents is presented in Table 6.

Specifically, the stratified sampling procedure, which is one of the probability sampling techniques, was used to select respondents from each of the study centres of the three regions selected randomly based on gender, level and programme of study.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Zones, Level, Gender and Programme

Zone	Level	Sex	Education			Business		Total
			DBE	DPFE	DSME	DC	DM	
			O	S				
Southern zone (Greater Accra Region)	100	M	24	16	8	12	12	72
		F	38	20	4	8	14	84
	200	M	28	18	10	8	12	76
		F	32	20	8	8	10	78
	300	M	14	8	6	8	10	46
		F	30	16	2	8	12	68
Sub-total			166	98	38	52	70	424
Middle zone (Ashanti Region)	100	M	26	16	8	6	12	68
		F	24	16	6	6	8	60
	200	M	26	19	6	4	8	63
		F	26	16	4	4	6	56
	300	M	50	30	8	6	8	102
		F	42	28	3	4	6	83
Sub-total			194	125	35	30	48	432
Northern zone (Northern Region)	100	M	20	10	7	4	14	55
		F	14	8	1	4	6	33
	200	M	18	10	0	4	8	40
		F	16	6	0	4	8	34
	300	M	26	12	0	6	8	52
		F	22	12	0	2	4	40
Sub-total			116	58	8	24	48	254
Grand Total			476	281	81	106	166	1110

Source: Generated from CoDE, UCC, 2017b

Probability sampling is a technique of drawing sample in which each sampling unit has a known probability of being included in the sample (Gravetter & Forzano, 2015). This employs strict probability rules in the selection of the sample units in that every unit of the population has an equal,

calculable and non-zero probability to be selected in the sample. This kind of sampling permits computation of selection, and offers a high degree of representativeness.

The stratification process was done to ensure that the various homogeneous groups within the population are taken care of in the sampling process since that was used to generalise to the larger population. The researcher's use of this sampling procedure was to ensure that the sub-groups in the population have equal chance of being represented in the sample.

In each of the three regions, sampling frames were designed based on the data provided by the College. The sampling frame was designed in line with the three main strata in each of the selected regions, that is, gender, level and programme of study. A computer generated random number sampling technique was used to generate the random numbers that were in line with each of the frame designed by the researcher using a Microsoft Excel tool. In designing the random number table, the first and last numbers were entered with regard to the study population to generate the tables for each stratum or category of respondents. With regard to the selection process, the researcher first of all, identified each member in the sample frame which was constructed using statistical figures obtained from the data provided by the Students Records Management Unit of the College as depicted in Tables 3, 4 and 5 (CoDE, UCC, 2017a).

For example, in selecting level 100 diploma students in the Southern zone (Greater Accra Region), 10 sampling frames were designed, two (male and female) for each of the five programmes of study. In the case of DBE level 100 students in the Greater Accra region (Southern zone), the total

accessible population was 1039 which comprised 372 male students and 667 female students. As indicated in Table 3, this represents students in the 8 study centres that run diploma programmes at Greater Accra region. Therefore, the sample frame numbering for the male group was 001 to 372 while that of the female group was 001 to 667. As indicated in Table 6, the study was to select 24 males and 38 females with regard to level 100 students in the region studying DBE. The emphasis of the selection process was on the position of the students in the sampling frame. That was why the number of rows and columns in the computer random number generated table were the same as the sampling frame for this group (Appendices B and C).

A sample of the computer random number generated for level 100 students in the Southern zone offering DBE is presented in Appendices B and C. The first part of Appendix B shows the random number generated for level 100 male students in the Southern zone offering DBE. Since the number of rows and columns in the sampling frame and the computer random number generated (Appendix B) with regard to level 100 male students in the Southern zone offering DBE were the same, all numbers that were equal to or less than 24 were selected. This process was considered because the sample size for that group was 24. It is important to note that the emphasis was on the position of these numbers since the number of rows or columns in the sample frame for this group was equal to the random number table generated. In the end, the study selected exactly 24 positions in the random number table generated, and the students in these positions in the sample frame were selected as expected. The positions selected are the underlined numbers shown in the random number table generated (Appendix B).

Furthermore, a sample of the computer random number generated for level 100 female students in the Southern zone offering DBE is presented in Appendix C. Again, in the case of DBE level 100 female students, the sample frame numbering for the group was 001 to 667. As indicated in Table 6, the study was to select 38 female students in the Southern zone studying DBE. The emphasis of the selection process was on the position of the students in the sampling frame. That was why the number of rows and columns in the computer random number generated were also the same as the sampling frame for the female group.

Again, since the number of rows and columns in the sampling frame for the female group and the computer random number generated (Appendix C) with regard to level 100 female students in the Southern zone offering DBE were the same, all numbers that were equal to or less than 38 were selected. Also, this approach was used because the sample size for that group was 38. Again, note that the emphasis was on the position of these numbers since the number of rows or columns in the sampling frame for this group was equal to the random number table generated. In the end, the study selected exactly 38 positions in the random number table generated, and the students in these positions in the sample frame were selected as expected. The positions selected are shown in the random number generated table (Appendix C). The selected positions are the underlined numbers in Appendix C. These processes were replicated for the selection of the remaining respondents from the rest of the zones, levels programmes and gender. The process of selection continued until the required sample size of 1110 students was obtained.

Sources of Data and Data Collection Plan

The study used of multiple sources of data collection. Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. The primary data were collected through field survey in the institution under study using questionnaire. The secondary data were gathered through the review of existing literature from guidance and counselling books and reports mainly from CoDE, UCC. For example, the graduation data on students' academic performance for the 49th graduation were obtained from Students Records Management Unit of CoDE, UCC. According to Ary et al. (2010), secondary data has been identified to be economical and having the potential to give high quality of information with the possibility of retesting.

The study was based on three main pillars: the review of literature, documentary analysis and field work. The process of data collection was planned in such a way that one method was used to guide the next process and a different method was employed. The researcher started this work by first reviewing related and relevant literature which provided insights on practices and trends in distance education programmes and distance education students' counselling needs. The document also gave the researcher some ideas of the conceptions of distance education programmes and distance education students' academic performance. Thus, before going to the field, the researcher had the opportunity to gain a tremendous amount of knowledge regarding distance education programmes and distance education students' counselling needs and the counselling services available to them. This knowledge regarding distance education programmes and distance education

students' counselling needs guided the researcher in developing the questionnaire that was used on the field.

As indicated earlier, the study adopted the mixed methods approach which created room for the researcher to use an adapted questionnaire and interview guides to collect baseline data that were followed by documentary analysis. During the field study, the researcher further made some observations on some critical aspects of students' satisfaction regarding the various support services available to them and their counselling needs. Thus, the data collection process as depicted in Figure 5 was planned in such a way that the various stages were factored into each other and that allowed for consistency in the presentation of the data. These different stages are explained to show how they contributed towards the study.

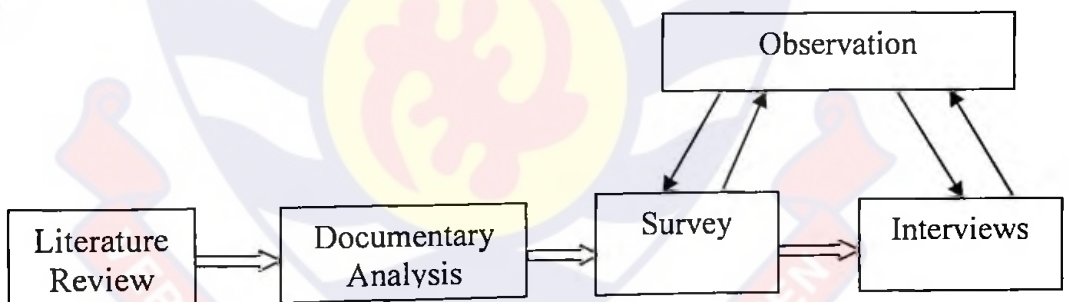


Figure 5: Data Collection Plan

Source: Author's construct (2019)

Literature review: In this study, relevant literature was reviewed on international trends in terms of distance education programmes, distance education students' counselling needs and challenges facing distance education students in accessing existing counselling services. The review of literature gave the researcher more insights into the main debates and concerns in the area of distance education students' counselling needs. Engagement with the literature also helped the researcher to appreciate the importance of

certain support services and interventions that institutions have put in place to shape and enhance distance education students' academic performance and success.

Documentary analysis: The researcher also used documentary analysis which focused on students' enrolment and academic performance. This created room for the researcher to appreciate how students' academic performance is conceptualised and measured in CoDE, UCC. An important aspect of this was the degree of congruence between policy text and policy in practice in the College.

Surveys: The administration of the questionnaire targeted diploma students of the College. With the exception of the last two items, all other items of the instrument were made up of close-ended items in order to encourage respondents to complete on schedule. Details of the instrument are discussed under instrumentation.

Observation: In the process of administering the questionnaire, the researcher also observed the students in their various study centres. This was done informally to understand the mood of students and their explicit response to the questionnaire. This process enabled the researcher to 'read between lines' and get the meaning of what respondents implied with regard to their body language when they responded to the items. Another important reason is that it enabled the researcher to get meaning from some of the respondents' silent voices.

Interviews: Interviews were conducted for key informants who were the three regional DESAG presidents, national DESAG president, and the Coordinator for the Counselling Unit of CoDE, UCC. The interview guides

were designed in such a way to cater for diversity of voices of the various key informants. These interviews with key informants were geared towards getting the views of the relevant people and their perceptions on the issues. The views and opinions of the key informants helped to show not only the extent to which individuals hold common or diverse perceptions on the counselling needs of distance education students, but also bring to focus a recommended model for effective counselling services delivery.

The interview was very important as it gave the researcher insiders' interpretation of the text document. It must be emphasised that in a study of this nature which focused on issues that are nested in contest, the researcher is interested not only in the physical events and behaviour taking place, but also in how participants in the study make sense of issues and how their understandings influence their behaviour. The interviews; therefore, enabled the researcher to 'read between lines' and get the meaning of what respondents implied from how they responded to certain questions. Another important reason was that it enabled the researcher to get meaning from some of the respondents' silent voices.

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaire (Counselling needs assessment questionnaire) for respondents (Appendix D) and three interview guides for regional DESAG presidents, national DESAG president, and the Coordinator for the Counselling Unit of CoDE, UCC (Appendices E, F G) were the instruments used for collecting the data. The questionnaire was adapted from that of Apreko (2010) with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.89. A questionnaire is a formally organised set of written items presented in a

uniform manner to a number of respondents or persons. This is to elicit responses from them on a specific subject matter (Zikmund, 2010). A questionnaire consists of questions or statements related to the aims of the study, hypotheses and research to be verified and questions to which the respondent is required to answer (Neuman, 2014). Most of the items on the questionnaire were closed-ended questions which allowed respondents to select from a number of options. Close-ended questionnaire items measure opinions, attitude or knowledge and it is easy to use, score and code for analysis on the computer. Closed-ended questionnaire has the tendency to enhance consistency of responses among respondents (Gravetter & Forzano, 2015).

The questionnaire, as presented in Appendix D was designed for students, and it was in four sections, namely: A, B, C and D. The sections were on the following corresponding themes: background characteristics of respondents, counselling needs of students, providers of counselling services, and the extent to which counselling needs of students are met by the College, effective service delivery mechanism of the College and challenges militating against students in accessing counselling services. In relation to the first section, that is section 'A', six close-ended items were used to collect data on the background characteristic of respondents. Items considered were gender, programme of study, level of students, marital status, age group and study zone/region of respondents.

Section 'B' which was used to collect data on the counselling needs of students was made up of 40 close-ended items. The counselling needs of students were categorised into four: educational/academic problems,

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Section 'B' which was used to collect data on the counselling needs of students was made up of 40 close-ended items. The counselling needs of students were categorised into four: educational/academic problems,

career/vocational problems, personal/social problems and practical problems. Data regarding each of these categories were collected using 10 close-ended items (Appendix D for details). Responses to the 40 close-ended items were measured numerically using unilinear scale such that one (1) represents the strongest disagreement to the issues or statements while four (4) represent the strongest agreement to the issues or statements.

Section 'C' was also used to collect data on providers of counselling services and the extent to which student's needs are met. The first two items in this section were multiple choice questions while the other 20 items were used to collect the data regarding the extent to which students' needs are met. In all, 22 items were used for this section. Responses on the first item were measured categorically while that of the second item was measured numerically using unilinear scale.

In relation to the last section which was section 'D', three items were used to collect data. One of the items collected data on the effectiveness of the counselling services provided by the College. Responses to this item were also measured numerically using four-point unilinear scale. The remaining two open-ended items were used to collect data on some of the most important challenges facing students in accessing counselling services at CoDE, UCC and additional comments on the issues of counselling needs of distance education students of CoDE, UCC. Even though, closed-ended items do not give respondents room for self-expression, respondents required less effort to respond. An open-ended item was also added to this section for the respondents to provide their own responses. Open-ended questions are used to give respondents free chance to express themselves on diverse issues. Open-

ended questions are difficult to analyse due to inconsistency in length but it helps in highlighting important issues which may not have been included in the questionnaire and also give room for individual subjective view on issues that are not influenced by the researcher (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell, 2014).

The questionnaire was used to collect the data because it was relatively less expensive than other methods such as interview and observation. In addition, it created room for the researcher to approach the respondents more easily. Also, the questionnaire used was deemed appropriate for the study because it provided a much quicker means of gathering information from such a fairly large population. In addition, it was easy to construct. According to Best and Kahn (2012), questionnaire also allows for anonymity of respondents which normally makes it easier for respondents to volunteer information without fear of victimisation. According to Gravetter and Forzano (2015), questionnaire is limited to literate population and does not provide an opportunity to collect additional information. In the case of this study, the respondents who were accessible to the study with regard to the questionnaire, were literates and were in a position to understand the items in the questionnaire as expected. The questionnaire was developed in simple language to facilitate the understanding of respondents.

As indicted earlier, three interview guides were also used to elicit qualitative data on the same issues. This helped to understand the issues from the humanistic and phenomenological point of view of the participants. In other words, the interview guide helped in providing further and better particulars regarding counselling needs of distance education students of CoDE, UCC. The three interview guides allowed the researcher to probe

further and to ensure open discussion to ascertain detailed information on the issues. Based on the specific objectives of the study, five themes were carved to construct the interview guides in order to tackle the stated objectives.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire that was used for the study, a pre-test was carried out. The pre-test was conducted during the second quarter of 2017. A sample of 44 students from Oyoko Study Centre of CoDE, UCC in the Eastern Region of Ghana, specifically, Koforidua were used. This study centre was not part of the main study, and for that matter were not part of the sample size. Validity is the extent to which an indicator accurately measures a concept it intends to measure (Ary et al., 2010). In other words, validity can be defined as the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure.

Validity was assessed to test the ability of the instruments to measure what it was projected to measure and to help detect any errors that could obscure the meaning of the instrument and prevent it from eliciting specious responses. According to Neuman (2014), the experience of pilot respondents is used to improve and amend the questionnaire before sending it out to the main research population. Validity, in the context of this study refers to how accurately the questionnaire was able to collect the responses from the respondents as intended by the researcher in order to tackle the objectives of the study.

With regard to face validity, the study ensured that the instruments measured what they appeared to measure. The face validity of the instrument was granted by the researcher's peers, colleague students and counsellors.

Content validity, on the other hand, was ensured by making sure that the instrument relates to the various constructs that it was purported to measure. For example, does the questionnaire measure the construct of needs the way the study designed it?

In relation to content validity, the study ensured that the items on the instruments covered the domain that the instruments purported to measure with regard to the purpose of the study. This was determined by the expert judgment of the two able supervisors and other professionals in the field of guidance and counselling. The questionnaire was made available to these academicians and professionals who helped in shaping them with the view of establishing content validity. The experts assessed the quality of each item in the context of clarity, ambiguity and generality. The study paraphrased, modified and deleted materials that were considered inaccurate or items that were infringement on the confidentiality of the respondents. Furthermore, these academicians and professionals helped scrutinised unclear, biased and deficient items, and evaluated whether items were members of the subsets they have been assigned.

The questionnaire was personally delivered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of some staff of the College. All the 44 copies of the questionnaire administered were retrieved as expected. After collecting data, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was obtained using the Predictive Analytic Software (PASW) Version 21.0. The researcher used a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient to measure the reliability of the questionnaire because the responses to the items were measured numerically using unilinear scale. According to Pallant (2010), the most appropriate measurement tool to

use in finding out the reliability coefficient of an instrument which is designed to elicit quantitative data is the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient tool. Therefore, it was appropriate to use this statistical tool in measuring the consistency of the questionnaire.

Coefficient's alpha or Cronbach's alpha co-efficient is one of the widely used measure of homogeneity or consistency with regard to a distribution or responses of an instrument. This reliability measurement tool was named after Lee Cronbach, who developed it in 1951 (Ary et al., 2010). Researchers use Cronbach alpha when measures have items that are not scored simply as right or wrong, such as attitude scales, but rather are scored using unilinear scale (Best & Kahn, 2012).

The Cronbach's alpha reliability co-efficient obtained for the various sections in the questionnaire were 0.889 for Section B and 0.901 for Section C. The Cronbach's alpha reliability co-efficient obtained for the questionnaire was 0.895 which was deemed acceptable. Research has shown that scales with Cronbach's alpha co-efficient of 0.70 or more are considered reliable (Cohen et al., 2011; Zikmund, 2010). Based on the recommendations made during the validation process, few modifications were made in the questionnaire in terms of items in the construct even though all the constructs scored the required Cronbach's alpha co-efficient. As has been noted by Zikmund (2010), pre-testing aims at identifying and eliminating potential problems. Cohen et al. (2011) further stress that pre-testing assists the researcher to improve upon the questionnaire in terms of wording, structure, format and organisation.

Ethical Consideration

The issue of ethics is an important consideration in research that involves human subjects (Best & Kahn, 2012). Research ethics is defined as the appropriate behaviour of a researcher relative to the norms of society (Zikmund, 2010). The researcher, research subjects, and clients of the research were protected from any adverse consequences of the study by following laid down rules and procedures of ethics in research. The study considered ethical factors in a number of ways. Ethical issues that were catered for in this study included right to privacy, voluntary participation, no harm to participants, and confidentiality, deception and scientific misconduct.

To gather data from the sampled individuals, the researcher first submitted a copy of the study proposal and the instruments to the Institutional Review Board of the University of Cape Coast to review. This was done to ensure that the research participants, the university community, and the country at large are protected. The Institutional Review Board gave ethical clearance for the data collection to begin (Appendix H). Based on the recommendations of the Board, the researcher ensured that all ethical requirements such as academic honesty, plagiarism, acknowledgement of copyrighted materials used, and institutional ethical clearance were addressed. Furthermore, permissions were sought from the management of CoDE, UCC and the regional resident tutors of the College.

Approval was sought from the Registrar of the College through the introductory letter. The approval was given by the registrar of the College (Appendix I). The consent of the respondents was sought using a questionnaire. Both respondents and participants were informed about the

purpose of the research and what objective it sought to achieve. The questions were read to them and clarifications were made where needed. The privacy and consent of respondents were also negotiated and respected in the study. All these were done to ensure and secure the consent of the respondents.

First, in a survey research, the clearest concern in ensuring the respondents' interest and well-being is protecting their identity. In this regard, the researcher adopted anonymity and confidentiality techniques to ensure their protection with regard to the respondents. The respondents were assured that the information they will provide would be kept as confidential as possible. On the issue of deception, the researcher did not consider it as a technique to collect from respondents as some investigators believe that it is appropriate sometimes to conceal a researcher's purpose in order to improve the quality of the study. Rather, the researcher introduced herself to the respondents and made it clear to them that the study was meant for an academic purpose. The researcher did not hide her identity from the respondents with the view of tricking them for information.

Also, it must be stated that the research community opposes unethical behaviour such as research fraud and plagiarism. This behaviour is termed scientific misconduct which normally occurs when a researcher falsifies or distorts data or the method of data collection or plagiarizes the work of others. In this study, the researcher followed strictly the prescribed standard of scientific behaviour to avoid fraud and plagiarism. To achieve this, the researcher collected information from the right respondents and properly analysed them before writing the research report. Also, ideas, works and

writings and references in this study were duly acknowledged in the in-text referencing and reference list.

After the researcher was sure that the respondents understood the content very well, the questionnaire was administered with some assistance from known course tutors and centre coordinators who are conversant and familiar with administering of questionnaire. The respondents were thoroughly informed before commencing the research, and they were properly treated throughout the research. Respondents were encouraged to feel free and air their views as objectively as possible and that they had the liberty to choose whether to participate or not. They also had the option to withdraw their consent at any time and without any form of adverse consequence. They were assured that the information they provided will be used solely for research purpose and nothing else.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, the Registrar of CoDE, UCC was written to for permission to conduct the study in the College (Appendix F). A period of three months was used to collect the data. Prior to the data collection, an informal familiarisation visits were made to the various study centres within the selected three regions for the confirmation of the number of diploma students. Respondents used about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher personally to the 1110 respondents with the support of four regional resident tutors of the College. These resident tutors served as field assistants. In most of the cases, some of the course tutors in the various centres also assisted in administering

and collecting the questionnaire. The resident tutors and the course tutors who assisted in administering the questionnaire had adequate experience regarding data collection process; therefore, it was appropriate for me to use them as field assistants. During the data collection process, relevant data and information were gathered from the field. The resident tutors and course tutors who volunteered field assistants to help were given brief training and orientation to refresh them, which made it easier for them to administer the questionnaire. The refresher programme included explaining the objectives of the study, how to identify respondents and data management.

The data collection procedures were carried out in three stages. The first stage was the collection of list of diploma students of the College from the students' records unit of the College. The second stage was the distribution of the questionnaire while the third stage focused on retrieving of the questionnaire administered. The researcher with support from some of the regional resident tutors and course tutors went through the entire questionnaire with the respondents after which the questionnaire was distributed to them to respond objectively to the items.

Using probability procedure, the researcher and the field assistants were given opportunity to be in the lecture theatres of the students in the various centres. The questionnaire was given out to the selected students in the sampling frame created for the various strata. The questionnaire was administered during their break-time and after the close of lectures. This was done in order not to disturb respondents study time. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire during their free time or immediately after study hours.

Specifically, the respondents were identified through the sampling frame constructed using their index numbers. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents randomly after selecting them using the computer generated random number table. In each study centre, selected respondents were first approached and were given a copy of the questionnaire individually to answer. Respondents who were not able to answer the questionnaire on the same day were asked to submit the answered questionnaire on some other day and their contacts (phone numbers) were obtained in order to reach them later. The administering process continued until all the selected respondents were captured for the study.

The interview process started immediately after analysing the quantitative data. In other words, it was a follow up to generalisation that emerged from the quantitative data analysis. It also served as a validation of the findings of the quantitative data. The purpose was to get enough idea about the issue raised and to confirm or disconfirm the quantitative data. As indicated earlier, the key informants interviewed were the three regional DESAG presidents, the national DESAG president, and the Coordinator for the Counselling Unit of CoDE, UCC. All the five participants purposively selected for the interview participated fully as expected. The interview was done on one-on-one bases and in some cases participants were contacted through phone calls. Some of the sampled participants granted the interview at their respective offices.

Generally, the data collection processes were done from one region to another and from one study centre to another. The completed questionnaires copies were collected back within a three-month period. At the end of the data

collection, the researcher was able to collect completed and accurate data from 1,075 diploma students, out of the 1110 administered. This shows that the response rate of the questionnaire administered was 96.8% which was appropriate. In the case of the interview, the study was able to interview all the participants sampled, representing 100% participation rate. According to Best and Kahn (2012), a response rate of 75% or more is appropriate to use for a descriptive survey study.

Data Processing and Analysis

The study adopted a descriptive survey design in which only quantitative data analysis was applied. The quantitative data were sorted and coded based on the procedures within the variable view of the statistical analysis software tool known as the PASW Version 21.0. The Test Analysis for Surveys (TAFS) was used for analysing the data. It is one of the most sophisticated statistical software packages popular with social scientists and other professionals when analysing quantitative data (Cohen et al., 2011; Pallant, 2010). Before the coding process, the researcher skimmed and scanned through the answered questionnaire to ensure that they were devoid of any irrelevant responses before feeding the computer with the data.

Furthermore, after the coding, the quantitative data were inputted into the data view of the software to complete the keying-in process. The raw data that were collected through the questionnaire were converted into the actual variables of interest through the pooling system. The data were then analysed and transformed into tables and extracted for presentation and discussion. Specifically, the data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. With the exception of data on the background characteristics

of respondents, responses to all the closed-ended items were measured numerically using unilinear scale.

In using inferential statistics to analyse the data, the study first of all performed normality test on the distribution using descriptive statistics in order to find out whether the distribution was normal. According to Ary et al. (2010), in analysing quantitative data, mean and standard deviation co-efficients are used when the distribution is normal while median and skewness co-efficients are used when the distribution is skewed. Ary et al. (2010) added that in a normal distribution the mean and the median are approximately the same. Ary et al. (2010) added that the skewness values of the data must also be within a threshold of -0.5 to 0.5. The normality test performed during the preliminary analysis showed that the distribution was normal. The closed-ended questionnaire items were analysed, taking cognisance of the fact that they were the basis for which conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

Results and discussion of the data were presented based on the specific research questions and hypotheses of the study. The background characteristics of the respondents were analysed using frequency and percentage distributions. Also, data on the three specific research questions of the study were analysed using descriptive statistical tools such as, means and standard deviations. These statistical tools were used to measure the various counselling needs of students, the extent to which these counselling needs of diploma students are met and the effectiveness of the College's counselling services delivery mechanism. Furthermore, these statistical tools were used because earlier research works on students' counselling needs and services (Agyemang, 2014; Kangai et al., 2011; Sampson, 2013; Sen & Kamat, 2016)

show that this group of people are homogeneous, and also the preliminary analysis shows that the distribution of the respondents was normal.

Inferential statistics such as the independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to analyse data on the five specific research hypotheses of the study. The independent samples t-test was used to analyse the data in order to determine if gender and marital status of the students have any significant influence on students' perceptions of their counselling needs.

Independent samples t-test is used to find out the difference between two independent groups where the distribution is normal and the variables are measured discretely such as counselling needs in the case of this study. It is also used to find out the impact of a categorical variable such as gender on a numerical variable. According to Cohen et al. (2011), it is appropriate to use the independent samples t-test when one wants to assess the impact of a categorical variable such as gender on a numerical variable such as students' counselling needs. This statistical tool was used again because it created room for the researcher to calculate the margin of the differences between the two independent groups, if any, using the Eta Square statistics.

The one-way, between groups, ANOVA was used to analyse the data in order to examine the influence of students' age group, programme of study and academic level on their counselling needs. This statistical tool was adopted because there were independent variables with more than two categories. This technique allowed the researcher to look at the individual and joint effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables (counselling needs of students). According to Pallant (2010), to find out

differences between independent groups that are more than two where the distribution is normal on numerically constructed variable such as students' counselling needs, it is appropriate to use the one-way ANOVA.

Multiple items were used to elicit data on each of the broad category of needs. In relation to each of the categories, ten close-ended items were used. The items were pooled together using average or mean responses of the respondents to form each of the broad categories. After transforming the items into the four broad categories of needs, descriptive statistical tools such as means and standard deviations were used in analysing the data since the preliminary analysis shows that the distribution is normal. Responses to the close-ended items used in eliciting data on the issues regarding the needs of students were measured on a four-point unilinear scale ranging from one to four where one represented the least met needs while four represented the highest met needs.

For the qualitative data, patterns emerging from the responses were sought. The various themes that emerged from the responses of the questionnaire were used in categorising the qualitative data. The analysis was done manually using the thematic approach which involved sifting and sorting of data according to key issues and themes based on the purpose of the study. In using the thematic approach, the researcher transcribed and grouped all the interviews into the various themes formulated based on the research questions and hypotheses of the study. This helped in creating familiarity with the data in the mind of the researcher to facilitate the process of analysis. Response relating to each specific research question and hypothesis was grouped and paraphrased looking for patterns and relationships. Other responses were

reported verbatim to explain general observations of the issues at stake, and also complement and amplify the results obtained from the quantitative data.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodology used in the study. It examined the study institution, epistemological orientation, research approach and design of the study. The chapter further looked at the population, sample and sampling procedure, sources of data collection, and instrumentation of the study. It was established that the study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed methods design where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The chapter further presented the validity and reliability of the instruments, ethical issues considered, and data collection procedures. The statistical tools used to test the hypotheses of the study were both descriptive and inferential. This chapter also discussed the nature of the data, how the data were processed, and methods used to analyse the data. The next chapter presents the results of the data analysed and the discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the data collected from the field. The discussion includes the interpretation of the data with reference to previous findings, theory and specific responses given by the respondents in accordance with the main purpose of the study. The general purpose of the study was to assess the counselling needs of distance education students of UCC, Ghana. The first part of the chapter deals with the demographic characteristics of respondents which serve as a preliminary analysis to the study. The second part is devoted to the research questions and hypothesis of the study. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in the data analysis.

Analyses of Descriptive Data

This part of the chapter deals with the analyses regarding the demographic characteristics of the respondents which is based on their gender, programme of study, academic level, marital status, age group, and study zone of respondents. These variables were considered as input in the theoretical model as presented earlier in Figure 3. As a result, the study examined the frequency and percentage distributions of these variables. The results are presented in Tables 7 to 11. The first to consider is distribution of respondents by programme of study and gender. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents by Programme of study and Gender

Programme of Study of Respondents	Gender of Respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Diploma in Basic Education (DBE)	180	32.5	281	53.8	461	42.9
Diploma in Psychology and Foundations of Education (DPFE)	157	28.4	119	22.8	276	25.7
Diploma in Science and Mathematics Education (DSME)	53	9.6	23	4.4	76	7.1
Diploma in Commerce (DCO)	44	8.0	57	10.9	101	9.3
Diploma in Management Studies (DMS)	119	21.5	42	8.1	161	15.0
Total	553	100	522	100	1075	100
% of Respondents by Gender	51.4%		48.6%		100%	

Source: Field survey (2018)

Results in Table 7 show that majority (51.4%) of the respondents who participated in the study were males while 48.6 percent were females. Specifically, in relation to DBE students, there were more females (53.8%) than males (32.5%). Similarly, in the case of DCO students, there were more females (10.9%) than males (8.0%). However, in the case of those reading/studying DPFE, DSME and DMS, the male population was more than the female population. Also, more of the students were DBE students (42.9%), followed by DPFE (25.7%) and DMS (15.0%) students. The least of the students were studying DSME (7.1%).

The findings that emerged from Table 7 show that most people at the diploma level prefer reading non-science and mathematics courses than science and mathematics courses. This finding is in line with the comments of Mapolisa (2012) who posits that most people in Africa with regard to ODL prefer studying non-science related programmes, particularly in the area of education and business than science programmes. This is so because the labour markets of these countries have more opportunities and vacancies for education and business graduates than science (Mapolisa, 2012).

Furthermore, the finding that the male population of diploma students outnumber that of female may mean that the total number of male diploma students at CoDE, UCC is greater than that of female. This gives a cursory indication that the diploma programme by CoDE, UCC is more attracted by males as compared to females. The finding is in line with the perceived social expectation in traditional Ghanaian society which is largely patriarchal in nature where males are more prone to work in the production and industry sector than females who prefer working in the service and home science sectors. That is, in such societies, males are known to participate more in education than their female counterparts. However, the percentage difference is not that wide and one may therefore, argue that the finding is good indicator in our modern society since both men and women have equal chance of being admitted into the programme and also into the labour market, either private or public.

Most researchers (Alemu, 2013; Best & Kahn, 2012; Neuman, 2014) are of the view that the longer a participant establishes relation with an institution, all things being equal, the better he or she expresses his or her view

on the institution's activities and services. As a result, the study collected data on the academic levels of the respondents. The distribution of respondents with regard to how long they have been with the College is represented by their levels and presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Distribution of Respondents' by Academic Level and Gender

Level of Respondents	Gender of Respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Level 100	191	34.5	161	30.8	352	32.7
Level 200	153	27.7	189	36.2	342	31.8
Level 300	209	37.8	172	33.0	381	35.5
Total	553	100	522	100	1075	100

Source: Field survey (2018)

Table 8 shows that more (35.5%) of the respondents were level 300 students. Also, there were more female (36.2%) students in level 200 than male (27.7%) students. However, in the case of levels 100 and 300, more of the students were males. The combined percentage shows that even though a number of respondents are relatively young in the College, majority (67.3%) of the respondents had been studying at the College for two years or more. One can, therefore, say that the respondents have enough experience to provide relevant information for the study with regard to their perceived counselling needs and support services provided by CoDE, UCC.

The study further elicited data on respondents' marital status and cross tabulated it with their gender in order to understand the dynamics of the two.

Table 9 presents the results of respondents' marital status by gender.

Table 9: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status and Gender

Marital status of Respondents	Gender of Respondent					
	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Single	302	54.6	285	54.6	587	54.6
Married	251	45.4	237	45.4	488	45.4
Total	553	100	522	100	1075	100

Source: Field survey (2018)

Table 9 shows that there are more respondents, both male (54.6%) and female (54.6%) respondents, who are single than those who are married. This may mean that people are likely to be single before educating themselves at the tertiary level. On the other hand, it may mean that people who are single prefer to participate in tertiary education than married people. However, significant number of the respondents (45.4%) indicated that they were married. This implies that significant number of the distance education students under CoDE, UCC diploma programmes is likely to get married earlier than their counterparts under the regular programmes.

The results that emerged from Table 9 support the general perception in Ghanaian societies that married people are more respected and are more likely to participate in distance learning programmes than regular programmes since they have other family, social and economic responsibilities that they must always meet (Kangai et al. 2011). Comparatively, this explains why 45.4 percent of the respondents are married. This can also be ascribed to the societal value that is peculiar to Ghanaian culture that once an individual has reached the stage of adulthood and is economically stable; such an individual

should get married, which most of distance education students are, according to Kangai et al. (2011).

According to Brigman and Campbell (2017), marriage has a positive relationship with counselling needs of students as well as their career or professional attainment. This means, married students have the greater counselling needs as compared to their single counterparts. They argued that a married student is likely to need counselling to ensure his/her emotional, psychological and social support. The result of this study supports the submission of Kangai et al. (2011) who asserted that many married students in distance learning are relatively old and they marry earlier than their colleagues on regular programmes because they believe that delaying marriage until they have reached tenure puts them under stress trying to conceive which can cause problems such as birth defects, difficulty in getting pregnant as well as infertility.

The next background characteristic variable considered was age group of respondents. Table 10 contains results on distribution of respondents' according to age and gender.

Table 10: Distribution of Respondents' Age by Gender

Age Group of Respondents	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
20 - 24 years	189	34.2	188	36.0	377	35.0
25 - 29 years	238	43.0	227	43.5	465	43.3
30 years and above	126	22.8	107	20.5	233	21.7
Total	553	100	522	100	1075	100

Source: Field survey (2018)

As indicated in the table, more of the respondents were within the age group of 25 – 29 years (43.3%). However, 35.0 percent of the respondents indicated that they were within the age range of 20 – 24 years. Also, 21.7 percent of the respondents' age group was 30 years and above. The combined percentage shows that majority (65.0%) of the respondents were more than 24 years. Specifically, with regard to the respondents who were more than 29 years, 22.8 percent were males while 20.5 percent were females. This shows that the male respondents were relatively older than the female respondents. The findings are in line with the comments of France et al. (2013) who posit that most females attend tertiary education at younger age as compared to males.

Furthermore, the combined percentage as indicated in Table 10 shows that majority (78.3%) of the respondents were less than 30 years. This may mean that the professional strength of the business and teaching profession in Ghana is very bright since most of the students who were offering education and business programmes were within the youthful age group (18 – 45 years) in Ghana and have longer time to spend in their respective profession before going on compulsory retirement.

The last background characteristics considered was the study zone/region of respondents which was cross tabulated with gender. The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Distribution of Respondents by Study Zone/Region and Gender

Study Respondents	Zone/Region of	Gender of Respondent					
		Male		Female		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Southern zone (Greater Accra)		177	32.0	237	45.4	414	38.5
Middle zone (Ashanti)		232	42.0	180	34.5	412	38.3
Northern zone (Northern)		144	26.0	105	20.1	249	23.2
Total		553	100	522	100	1075	100

Source: Field survey (2018)

As indicated in Table 11, (38.5%) of the respondents' zone of study was the Southern zone, followed by Middle zone (38.3%). However, the zone with the least number of diploma students was Northern zone (23.2%). This shows that the number of students of the College in the northern zone is the least. The findings are in line with the assertion of CoDE, UCC (2017b) that the number of students enrolled on to its programme is not hearten as compare to other zones in the country. The distribution is not astonish since generally the population at the northern zone is not greater than that of the southern and middle zones.

Analysis and Results Pertaining to the Quantitative Data of the Study

This section presents the quantitative results of the specific research questions and hypotheses of the study. The data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. These statistical tools were used because the responses to the items with regard to the variables were measured using unilinear scale and also the preliminary analysis at the pre-test stage shows that the distribution was normal. That is, the various statistical tools

were used after the researcher performed the test of normality to find out whether the distribution was normal. Mean and standard deviation coefficients are used when the distribution is normal while median and skewness coefficients are used when the distribution is skew (Pallant, 2010). According to Pallant, in a normal distribution the mean and the median are approximately the same. The skewness values must have a threshold of -0.5 to 0.5.

Furthermore, the skewness values of the distribution were closer to each other and were within an acceptable threshold of a normal distribution (they were within a range of -0.32 to 0.37). The standard deviations were also moderate and closer to each other, indicating the non-dispersion in a widely-spread distribution. The moderateness of the standard deviations of the distribution shows that the views of the respondents were coming from a moderate homogeneous group with similar characteristics or similar understanding with regard to the issues under consideration. This means that Respondents' view on the issues is an approximation to a normal distribution.

Responses to the closed-ended items used in eliciting data on the issues regarding the concepts were measured on a four-point unilinear scale ranging from one to four where one represented the strongest disagreement to the issues while four represented the strongest agreement to the issues. Based on the recommendation of Pallant (2010), the study adopted mathematical approximation techniques to interpret the mean scores. Thus Strongly Agree (4.0 – 3.5), Agree (3.4 – 2.5), Disagree (2.4 – 1.5), and Strongly Disagree (1.4 – 1.0). The cut-off point for determining a priority need is a mean score of 2.5. The 2.5 is an average score of the responses from the unilinear scale i.e. $(1+2+3+4) \div 4$. The results showing the views of the respondents regarding

the stated research questions and hypotheses of the study are presented as follows:

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: What are the Priority Counselling Needs of Students of the College with Respect to the Four Broad Categories of Students' Needs?

Counselling units/centres in most universities in Ghana offer counselling services for students, occupational orientation and placement services in the form of colloquia between students and employers (Essuman as cited in Apreko, 2010). Also, vocational guidance is offered to students to help them improve their performance at interviews and write applications for jobs. However, to provide these services, it is essential to know the needs of students in order to provide services that will meet these needs. The first research question of the study, therefore, finds out the most prevalent counselling needs of students in CoDE, UCC with respect to the four broad categories of students' needs. The results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Prevalent Broad Categories of Counselling Needs of Students of CoDE, UCC (N = 1075)

Broad Counselling Needs of Students	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Personal/social needs	2.86	0.36	1 st
Practical needs	2.84	0.23	2 nd
Educational/academic needs	2.77	0.37	3 rd
Career/vocational needs	2.77	0.35	4 th

Source: Field survey (2018) Where Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation

Table 12 shows the means and standard deviation of the broad categories of students' needs. The criterion for determining a priority need is a mean score of 2.5 or above. As depicted in the Table, respondents indicated

that they have various needs in the four broad categories. Specifically, respondents indicated their needs for educational/academic issues (Mean = 2.77, Std. Dev. = 0.37). In relation to career/vocational needs, respondents again indicated their needs (Mean = 2.77, Std. Dev. = 0.35). Furthermore, respondents indicated their personal/social needs (Mean = 2.86, Std. Dev. = 0.36) and practical needs (Mean = 2.84, Std. Dev. = 0.22).

When compared with the cut-off point, it can be said that all the broad counselling needs of CoDE diploma students were priority needs: the mean of each of these needs was higher than the cut-off point of 2.5. From the highest to the lowest, their priority order was found to be personal/social needs, practical needs, educational/academic needs and career vocational needs.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: What are the Most Prevalent Specific Counselling Needs of Students under Each of The Four Broad Categories of Students' Needs?

After examining the four broad categories of student's need, the study further looked at the most prevalent specific counselling needs of students under each broad category of students' counselling need. The rationale of the second research question was, therefore, to deal with this purpose. The first to consider was educational/academic needs. In assessing the specific needs of students with regard to educational/academic, ten items were used. Responses to the items were measured numerically using unilinear scale. The cut-off point for determining a priority need is a mean score of 2.5 or above for the specific categories of needs. The results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Respondents' views on Specific Educational/Academic Needs of Students

Statements on educational/academic problems	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
I have problems meeting deadlines for submission of assignments	3.183	0.838	1 st
I lack confidence in my ability to succeed academically	3.160	0.754	2 nd
I have problems allocating time for my studies	3.091	0.828	3 rd
I find it difficult discussing my academic problems with my course tutors	2.861	0.816	4 th
I have difficulty coping with course workload in my study centre	2.853	0.834	5 th
I have difficulty preparing for examinations	2.839	0.881	6 th
I have poor study skills/habits	2.732	0.737	7 th
I have difficulty with the style of teaching in the study centre	2.560	0.903	8 th
I have difficulty retrieving from memory during examinations	2.301	0.926	9 th
I have problems attending lecturers regularly	2.147	0.871	10 th

Source: Field survey (2018) (N = 1075)

As indicated in Table 13, respondents indicated that they have problems meeting deadlines for submission of assignments (Mean = 3.183, SD = 0.838). They also indicated lack of confidence in their ability to succeed academically (Mean = 3.160, Std. Dev. = 0.754). Also, respondents indicated that they have problems allocating time for their studies (Mean = 3.091, Std. Dev. = 0.828). Similarly, respondents indicated that they found it difficult discussing their academic problems with their course tutors (Mean = 2.861, Std. Dev. = 0.816) also have difficulty coping with course workload in their respective study centres (Mean = 2.853, Std. Dev. = 0.834). Respondents further indicated that they have difficulty preparing for examinations (Mean =

2.839, Std. Dev. = 0.881) and have poor study skills/habits (Mean = 2.732, Std. Dev. = 0.737). Furthermore, the results show that respondents have difficulty with the style of teaching in the study centres (Mean = 2.560, Std. Dev. = 0.903). However, difficulty retrieving from memory during examinations (Mean = 2.301, Std. Dev. = 0.926) and attending lectures regularly (Mean = 2.147, Std. Dev. = 0.871) were the least of their needs.

The major needs of students on their specific educational needs were problem meeting deadline in submission of assignment, lack of confidence, problem with time allocation, difficulty discussing academic problems with course tutors, difficulty preparing for examination, poor study skills, difficulty coping with workload in the study centre, difficulty with the style of teaching in the study centre. However, three topmost important needs of the students were, problems meeting deadlines for submission of assignments, lack of confidence in ability to succeed academically, problem with time allocation.

The next most prevalent specific counselling needs of students under each broad category of students' need in CoDE, UCC considered were career/vocational needs. Again, 10 items were used to elicit data on these issues. The results are presented in Table 14.

Results that emerged from Table 14 show the respondents need information about how to prepare and attend job interviews (Mean = 3.146, Std. Dev. = 0.709) and also they need information about job placement after leaving school (Mean = 3.061, Std. Dev. = 0.757).

Table 14: Respondents' views on Specific Career/Vocational Needs

Statements on career/vocational problems	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
I need information about how to prepare and attend job interviews	3.146	0.709	1 st
I am worried about job placement after leaving school	3.061	0.757	2 nd
I have difficulty getting information about how to start my own business after leaving school	2.951	0.927	3 rd
I regret choosing my current programme of study/career	2.948	0.756	4 th
I need more information about occupations or careers or jobs in my area of specialisation	2.858	0.685	5 th
I am confused about the kind of job I will do in future	2.769	0.889	6 th
I have difficulty preparing good curriculum vitae	2.679	0.877	7 th
I lack adequate information on job requirements	2.626	0.797	8 th
I need help to find placement for industrial attachment	2.462	0.978	9 th
I am worried about not visiting any industrial while in school to get acquainted to the industrial environment	2.217	0.974	10 th

Source: Field survey (2018)

(N = 1075)

Again, the respondents indicating that they have difficulty getting information about how to start their own business after leaving school (Mean = 2.951, Std. Dev. = 0.927) and also they regret choosing their current programme of study/career (Mean = 2.948, Std. Dev. = 0.756).

Furthermore, respondents were of the view that they need more information about occupations or careers or jobs in their area of specialisation (Mean = 2.858, Std. Dev. = 0.685) and also confused about the kind of job they will do in future (Mean = 2.769, Std. Dev. = 0.889). Again, respondents indicated that they have difficulty preparing good curriculum vitae (Mean =

2.679, Std. Dev. = 0.877) and lack adequate information on job requirements (Mean = 2.626, Std. Dev. = 0.797).

However, finding placement for industrial attachment (Mean = 2.462, Std. Dev. = 0.978) and visiting industries while in school to get acquainted to the industrial environment (Mean = 2.217, Std. Dev. = 0.974) were the least of their needs.

The most important needs in the specific career/vocational were information about how to prepare and attend job interviews, worried about job placement, how to start own business, regret choosing current programme of study, inadequate information on job requirement, regret choosing current programme of study, information about jobs in specialised area, difficult, confused about the kind of job to do in future, preparing CV and also lack adequate information on job requirement.

The topmost important needs were information about how to prepare and attend job interviews, worried about job placement and how to start own business.

The next most prevalent specific counselling needs of students under each broad category of students' need in the College considered was personal/social needs. The results are presented in Table 15.

As indicated in the table, in relation to specific personal/social needs, respondents were of the view that they have problem relating well with their lecturers/instructors (Mean = 3.402, Std. Dev. = 594).

Table 15: Respondents' views on Specific Personal/social Needs of Students

Statements on personal/social problems	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
I have problem relating well with my lecturers/instructors	3.402	0.594	1 st
I have problem with dating	3.131	0.753	2 nd
I need to understand more of myself	3.058	0.971	3 rd
I lack freedom at home	3.038	0.728	4 th
I have problem making new friends	2.886	0.632	5 th
I have difficulty relating well with other students	2.778	0.911	6 th
I need to know how to solve interpersonal conflicts	2.714	0.956	7 th
I have problem meeting family demands	2.674	0.906	8 th
I have problem dealing with disappointment	2.627	0.939	9 th
I find it difficult to go for an HIV test	2.249	0.954	10 th

Source: Field survey (2018)

(N = 1075)

Respondents further indicated that they have problem with dating (Mean = 3.131, Std. Dev. = 753), also the need to understand more about themselves (Mean = 3.058, Std. Dev. = 0.971) and lack freedom at home (Mean = 3.038, Std. Dev. = 728). Again majority of the respondents indicated that they have problem making new friends (Mean = 2.886, Std. Dev. = 0.632) and also have difficulty relating well with other students (Mean = 2.778, Std. Dev. = 0.911). In addition respondents were of the view that they need to know how to solve interpersonal conflicts (Mean = 2.714, Std. Dev. = 0.956) and also have problem meeting family demands (Mean = 2.674, Std. Dev. =

906). Respondents also indicated that they have problem dealing with disappointment (Mean = 2.627, Std. Dev. = .939).

However, to go for an HIV test (Mean = 2.249, Std. Dev. = .954) was the least of their needs.

The most important specific personal/social needs of students based on the cut-off points were problem relating with lecturers/instructors, problems with dating, self-understanding, lack of freedom at home, problem making friends difficulty relating with other students, resolving interpersonal conflicts, problem meeting family demands, problem dealing disappointment. However, the topmost needs were, problem relating with lecturers/instructors, problem with dating, self-understanding and lack of freedom at home.

The last most prevalent specific counselling needs of students under each broad category of students' need in the College considered was practical needs. Again, ten close-ended items were used to collect data on these issues. As indicated the criterion for determining a priority need is 2.5 or above. The results are presented in Table 16.

As depicted in the table, respondents indicated that they are worried about the inadequate lecturer room space in their respective study centres (Mean = 3.181, Std. Dev. = 0.690) and also face financial problems in their study (Mean = 3.179, Std. Dev. = 0.638). Again, respondents feel that the medical services offered near their study centres are not adequate (Mean = 3.164, Std. Dev. = 0.529) and worried about the poor facilities for the disabled persons in their respective study centres (Mean = 3.086, Std. Dev. = 0.612).

Also, respondents indicated that they get emotionally disturbed when they fail to meet their financial demands (Mean = 2.968, Std. Dev. = 0.721)

and are also disturbed about the high cost of cooked food in and around their respective study centres (Mean = 2.850, Std. Dev. = 0.623).

Table 16: Respondents' views on Specific Practical Needs

Statements on practical problems	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
I am worried about the inadequate lecture room space in the study centre	3.181	0.690	1 st
I face financial problems in school	3.179	0.638	2 nd
I feel the medical services offered near my study centre are not adequate	3.164	0.529	3 rd
I am worried about the poor facilities for the disabled persons in my study centre	3.086	0.612	4 th
I get emotionally disturbed when I fail to meet my financial demands	2.968	0.721	5 th
I am disturbed about the high cost of cooked food in and around my study centre	2.850	0.623	6 th
I am worried about the high user fees charged by the College	2.765	0.902	7 th
I am worried about the inadequate transport facilities in the study centre	2.626	0.816	8 th
I do not have adequate information about the College	2.443	0.806	9 th
I am worried about the poor facilities in my study centre	2.123	0.934	10 th

(N = 1075)

Source: Field survey (2018)

Respondents further indicated that they are worried about the high user fees charged by the College (Mean = 2.765, Std. Dev. = 0.902) and are also worried about the inadequate transport facilities in the study centres (Mean = 2.626, Std. Dev. = 0.816). However, adequate information about the College (Mean = 2.443, Std. Dev. = 0.806) and poor facilities in their respective study centres (Mean = 2.123, Std. Dev. = 0.934) were the least of their needs.

The most important needs of students were inadequate lecture rooms space, financial problems in school, inadequate medical service, and poor facilities for persons with disability at the study centre, meeting financial demands, high cost of coked food, high user fee charged by the College inadequate transport facilities in the study centre. The topmost important needs of students were inadequate lecture room space in the study centre, financial problems in school, inadequate medical and poor facilities for persons with disability at the study centre.

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: To What Extent are the Counselling Needs of Diploma Students Met at CoDE, UCC?

The motivation behind the third research question of the study was to examine the extent to which the counselling needs of students are met at the CoDE, UCC. The four broad categories of students' needs were considered.

In addition, a cut-off point of 2.5 was used to determine the extent to which students' needs are met. All statements with mean scores of 2.5 or above show that the counselling needs of students were adequately met. While a mean score below 2.5 indicates that needs are not adequately met. The first category of needs considered were educational/academic needs. The results are presented in Table 17.

Table 17: Respondents' views on the Extent to which their Educational/Academic Needs are Met at CoDE, UCC

Statements on educational/academic needs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Need for study skills	1.098	0.677	1 st
Need to have confidence	1.340	0.496	2 nd
Need to know how to prepare a study time table	2.109	0.646	3 rd
Need to know how to prepare for examination	2.303	0.785	4 th
Need to have techniques on how to retrieve information from memory during examination	2.318	0.856	5 th
Mean of all means (extent of meeting educational/ academic needs)	1.834	0.329	

Source: Field survey (2018); (N = 1075); Where Std. Dev. = Standard Deviation

As depicted in Table 17, when respondents were given opportunity to indicate the extent to which their specific educational/academic needs are met, respondents indicated that their needs were not adequately met with regard to the need for study skills (Mean = 1.098, Std. Dev. = 0.677), the need to have confidence (Mean = 1.340, Std. Dev. = 0.496), the need to know how to prepare a study time table (Mean = 2.109, Std. Dev. = 0.646), the need to know how to prepare for examination (Mean = 2.303, Std. Dev. = 0.785) and the need to have techniques on how to retrieve information from memory during examination (Mean = 2.318, Std. Dev. = 0.856). Overall, the results

show that students of CoDE, UCC indicated that their educational/academic needs were not adequately met (Mean = 1.834, Std. Dev. = 0.329).

The study further examined the extent to which career/vocational needs are met. The results are presented in Table 18.

Table 18: Respondents' views on the Extent to which Prevalent Specific Career/Vocational Needs are Met at CoDE, UCC

Statements on career/vocational needs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Need to have information on job requirements	1.172	0.701	1 st
Need to have knowledge on how to prepare good curriculum vitae	1.206	0.488	2 nd
Need for more information about occupations or careers or jobs in my area of specialisation	1.681	0.617	3 rd
Need to have information about how to prepare and attend job interviews	1.771	0.733	4 th
Need to have information before choosing a programme of study in future	2.732	0.637	5 th
Mean of all means (extent of meeting career/vocational needs)	1.712	0.315	

Source: Field survey (2018) (N = 1075)

As indicated in Table 18, respondents indicated that their need to have information on job requirements (Mean = 1.172, Std. Dev. = 0.701), the need to have knowledge on how to prepare good curriculum vitae (Mean = 1.206, Std. Dev. = 0.488), information about occupations or careers or jobs in their area of specialisation (Mean = 1.681, Std. Dev. = 0.617) and the need to have information about how to prepare and attend job interviews (Mean = 1.771, Std. Dev. = 0.733) were not adequately met. However, respondents indicated

that the need to have information before choosing a programme of study in future was adequately met (Mean = 2.732, Std. Dev. = 0.637).

The next set of needs that were exposed to respondents to indicate the extent to which these needs are met is personal/social needs. The mean and standard deviation distribution of the results are presented in Table 19.

Table 19: Respondents' views on the Extent to which Specific Personal/social Needs are Met at CoDE, UCC

Statements on personal/social needs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Need to know my strengths and weaknesses	1.021	0.677	1st
Need to have information on maintaining healthy relationship	1.376	0.606	2 nd
Need to have knowledge on how to resolve interpersonal conflicts	1.944	0.549	3 rd
Need to know how to combine work with study and family responsibilities	1.949	0.548	4 th
Need to have information on how to relate well with other students	1.965	0.488	5 th
Mean of all means (extent of meeting personal/social needs)	1.651	0.367	

(N = 1075)

Source: Field survey (2018)

As indicated in Table 19, respondents were of the view that their need to know their respective strengths and weaknesses (Mean = 1.021, Std. Dev. = 0.677), the need to have information on maintaining healthy relationship (Mean = 1.376, Std. Dev. = 0.606), the need to know how to combine work with study and family responsibilities (Mean = 1.949, Std. Dev. = 0.548), the need to have knowledge on how to resolve interpersonal conflicts (Mean =

1.944, Std. Dev. = 0.549) and the need to have information on how to relate well with other students (Mean = 1.965, Std. Dev. = 0.488) were not adequately met.

Again, in relation to the extent to which, and respondents were all not adequately met. In all, respondents' needs were not adequately met with regards to personal/social needs. One may, therefore, posit that diploma students of the College personal/social needs are not adequately met.

The last broad category of needs that respondents were exposed to was practical needs. A mean score of 2.5 or above show the needs of students are adequately met. While a mean score below 2.5 indicates that the needs of students are not adequately met. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which these needs are met. The results are presented in Table 20.

Table 20: Respondents' views on the Extent to which Specific Practical Needs are Met at CoDE, UCC

Statements on practical needs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Need to improve the facilities in my study centre	1.292	0.454	1 st
Need to have additional classroom space in the study centre	1.329	0.471	2 nd
Need for the College to monitor the cost of cooked food in and around my study centre to ensure fair price	1.359	0.475	3 rd
Need for information about the College/university	1.504	0.502	4 th
Need for information on where to seek financial assistance	1.784	0.743	5 th
Mean of means (extent of meeting practical needs)	1.443	0.219	

(N = 1075)

Source: Field survey (2018)

As indicated in the table 20, respondents needs were not adequately met with regards to their the need to improve the facilities in their respective study centres (Mean = 1.292, Std. Dev. = 0.454), the need for the College to monitor the cost of cooked food in and around the study centres to ensure fair price (Mean = 1.359, Std. Dev. = 0.475), the need to have additional classroom space in the study centre (Mean = 1.329, Std. Dev. = 0.471), the need for information about the College/university (Mean = 1.504, Std. Dev. = 0.502) and the need for information on where to seek financial assistance (Mean = 1.784, Std. Dev. = 0.743) were all not adequately met.

Generally, the results in Table 20 show that practical needs of students of the College are not adequately met (Mean = 1.443, Std. Dev. = 0.219). Generally, the findings that emerged from Tables 17, 18, 19 and 20 show that the counselling service provided by the College to help meet the needs of students are not able to meet adequately students' needs. This shows that the Needs of students that the College sought to meet were really not what students actually needed. It is, therefore, very important that the needs of students are identified in other to meet them through counselling.

The study further collected data on the effectiveness of the service delivery mechanism of the College. Respondents were asked to rate the overall effectiveness of the counselling services provided by the College/ university. The results are presented in Table 21.

As depicted in Table 21, majority (69.7%) of the respondents were of the view that the overall effectiveness of the counselling services provided by the Counselling Unit of the College can be described as not effective.

Table 21: Respondents' views on the Effectiveness of the Services provided by the College

Overall effectiveness of the counselling services provided by the College	Frequency (No.)	Percent (%)
Not effective	749	69.7
Less effective	217	20.1
Effective	89	8.3
Highly effective	20	1.9
Total	1075	100

Source: Field survey (2018)

Also, 20.1 percent of the respondents indicated that the counselling services provided by the College are less effective while 8.3 percent indicated that it was effective. However, only 1.9 percent of the respondents indicated that the counselling services provided by the College were highly effective.

RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR: What Challenges are Militating against Students in Accessing Counselling Services in CoDE, UCC?

The last research question formulated under this study looked at the challenges confronting students in accessing counselling services in CoDE, UCC. The rationale behind this question was to know the perceived challenges faced by students in accessing the Counselling services in order to recommend appropriate and comprehensive counselling strategy that can be used to effectively meet the needs of distance education students. An open-ended item was used for this question. Respondents were given opportunity to list three most important challenges confronting them in accessing effective guidance and counselling services delivery in the College. The five most occurring challenges stated by respondents were considered. The results are presented in Table 22.

Table 22: Challenges Confronting Students in Accessing Counselling Services in the College

Challenges	No.	%
None availability of professional counsellors at my study centre	997	92.7
No time for me to seek the services of the counselling unit	935	87.0
Lack of information regarding how to get to the counsellors	853	79.3
Lack of offices for counselling in my study centre	817	76.0
Lack of organised workshops/seminars on counselling in my study centre	741	68.9

Source: Field survey (2018) (N = 1075)

As depicted in Table 22, a majority of the number (92.7%) of the respondents indicated that none availability of professional counsellors at their respective study centres is one of the major challenges they face. Also, 87.0% of the respondents indicated that they do not have time to seek the services of counsellors. In addition, 79.3 percent of the respondents stated that lack of information regarding how to get to the counsellors of the College is another challenge confronting them in accessing effective counselling services delivery of the College. Again, majority (76.0%) of the respondents were of the view that lack of offices for counselling in their respective study centres is another challenge militating against their access to effective counselling services delivery at the College. Also, majority (68.9%) of the respondents indicated that lack of organised workshops/seminars on counselling at the various study centres is one of the challenges confronting them in accessing counselling services of the College.

The major challenges confronting students in accessing counselling services in the College were non-availability of professional counsellors at the

study centre, not having time to seek the services of the counselling unit, lack of information regarding how to get the counsellors and lack of offices for counselling in the study centre.

Testing of Hypotheses

In order to examine the influence of students' personal characteristics on their counselling needs. The study formulated multiple hypotheses to be tested. The first hypothesis formulated to be tested focus on examining the influence of gender on the counselling needs of the students. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare male and female diploma students' four broad categories of needs. The results are presented in Table 23.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of male and female students of CoDE, UCC.

H_{A1}: There is a significant difference in the counselling needs of male and female students of CoDE, UCC.

Table 23: Differences between Male and Female in Four Broad Categories of the Students' Counselling Needs

Broad Categories of Needs	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	η^2
Educational/academic needs	Male	553	2.795	0.259	2.005*	0.044	0.004
	Female	522	2.749	0.465			
Career/vocational needs	Male	553	2.763	0.342	-0.837	0.403	
	Female	522	2.781	0.367			
Personal/social needs	Male	553	2.842	0.348	-1.222	0.222	
	Female	522	2.869	0.377			
Practical needs	Male	553	2.848	0.220	1.427	0.154	
	Female	522	2.828	0.229			
Counselling needs of students	Male	553	2.812	0.221	0.324	0.746	
	Female	522	2.807	0.283			

Source: Field survey (2018) *p < 0.05 df = 1073 (N = 1075)

Where η^2 = Eta Square, and SD = standard deviation

The results in Table 23 shows that there was a significant difference in the educational/academic counselling needs of male (Mean = 2.795, Std. Dev. = 0.259) and female (Mean = 2.749, Std. Dev. = 0.465) diploma students of the College $t(df = 1073) = 2.005, p < 0.05$). Based on Cohen (as cited in Cohen et al., 2011) guidelines on the interpretation of the eta square, the magnitude of the difference between the mean scores of male and female students with respect to their educational/academic needs was significantly small (eta square (η^2) = 0.004). This shows that 0.4 percent of the variances in the students' counselling needs could be explained by their gender.

However, in relation to career/vocational ($t = -0.837, df = 1073, p = 0.403$), personal/social ($t = -1.222, df = 1073, p = 0.222$), and practical ($t = 1.427, df = 1073, p = 0.154$) needs, there were no significant differences between the male and the female students of the College. Overall, in three out of four cases the results show that gender has no significant influence on the students' counselling needs ($t = 0.324, df = 1073, p = 0.746$). Based on the finding, the hypothesis that stated that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of male and female diploma students of CoDE, UCC was rejected.

In order to test the second hypothesis of the study, the study further examined the effect of age on students' counselling needs. Again, the four broad categories of needs were considered. The study therefore, considered age differences that exist among respondents with regard to their perceived needs. The measurement and conceptualisation of the variables have been explained earlier. The One-way ANOVA was used to analyse the data in order

to examine the influence of age group since the distribution was normal and homogenous. In addition, a post-hoc test was conducted using Tukey HSD to find out where the actual differences lied if any. In order to quantify the differences and also to know the margin of the differences, the eta square value was calculated for the differences. A hypothesis was formulated to be tested in order to deal with this specific objective.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students with respect to age.

H_{A2}: There is a significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students with respect to age.

The one-way analysis of variance was conducted to explore the age group differences among the students with regard to their perceived needs. The respondents' age groups were in three groups since none of the students were less than 20 years which was the first group under the questionnaire (Group 1: 20 – 24 years; Group 2: 25 – 29 years; Group 3: 30 years and above). The age group of the respondents was treated as the independent variable while the dependent variables considered were the counselling needs of students. The results are depicted in Table 24.

Table 24: Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Table on Age Group Differences among Diploma Students of CoDE, UCC Regarding their Counselling Needs

Broad Categories of Needs	Age Group of Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F	Sig.	η^2
Educational/academic needs	20 - 24 years	377	2.721	0.315	8.506**	0.000	0.016
	25 - 29 years	465	2.825	0.382			
	30 years and above	233	2.752	0.428			
	Total	1075	2.773	0.374			
Career/vocational needs	20 - 24 years	377	2.693	0.298	21.676**	0.000	0.039
	25 - 29 years	465	2.779	0.361			
	30 years and above	233	2.883	0.391			
	Total	1075	2.772	0.354			
Personal/social needs	20 - 24 years	377	2.797	0.365	8.203**	0.000	0.015
	25 - 29 years	465	2.896	0.309			
	30 years and above	233	2.870	0.437			
	Total	1075	2.856	0.362			
Practical needs	20 - 24 years	377	2.797	0.241	9.917**	0.000	0.018
	25 - 29 years	465	2.863	0.197			
	30 years and above	233	2.856	0.239			
	Total	1075	2.838	0.224			
Counselling needs	20 - 24 years	377	2.752	0.229	15.382**	0.000	0.028
	25 - 29 years	465	2.841	0.223			
	30 years and above	233	2.841	0.320			
	Total	1075	2.809	0.252			

Source: Field survey (2018) **p<0.01 (N = 1075)

As indicated in Table 24, there were differences in the mean scores of the respondents in each of the four categories of needs. In relation to educational/academic needs, respondents who fall within the age groups of 25 – 29 years (Mean = 2.825, Std. Dev. = 0.382) demonstrated relatively high level of such needs. However, respondents who were within the age group of 20 – 24 years (Mean = 2.721, Std. Dev. = 0.315) were those with least

educational/academic needs. In relation to career/vocational needs, the results in Table 24 show that respondents who were 30 years and above (Mean = 2.883, Std. Dev. = 0.391) were those that needed more guidance, followed by those who were within the age group of 25 – 29 years (Mean = 2.779, Std. Dev. = 0.361). The results that emerged from Table 24 further show that respondents who were within the age group of 25 – 29 years have higher level of personal/social (Mean = 2.896, Std. Dev. = 0.309) and practical (Mean = 2.863, Std. Dev. = 0.197) needs than those in the other age groups.

In all, Table 24 shows that older students have high level of counselling needs than the younger ones. The findings show that respondents within the age group of 25 – 29 years require more support with regard to their educational/academic needs than the other age groups. Again, the results show that as one gets older, so as his/her career/vocational counselling needs.

The descriptive statistics show that there are differences in the mean scores of the various groups. As a result the differences were examined further using ANOVA table to find out whether the differences are significant. The results in Table 24 show that there were significant differences between the various age groups with regard to their educational/academic [$F(2, 1074) = 8.506, p < 0.01$], career/vocational [$F(2, 1074) = 21.676, p < 0.01$], personal/social [$F(2, 1074) = 8.203, p < 0.01$], and practical [$F(2, 1074) = 9.917, p < 0.01$] needs. Generally, age had significant relationship with the counselling needs of the students. Based on the findings that emerged from Table 24, the hypothesis that stated that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of the students with respect to age was rejected.

Since there was a significant difference in the counselling needs of the respondents with regard to their age group, the study went further to calculate the effect size as shown in Table 24. This shows that the margin of the differences with regard to educational/academic needs ($\eta^2 = 0.016$), career/vocational needs ($\eta^2 = 0.039$), personal/social needs ($\eta^2 = 0.015$), and practical needs ($\eta^2 = 0.018$) were small. Generally, the margin of the differences in the counselling needs of the various age groups was 2.8 percent ($\eta^2 = 0.028$). The study further conducted the post-hoc comparison which makes use of the Tukey HSD test. The results are presented in Table 25.

There were differences in mean scores of the respondents in each of the four broad categories of needs. In relation to educational/academic needs, students who fall within the age group of 25 – 29 years demonstrated relatively high level of educational/academic needs than those within the age groups of 20 – 24 years (MD = 0.103, $P < 0.05$) and those who were 30 years and above (MD = 0.073, $P < 0.05$).

Similarly, in the case of career/vocational needs those who were 30 years and above indicated that they require more needs than the other groups. Generally, results in Table 25 shows that those who were 30 years and above indicated that they require more needs than those with the age group of 20 – 24 years and 25 – 29 years.

Table 25: Post-Hoc Comparisons of Respondents' Age Group with regard to their Four Broad Categories of Needs

Tukey HSD	(I) Age group of respondents	(J) Age group of respondents	MD (I-J)	Sig.
Educational/academic needs	25 - 29 years	20 - 24 years	0.103**	0.000
		30 years and above	0.073**	0.039
		30 years and above and 20 - 24 years	0.030	0.588
Career/vocational needs	25 - 29 years	20 - 24 years	0.086**	0.001
		30 years and above and 20 - 24 years	0.189**	0.000
		above and 25 - 29 years	0.104**	0.001
Continuation of Table 25				
Personal/social needs	25 - 29 years	20 - 24 years	0.099**	0.000
		30 years and above	0.026	0.647
		30 years and above and 20 - 24 years	0.074*	0.037
Practical needs	25 - 29 years	20 - 24 years	0.065**	0.000
		30 years and above	0.007	0.928
		30 years and above and 20 - 24 years	0.059*	0.004
Counselling needs	25 - 29 years	20 - 24 years	0.088**	0.000
		30 years and above	0.003	0.991
		30 years and above and 20 - 24 years	0.088**	0.000

Source: Field survey (2018) MD = Mean Difference *p<0.05, **p<0.01 (N = 1075)

The study further needed to find out whether students' counselling needs are related to marital status in order to test the third hypothesis of the study. The independent samples t-test was used to analyse the data since the marital status was put into two categorical groups: married and single. The study formulated research hypothesis to be tested in order to tackle this specific purpose. The results of the analysis with regard to the hypothesis are presented in Table 26.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students with regard to their marital status.

H_{A3}: There is significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students with regard to their marital status.

The results of the analysis with regard to the hypothesis are presented in Table 26.

Table 26: Effect of Marital Status on Diploma Students of CoDE, UCC Four Broad Categories of Needs

Broad Categories of Marital		N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	η^2
Needs	status						
Educational/ academic needs	Single	587	2.792	0.311	1.765	0.078	
	Married	488	2.750	0.437			
Career/vocational needs	Single	587	2.738	0.282	-3.322**	0.001	0.010
	Married	488	2.812	0.421			
Personal/social needs	Single	587	2.833	0.361	-2.243*	0.025	0.005
	Married	488	2.883	0.362			
Practical needs	Single	587	2.820	0.234	-2.913**	0.004	0.008
	Married	488	2.860	0.211			
Counselling needs	Single	587	2.796	0.230	-1.944*	0.042	0.004
	Married	488	2.826	0.277			

Source: Field survey (2018) **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05 (df = 1073)
 Where η^2 = Eta square, and SD = standard deviation (N = 1075)

As presented in Table 26, there was no significant difference between married and single respondents with respect to their educational/academic needs. In relation to career/vocational ($t = -3.322$, $df = 1073$, $p = 0.01$), personal/social ($t = -2.243$, $df = 1073$, $p = 0.01$), and practical ($t = -2.913$, $df = 1073$, $p = 0.01$) needs, there were significant differences between married respondents and those who were single.

In all, the results that emerged in Table 26 show that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of students who were married (Mean = 2.826, Std. Dev. = 0.277) and those who were single (Mean = 2.796, Std. Dev. = 0.230), with regard to their counselling needs [$t = -1.944$, $df = 1073$, $p < 0.01$]. This shows that in relation to counselling needs of the students, married students have greater needs than students who were single. This means, married students require more counselling and assistance than students who are single. Based on the findings that emerged from Table 26, the hypothesis that stated that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of the students with regard to their marital status was rejected.

The next issue to consider was the differences that exist among respondents studying various programmes in relation to their counselling needs. In dealing with this the study formulated the fourth hypothesis to be tested.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students in terms of programme of study.

H_{A4}: There is significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students in terms of programme of study.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore the differences that occur in the counselling needs of students as a result of their programme of study. The results are depicted in Table 27.

The one-way analysis of variance was conducted to explore the difference among respondents offering different programmes with regard to their needs. The respondents' programme of study were in five groups (Group 1: DBE; Group 2: DPFE; Group 3: DSME; Group 4: DCO; Group 5: DMS). There were significant differences at the $p < 0.01$ level in the educational/academic [$F(4, 1074) = 4.642, p = 0.001$], career/vocational [$F(4, 1074) = 16.150, p = 0.000$], personal/social [$F(4, 1074) = 7.713, p = 0.000$], and practical [$F(4, 1074) = 9.821, p = 0.000$] needs for the five groups.

Table 27: Differences in the Counselling Needs of the Students in terms of Programme of Study

Broad Categories of Needs	Programme of Study	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F	Sig.	η^2
Educational/ academic needs	DBE	461	2.727	0.451	4.642**	0.001	0.017
	DPFE	276	2.815	0.242			
	DSME	76	2.878	0.359			
	DCO	101	2.819	0.338			
	DMS	161	2.753	0.325			
	Total	1075	2.773	0.374			
Career/ vocational needs	DBE	461	2.696	0.395	16.150**	0.000	0.057
	DPFE	276	2.838	0.274			
	DSME	76	2.953	0.214			
	DCO	101	2.871	0.353			
	DMS	161	2.725	0.339			
	Total	1075	2.772	0.354			
Personal/social needs	DBE	461	2.791	0.403	7.713**	0.000	0.028
	DPFE	276	2.906	0.331			
	DSME	76	2.905	0.187			
	DCO	101	2.961	0.278			
	DMS	161	2.865	0.370			
	Total	1075	2.855	0.362			

Table 27 continued

Practical needs	DBE	461	2.852	0.222	9.821**	0.000	0.035
	DPFE	276	2.788	0.205			
	DSME	76	2.880	0.203			
	DCO	101	2.780	0.252			
	DMS	161	2.902	0.231			
	Total	1075	2.838	0.225			
Counselling needs	DBE	461	2.766	0.291	7.889**	0.000	0.029
	DPFE	276	2.836	0.207			
	DSME	76	2.903	0.175			
	DCO	101	2.857	0.210			
	DMS	161	2.811	0.240			
	Total	1075	2.809	0.252			

Source: Field survey, (2018) **p<0.01 (df = 1073) (N = 1075)
Where η^2 = Eta square

The actual differences in the mean scores between the groups with respect to educational/academic ($\eta^2 = 0.017$), personal/social ($\eta^2 = 0.028$) and practical needs ($\eta^2 = 0.035$) were small while that of career/vocational ($\eta^2 = 0.57$) was moderate.

The effect size calculated, using eta square, was 0.119. Results from Table 27 further show that there was significant difference among the respondents offering various diploma programmes in terms of their counselling needs [F (4, 1074) = 7.889, p = 0.000]. The margin of the difference in the counselling needs of students in terms of the groups was 2.9 percent, representing an eta square of 0.029. Based on the findings, the hypothesis that stated there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of the students in terms of programme of study was rejected. This means, the counselling needs of the students differ from one programme to another.

Specifically, as indicated in Table 27, students offering DSME (Mean = 2.903, Std. Dev. = 0.175) require high level of needs than those offering other programmes. This was followed by those offering DCO (Mean = 2.857, Std. Dev. = 0.210), DPFE (Mean = 2.836, Std. Dev. = 0.207) and DMS (Mean = 2.811, Std. Dev. = 0.240). Students offering DBE (Mean = 2.766, Std. Dev. = 0.291) were group of students with least required needs. The study further examined the post-hoc comparisons of respondents' programme of study using the Tukey HSD test in order to know exactly where the differences are coming from with regard to the needs that were statistically significant.

Also, a post-hoc test was conducted using Tukey HSD to find where the actual differences lie. In order to quantify the differences also and to know the margin of the differences, the eta square values were calculated for the differences if any. Programme was treated as independent variables while the needs of respondents were treated as dependent variables. The results are presented in Table 28.

Table 28: Post-Hoc Comparisons of Respondents' Programmes of Study in Terms of the Four Broad Categories of Counselling Needs

Tukey HSD Dependent Variable	(I) Programme of Study	(J) Programme of Study	MD (I-J)	Sig.	
Educational/academic needs	DPFE	DBE	0.088*	0.017	
		DMS	0.062	0.444	
	DSME	DBE	0.151*	0.011	
		DPFE	0.063	0.689	
		DCO	0.059	0.836	
		DMS	0.125	0.112	
	DCO	DBE	0.092	0.164	
		DPFE	0.004	0.990	
		DMS	0.066	0.628	
	DMS		DBE	0.026	0.943

Table 28 continued

Career/vocational needs	DPFE	DBE	0.142**	0.000	
		DMS	0.114**	0.008	
	DSME	DBE	0.256**	0.000	
		DPFE	0.114	0.079	
		DCO	0.081	0.527	
	DCO	DMS	0.228**	0.000	
		DBE	0.175**	0.000	
		DPFE	0.033	0.924	
	Personal/social needs	DMS	DMS	0.146**	0.008
			DBE	0.028	0.898
DPFE		DBE	0.115**	0.000	
		DSME	0.001	0.990	
DSME		DMS	0.041	0.784	
		DBE	0.114	0.075	
		DMS	0.040	0.930	
DCO		DBE	0.171**	0.000	
		DPFE	0.056	0.670	
Practical needs		DMS	DSME	0.056	0.841
	DMS		0.096	0.214	
	DBE		0.074	0.157	
	DBE	DPFE	0.064**	0.001	
		DCO	0.072*	0.026	
	DPFE	DCO	0.008	0.998	
		DBE	0.028	0.842	
	DSME	DPFE	0.092*	0.012	
		DCO	0.100*	0.025	
		DBE	0.050	0.094	
Counselling needs	DMS	DPFE	0.114**	0.000	
		DSME	0.022	0.952	
		DCO	0.122**	0.000	
	DPFE	DBE	0.070**	0.002	
		DMS	0.025	0.843	
	DSME	DBE	0.137**	0.000	
		DPFE	0.067	0.231	
		DCO	0.046	0.743	
	DCO	DMS	0.093	0.060	
		DBE	0.091**	0.008	
DPFE		0.021	0.950		
DMS		0.047	0.582		
DMS	DBE	0.045	0.289		

Source: Field survey (2018) MD = Mean Difference *p<0.05 **p < 0.01

(N=1075)

As presented in Table 28, with regard to educational/academic needs of respondents, DPFE students demonstrated relatively significant high level of needs than DBE students ($MD = 0.088, p < 0.01$). Also, in relation to educational/academic needs, there was a significant difference between DSME and DBE students. The DSME demonstrated high level of needs than DBE students ($MD = 0.151, p < 0.01$). The results mean that DSME and DPFE students' educational/academic needs are more met than DBE students. This shows that the significant difference that existed regarding students educational/academic needs is as a result of the differences between DBE students and DPFE and DSME students.

Furthermore, in relation to career/vocational needs, the significant difference that occurred with regard to the various programmes of study was as a result of the differences between DPFE students and DBE ($MD = 0.142, p < 0.01$) and DMS ($MD = 0.114, p < 0.01$) students. Also, there differences can be seen between DSME students and DBE ($MD = 0.256, p < 0.01$) and DMS ($MD = 0.228, p < 0.01$) students. In addition, there were statistically significant differences between DCO students and DBE ($MD = 0.175, p < 0.01$) and DMS ($MD = 0.146, p < 0.01$) students.

In relation to personal/social needs, the significant difference that occurred with regard to the various programmes of study was as a result of the differences between DPFE and DBE students ($MD = 0.115, p < 0.01$) and DCO and DBE ($MD = 0.171, p < 0.01$) students. Also, the differences that emerged with regard to practical needs can be seen between DBE students and DPFE ($MD = 0.064, p < 0.01$) and DCO ($MD = 0.072, p < 0.05$) students. Again, there were significant difference between DSME students and DPFE

(MD = 0.092, $p < 0.05$) and DCO (MD = 0.100, $p < 0.05$) students. In addition, there were significant differences between DMS students and DPFE (MD = 0.114, $p < 0.01$) and DCO (MD = 0.122, $p < 0.01$) students with regard to practical needs.

In all, the post-hoc results that emerged from Table 28 show that DPFE students' counselling needs are met more than DBE students (MD = 0.070, $p < 0.01$). Also, DSME students' counselling needs are met more than DBE students (MD = 0.137, $p < 0.01$). Similarly, DCO students' counselling needs are met more than DBE students (MD = 0.091, $p < 0.01$). The results show that DBE students' counselling needs are not met when compare to other students offering diploma programmes. Based on the findings, the hypothesis that stated that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of the students in terms of their study programme was rejected.

The next demographic characteristics item considered was the academic level of the students. The rationale was to examine the differences that exist among the various academic levels within the students in terms of the four broad categories of needs. The fifth hypothesis was formulated to be tested. Again, the One-way ANOVA was conducted to explore the differences among the various levels within the students of the College. Also, a post-hoc test was conducted using Tukey HSD to find out where the actual differences lie. The results are presented in Table 29.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students in terms of academic level.

H_{A5}: There is a significant difference in the counselling needs of CoDE, UCC students in terms of academic level.

As indicated earlier, the One-way ANOVA was conducted to explore the difference in the differences between the levels of students with regard to their four broad categories of needs. The respondents' academic levels were in three categories (Group 1: Level 100; Group 2: Level 200; Group 3: Level 300). The levels of the students were treated as the independent variable while the dependent variable considered was the four broad categories of needs. There were statistically significant differences at the $p < 0.01$ level in the students' education/ academic [$F(2, 1074) = 11.301, p = 0.000$], career/vocational [$F(2, 1074) = 6.872, p = 0.001$], and personal/social [$F(2, 1074) = 51.513, p = 0.000$] needs for the three groups. However, in relation to practical needs [$F(2, 1074) = 2.435, p = 0.088$], there was no statistically significant difference between the various levels of students.

Table 29: Differences in the Academic Level of Students in Terms of the Four Broad Categories of Needs

Broad Categories of Needs	Level of Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F	Sig.	η^2
Educational/academic needs	Level 100	352	2.696	0.460	11.301**	0.000	0.021
	Level 200	342	2.811	0.292			
	Level 300	381	2.809	0.339			
	Total	1075	2.773	0.374			
Career/vocational needs	Level 100	352	2.715	0.440	6.872**	0.001	0.013
	Level 200	342	2.803	0.269			
	Level 300	381	2.796	0.325			
	Total	1075	2.772	0.354			
Personal/social needs	Level 100	352	2.703	0.353	51.513**	0.000	0.088
	Level 200	342	2.944	0.352			
	Level 300	381	2.918	0.335			
	Total	1075	2.856	0.362			

Table 29 continued

Practical needs	Level 100	352	2.859	0.219	2.435	0.088	0.005
	Level 200	342	2.822	0.215			
	Level 300	381	2.834	0.236			
	Total	1075	2.838	0.224			
Counselling needs	Level 100	352	2.743	0.262	18.834**	0.000	0.034
	Level 200	342	2.845	0.232			
	Level 300	381	2.839	0.251			
	Total	1075	2.809	0.253			

Source: Field survey (2018) **p < 0.01 Where η^2 = Eta square

Overall, the results show that levels of respondents have a statistically significant effect on students' counselling needs [$F(2, 1074) = 18.834, p = 0.000$]. Specifically, the results show that level 300 and 200 students have greater counselling needs than level 100 students. This may mean that the longer a student stays in the College, the greater his/her counselling needs. However, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups were relatively small for educational/academic ($\eta^2 = 0.021$), and career/vocational ($\eta^2 = 0.013$) needs while that of personal/social ($\eta^2 = 0.088$) it was moderate. This shows that the difference between the various levels of students was larger in the case of personal/social needs.

The study further examined the post-hoc comparisons of the levels, using the Tukey HSD test in order to know exactly where the differences are coming from with regard to the needs that were statistically significant. The results are presented in Table 30.

As presented in Table 30, with the exception of practical needs, there were differences in mean scores of the respondents in educational/academic,

career/vocational and personal/social needs of the students. Specifically, in relation to educational/academic needs, level 100 students demonstrated relatively lower level of needs than those who were in levels 200 (MD = 0.115, $p < 0.01$) and 300 (MD = 0.114, $p < 0.01$). Similarly, in the case of career/vocational needs the students who were in level 100 indicated that they have lower level of needs than those who were in levels 200 (MD = 0.088, $p < 0.01$) and 300 (MD = 0.081, $p < 0.01$). Also, in the case of personal/social needs, level 100 students indicated that they have lower needs than those in levels 200 and 300.

Table 30: Post-Hoc Comparisons of Respondents' Academic Levels in Terms of the Four Broad Categories of Counselling Needs

Tukey HSD	(I) Level of respondents	(J) Level of respondents	MD (I-J)	Sig.
Educational/academic needs	Level 200	Level 100	0.115**	0.000
		Level 300	0.001	0.999
	Level 300	Level 100	0.114**	0.000
Career/vocational needs	Level 200	Level 100	0.088**	0.003
		Level 300	0.007	0.960
	Level 300	Level 100	0.081**	0.005
Personal/social needs	Level 200	Level 100	0.241**	0.000
		Level 300	0.026	0.572
	Level 300	Level 100	0.215**	0.000
Practical needs	Level 100	Level 200	0.0369	0.078
		Level 300	0.024	0.305
	Level 300	Level 200	0.012	0.737
Counselling needs	Level 200	Level 100	0.102**	0.000
		Level 300	0.005	0.953
	Level 300	Level 100	0.096**	0.000

Source: Field survey (2018) MD = Mean Difference** $p < 0.01$ (N = 1075)

The findings that emerged from Tables 28 and 29 show that the academic level of students have a statistically significant effect on their counselling needs. That is, level 100 students have lower level of counselling needs than continues students. Based on the findings, the hypothesis that stated that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of the students in terms of academic level was rejected.

Results Pertaining to the Qualitative Data of the Study

After collecting the quantitative data from the respondents and analysing them, the researcher went back to the field to interview the participants for the qualitative data. As indicated earlier, five participants were selected and interviewed. The focus of the interview was based on five major themes that were derived from the specific objectives of the study. The themes were identification of the priority counselling needs of students with respect to the four broad categories of students' needs, identification of most prevalent specific counselling needs of students under each of the four broad categories of students' counselling needs, the extent to which the identified priority needs of students are met, challenges militating against students in accessing counselling services, and the influences of students' personal characteristics on their counselling needs.

First Participant (P1)

When asked about some of the problems students of the College face, the first participant stated during the in-depth interview that *some of the major problems students face had to do with how to resolve incomplete (IC) issues regarding examination scores*. He added that *some of the students call to complain that the conduct of some coordinators and tutors are not the best*

and also the learning environment of the various centres are poor. The researcher probed further to find out whether some of the issues or problems reported by the students required counselling. He responded in affirmative, saying that, all the issues students report disturb them emotionally and psychologically, especially the IC issues give most students sleepless nights which require the assistance of a counsellor. Some students are also not able to blend their academic work with their social life. As indicated in the quantitative results, he further stated that mostly third year students are those that complain and have more counselling needs than the other categories of students. He explained that, most of these third year students are just about to complete their programme of study but still have unresolved ICs, worried about the College's inability to help them get direct posting by the Ghana Education Service and thinking about how to progress with the certificate they are about to be awarded. The researcher probed further to know why students were thinking about how to progress with the certificate they have worked for, P1 had this to say: these students were not duly informed about the relevance of the certificate to their current jobs. They just wanted to further their education and relied mostly on the courses their friends were offering and how easy it was to pursue the programme,

He also said, pregnant women and the aged also do complain and they are fond of leaving the centre early when class is still on-going. This shows that third year students have more counselling needs than the others category of students. The views of the P1 may mean that career/ vocational and academic needs were of greater concern to students than the other broader categories of needs.

The first participant further said that *problems indicated are handled by advising those that are close to CoDE main campus to visit the Counselling Unit because they do not have any unit that handle counselling at the various study centres.* He added that *sometimes he try to solve the issues with the students themselves, especially regarding welfare issues.* However, *cases that required counselling, were all referred to the Counselling Unit. After doing so, I usually do not to follow up on the referred students.* He again said that *the Counselling Unit is very dormant in resolving problems faced by students of the College.*

The researcher further asked the P1 to give some recommendations that can help the Counselling Unit to be effective. He said *that the College should create Counselling Unit at the various regional centres and professional counsellors should regularly visit these centres. He added that these units should also have a hotline for students to be able to reach the unit at all times. There should also be a hand-out and leaflets or flyers on counselling problems that are regularly faced by students and the ways to solve them for students to read./*

. Again, P1 said the counselling unit should also find a way to educate students on the various programme of the College, its job prospects and areas for further education

Second Participant (P2)

In relation to the second participant, the researcher first asked him about the various needs of distance education students. He said that *the priority needs of students of the College had to do with the availability of modules and poor infrastructure at some of the study centres.* When asked

whether students needed any training, skills or information from the college to be able to succeed academically (through seminars & how to prepare for exams), he said *yes, they do, they need to be aware of the do's and don'ts during examinations and what can cause incomplete results*. In relation to academic confidence, he said that *to some extent students have some level of confidence. Some of them have confidence to climb higher because they completed Senior High School way back, so they see distance education as an opportunity to advance in life*.

Furthermore, the second participant said that *time management is considered a need by most students of the College because they study at home, work, attend to family issues etc and as a result always find it difficult to blend all these activities*. When asked whether the College is able to meet students' needs, the second participants said *yes, because with regard to information, that's tit-bits information are pasted on the board for them to read. However, seminars to educate them about some of the services provided by the Counselling Unit have not been achieved*. He added that *students of the College need career or vocational information, as a result some executives of the students do organise some for their constituents. However, the students need some significant level of training to enable them to get better job and also earn higher income*.

In relation to students getting relevant information about job prospects, the second participant said *that CoDE does not give that information. However, students sometimes consult their coordinators for advice. Also, the students need to know how to develop their curriculum vitae (CV) or resume, since most of the students do not know how to prepare them because the*

College has not put any measures in place to teach students on how to prepare their CV or resume. I think the College has not done enough in respect of career needs of students.

The second participant was again asked to mention some of the personal-social needs of students that should be resolved. She said that *some of the personal needs include marriage issues, how to manage time, financial issues and how to handle children.* When asked whether these needs have been met by the College, she said *no, and that the College has not been helpful in resolving students' personal-social needs.* She again said that *the students face financial challenges, paying their own school fees, and taking care of their children's finances. However, the College is able to meet some financial needs related to payment of fees. The College has flexible terms for fees payment which enable students to pay their fees in phases.*

The researcher further asked P2 during the in-depth interview whether the students are in need of medical services in the various study centres. He said *yes, and added that there are no health facilities or emergency kits in and around the study centres. It is only during examinations that medical officers come around. I think they should be around throughout the sections/academic activities. Also, getting transport services to some of the study centres is kind of a difficulty and the distance some students travel to and from the study centre too is far, which is a challenge. However, in relation to cooked foods, the vendors around the study centres are doing well. I think the food is quiet ok because the centre regulates the vendors.*

The researcher further asked P2 to give some recommendations that can help the Counselling Unit to be effective. P2 had this to say: *In my view,*

the counselling services of the College in the various study centres are not effective at all. This is so because most students think it is dormant and also not accessible. Also, there is no orientation regarding the activities of the Counselling Unit. The unit is not effective at all, as a result most students do not consider the Counselling Unit when they are faced with challenges. However, the College can help students succeed academically by distributing modules on time, getting its own facilities, and also the College should revise and check mistakes in the modules. They can also collaborate with DESAG to organise seminars at the study centres to equip students with the needed skills to prepare and attend job interviews. The Counselling Unit should also organise proper orientations for students to enable students have adequate information about the activities of the College,

Third Participant (P3)

The researcher first asked the third participant to indicate the core functions of the Counselling Unit of CoDE, UCC. He said that *the core functions of the Unit include offering counselling services to students in the areas of personal-social, career/vocational and educational/academic in order to ensure successful completion of their various programmes of study.* However, when he was asked whether the Unit has been able to live up to its mandate, he said that *not really, and that delivery of counselling services has not been effective at all. He added that the nature of counselling issues that are reported to the Counselling Unit by students are usually low CGPA, too many referrals, ICs, not being able to pay their school fees and personal issues such as lack of support from spouses and inability to attend social functions.*

In relation to the challenges associated with the delivery of counselling services at CoDE, UCC, he said that *there are no resources, both material and human are woefully inadequate. Also, there are no counselling offices in the various study centres. Even if counsellors at the headquarters want to travel to the study centres to offer counselling services to students, there is no time allotted to counselling on the timetable. The timetable for students is so rigid such that students cannot even get time to see the counsellors.*

After stating all these challenges, the researcher further asked him to state some of the recommendations that he thinks can be used to set up an effective counselling service unit at CoDE. He said that *for counselling to be effective there should be counselling offices at all the regional offices if not all study centres. Professional counsellors should be at all the regional offices. Initially, coordinators were trained and engaged as academic counsellors at their various study centres and I think we have to go back to that if counselling is to be effective. There should be time allotted on the timetable for counselling sessions for all first years so that students will have the opportunity of meeting counsellors who will help them adapt to the environment appropriately. I think if this is done, counsellors can use the time allotted on the timetable to organise seminars, workshops and study clinics for students. Once this is done at the first year in students' life they will see the need to seek counselling later on when they are confronted with issues.*

Fourth Participant (P4)

When the fourth participant was asked about his opinion on some of the educational/academic needs of distance education students of CoDE, UCC,

he said *some students lack certain basic needs or necessities that would help facilitate their academic objectives.*

P4 was asked by the Researcher to explain further and he had this to say: *our mode of study where students study at their various homes coupled with their daily activities becomes a challenge because, the students do not have the advantage to access a library with all the necessary educational materials which would help them in their study.*

When he was asked to indicate what students wished to be put in place to help solve such problems, he said *at least the College should provide centres at the regional level with good learning environment/materials for students to be comfortable and learn.* He was further asked to indicate whether the College provides students with needs such as: study skills, preparation for examinations, time allocation etc, he said no but, *if they bring that on board it will be very helpful.* He further said that *some of these are done during their orientation which is not enough. Therefore, it must be a continuous activity.*

When asked whether the timing for orientation is appropriate or not, he said, *the orientation is done before the distribution of modules when everybody is thinking of joining the queue to be served first. The second orientation is done during matriculation, where students are again busy taking pictures. Even the regular students who are on campus all the time to have much information about the University is given one week orientation. But unfortunately, distance students do not have these privileges to help guide them to study well, therefore, orientation should be done throughout the course of study of the students.* He further suggested that, *the college can rely on DESAG or regional resident tutors (RRT) to organise seminars and*

conferences for students and experienced professors or resource persons could be invited to help educate students during these conferences or seminars.

The researcher further asked the fourth participant his views on the career or vocational needs of students of CoDE, UCC. He said, *globally, vocational or career needs has become one of the pressing skills people are craving for, thus the distance education students equally need such skills.* He further suggested that, *the College should include vocational/career courses for students to enrol on, because as at now the College only has a limited number of course for its applicants which only force most students to become teachers.* He further said that *students must be informed in whatever way, for them to know the programme they are pursuing and its job prospects.* However, when asked if students are aware of information regarding the prospects of the programme they are studying, he said, *somehow, the students are aware, and more also, because the College has a limited number of courses that are offered which are only business and education, students do not have any choice but to pursue these courses which would only prepare them to become teachers.*

The researcher further asked why the students pursued these programmes even though they were aware it was not in their line of career choice. He said that, *it is just to have a tertiary education and its certificate and also the pride or prestige attached to having these certificate makes them to pursue these limited courses.* The researcher further asked the fourth participant about the College providing information about job placement and curriculum vitae preparation for students. He answered in the affirmative and

further said, *the college should intensify the provision of information on job placements and curriculum vitae preparation skills and generally make it known to all students.* He again said *that though the College is doing it, more need to be done and if possible, add more courses to their programmes.*

When asked whether the students have personal needs that the College should address, he said that *the student has a lot of personal-social needs that the College has to address. Some are school fees.* He further said that *the College has made it easier for continuing students to pay their fees in instalments over a period of time and he said it is really helping most students.* He also talked about relationships, especially student-college relationship and student-tutor relationship and that relationship must be effective to keep our students in our College. When probed further regarding the financial problems students are facing, he said, *some of them who are working earn as low as Gh¢200.00 which is not enough to cater for their personal needs as well as pay their fees.* When asked how these students cope with these financial problems, he again said, *some students go for loans at the banks.*

In relation to availability of medical services in and around the study centres, he said *students would always wish to have the services available. But the College only provides these services during their examination period. Therefore, I wish these services would be available at all times or there can be an arrangement with medical centres to help solve emergency issues of students.* Regarding his opinion on transport services, he said that *it is also another challenge that students face where some places are far away from the study centre, students go through stress to travel hours before getting to their centre. At times some students also find it difficult to get transport fare and*

also the risk involved in travelling. He further said that, *some are not able to return to their various homes on daily bases and thereby making accommodation issues another challenge.* With regard to the availability of food and its healthiness in and around the centres, he said that *most students rely on foods that are prepared by the community people in and around the study centres. However, the hygienic nature of the foods cannot be guaranteed. As a result some of the centres have contracted some people to cook and the quality of it is quite good.* He also said that *the College could contract people to cook and regularly check on them to provide quality food to all students.*

The fourth participant was further asked to indicate how effective the counselling service provided to students by the College was. He said *it was not effective at all.* He was asked to mention some of the significant challenges that students face regarding the counselling services provided by the College. He said, *time is very important, because the students are available during the weekend and they do not have enough time for the counselling services, and during the week days some go to their workplaces and cannot leave their work to patronise the services being provided. He suggested that, if there could be a time during the weekend which will be allotted for counselling it would be of great help.* He also said, *if some of them were to have the time and accessed the service they would have done better academically and even made good decisions.* He further said, *Ghana as a whole do not take counselling seriously, so professionally, the College should provide the service and encourage the students to patronise.*

The researcher asked him to recommend ways to improve the counselling services to students. He said *the College should establish a permanent counselling service unit for every Study Centre and have people who would be assigned to perform such duties. He added that all the problems he previously talked about, like finance, attitude towards study etc, all depends on how effective the counselling service will be able to help students manage these problems.*

Fifth Participant (P5)

The researcher first asked the fifth participant about his opinion on some educational/academic needs of distance education students. He said that *there are a lot of such, but I will touch on only few pressing ones.* He also said, *in some centres the classroom structures and the environment are very poor.* When asked whether the College provides students with study skills, preparation for examinations, time allocation etc, he said no but *he had voluntarily organised a seminar for students to know how to manage time, how to prepare themselves during examinations etc, but the limitation was that most students did not participate.*

The researcher probed further to find out why the students did not participate. He said that *it may be because of the distance from the student's home to the study centre, interference of their personal work and school activities and also financial problems.* When asked whether the college is providing any of such services to meet their students' needs, he replied by saying 'No'. Regarding the appropriateness of the College making provisions for those services, he answered in affirmative. He further suggested that, *if it*

will be done, it should be done at all study centres and not only at the regional level.

The fifth participant was asked of his view on the career or vocational needs of CoDE, UCC students. He said *the College's programmes are mostly targeted at producing teachers so if they do not get any job at the educational sector, the students end up doing nothing. So now that the students are allowed to do their national service it will help them to get some of these skills. The perception out there is that, the students that are enrolled are already working. To some extent this perception is true, but the reality is that, most of them are not actively working. Some students after completing Senior High School quickly enrol onto the distance education programme. He further stated that, if care is not taken, the diploma courses in the long run would collapse as the colleges of education has introduced the four-year degree programme.*

When asked about the College providing information about job placement and curriculum preparation for students. *He replied yes, that students need it a lot. But the College is not really providing that service for the students. So, he personally has to organise seminars in that respect for the students. And to his surprise some who have higher certificate like degree do not know the difference between CV and resume, and also some do not even have a CV on their own.*

The fifth participant was further asked if the students have personal – social needs that the college should address. He said that *the most significant personal-social needs of students had to do with finance. In my study centre, I know some students who are very brilliant but due to financial difficulties they*

ended up dropping out from school. I think there should be a scheme for brilliant but needy students. And it should be done in such a way that each centre provides proof or evidence of such students. In relation to how students have ability to know themselves, relationship issues, dealing with disappointments etc, he said if two or more are gathered there would be such things and it must be catered for.

Regarding issues about transport services, he said at first due to limited number of study centres students faced difficulties travelling long distances to attend lectures, but now we have more study centres. Students choose the centres that are closer to them and this it has lessen some of these problems. He added that in relation to the facilities at the various centres, because they are using SHS facilities, the chairs, tables and environment is not all that comfortable. And more also bed bugs are found in some of these classrooms. Most distance education students are mature and such the desks are too small for them to sit comfortably and study. So, it will be great if the college has its own facilities at various centres. In relation to the availability of food, its cost, its healthiness and well hygienic environment for students to buy in and around the centres, he said, the food vendors are regulated by the study coordinators at the centres, so things are good when it comes to food services. And when it comes to the cost, that would be determined by the choice of students as to what one wants to buy, because the prices of food vary.

When asked, how effective the counselling services provided to students by the College was, he said because of the coverage, students do not access it. But the students need this service a lot. He further said, some students need professional counselling but it seems these counsellors are not

available. Again, when asked about some of the significant challenges that students' face in accessing the counselling services provided by the College, he said, *the counselling services are not available, and that the only one available at the headquarters.. Therefore, if anyone has a problem, the person can hardly travel that far distance just for counselling. In most of the study centres, the counselling is out because counsellors are not available to even provide services to students. It is only the coordinators or their tutors that help students to cope or adapt to the environment.*

The researcher asked the fifth participant to also recommend what should be done to improve the counselling services to students. He said *all centre coordinators should be oriented on how to provide counselling services, and to regularly make themselves available to counsel students. He further said that, the student executives or leaders too can also be oriented on how to render counselling service as most students approach them more often.*

The result from the qualitative data confirms that of the quantitative data on all the five objectives set for the study. It also gave clear explanations to findings of the quantitative data,

Discussion of the Results of the Study

In this section, the results of the study were discussed in line with the existing concepts and theories. The discussions were done according to the specific objectives of the study.

With regard to the broad categories of students' needs, results showed that students had the need for all. The need for educational/academic issues supports the views of France et al. (2013) who posit that school counsellors must guide and help students to deal with issues like study habits, difficulty in

understanding lecturers/course tutors, inability to concentrate in class, inadequate learning materials and failure in examinations. Distance education students in the various universities exhibits different characteristics and problems that suggest a diversity of need among students in the area of career counselling and guidance programmes (Litoiu & Oproiu, 2012)., this finding also support the results obtained by Yakubu, Awabil and Forde (2017) who saw that educational/vocational needs are of great concern to students The present findings contradict the results obtained by Awabil and Akande (2013) and Okyere, Awabil and Nyarko-Sampson (2015) they saw practical needs as of greater concern to students.

The finding that students need career/vocational counselling means that students of the College need help and assistance in order for them to choose an occupation, prepare for it, and enter upon it and progress in it. This finding is in line with the assertion of (Rivera & Pellitteri, 2012). This shows that there is the need for the counselling unit of the College to primarily help individuals to make decisions and choices involved in planning a future and building a career. The finding that students of the College need career/vocational guidance is consistent with the findings of some researchers, who also found that almost one-half or more of tertiary students' desire help with educational and vocational planning (Awabil & Akande, 2013; Okyere, Awabil & Nyarko-Sampson, 2015; Wambu & Fisher, 2015).

The findings that personal/social, practical, educational/academic and career/vocational are major needs of students implies that diploma students of CoDE, UCC are faced with many problems that are burn out of many factors including lack of information, money, accommodation, and food (Wahl &

Blackhurst, 2013). According to Wambu and Fisher (2015), identification of students' counselling needs help school counsellors to assist students to know how to behave with consideration towards other people, to understand themselves, to learn manners and etiquette, pursue leisure time activities, practice social skills, develop family and family relationships, and understand social roles and responsibilities.

The two most important counselling needs of students were personal/social and practical related. The finding that personal/social was ranked second on the four broad categories of needs is in line with the report of Yakubu, Awabil and Forde (2017) who also ranked personal/social need second in their report. The current finding that students' greatest need was practical need is also in line with the result obtained by Awabil and Akande who ranked practical needs as first in their report. This finding is also in agreement with the report of Okyere, Awabil and Nyarko-Sampson (2015). Their report indicated that practical needs were the most pressing concern of students. This may mean that students of CoDE worried most about their personal/social and practical needs. This also implies that students' abysmal performance is as a result of their personal and practical needs not being met.

Also, this presupposes that students of the College have some basic needs, with regard to the four broad categories, that the College must consider by putting in place systems and structures to meet them adequately. The findings corroborate with that of Obeng (2011) whose study showed that study habit, educational information, career information, employment and self-understanding were the greatest needs of adolescent students.

Furthermore, the finding that personal/social needs are the highest needs of the students is consistent with that of Barrell (2015) who examined the counselling needs of middle school students. The findings that emerged from Barrell's study showed that the top needs of students were predominantly personal, social and emotional in nature. Furthermore, the finding that personal/social needs are the most ranked needs required by the students support the assumption of Maslow's theory of needs which states that our most basic need is for physical survival. This will be the first thing that motivates our behaviour. Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us, and so on (McLeod, 2016). The need to satisfy one's personal/social needs becomes stronger the longer the duration they are denied. This shows that the students must satisfy their personal/social deficit needs before progressing to meet higher level needs such as career/vocational and educational/academic needs. When deficit need has been satisfied it will go away. Activities will then become habitually directed towards meeting the next set of needs that are yet to be satisfied.

The findings and the relevant supports show counselling services are essential for all students, particularly distance education students. It enables the students in enriching the perspective and promoting the attitude towards resolving educational, vocational and personal problems. This implies that the personal challenges of students hinder their academic progress. The personal challenges of students should be given the needed attention.

Students under distance education mode are unique beings with a unique set of challenges during their study. Most of them are on the labour market working or looking for job while learning. Also, most of them are

having their own family and carry the burden of the family. As a result, they face many challenges that are social, psychological and economic in nature. These challenges can result in their breakdown in academic activities. Therefore, distance education students' academic, personal, social and career needs must be addressed in order for them to be successful in their programme of study. According to Barrell (2015), if these needs are not addressed, students are likely to develop more negative outcomes.

The results on specific educational/academic needs of students show that respondents have poor study skills/habits is in agreement of the report of Yakubu, Awabil and Forde (2017). The finding implies that study habits are some of the greatest educational/academic needs of the students. The finding that study habits are greatest educational/academic needs of the students corroborates with that of Obeng (2011) who found out that study habits, educational information, and self-understanding were the greatest academic needs of students. The finding is also in line with the assertion of Awabil (2016) that student should be taught how to study effectively.

The finding again supports the comments of France et al. (2013) who posit that in vocational counselling, counsellors need to deal with issues like study habits, difficulty in understanding lecturers/course tutors, inability to concentrate in class, inadequate learning materials and failure in examinations. Awabil (2016) also asserted that for anyone to be a successful student, he/she has to learn and put in essential study skills which he/she agrees to. Furthermore, the finding support that of Kangai et al. (2011) who found out that during the programme stage, students need guidance and information on

study skills, learning from media, overcoming personal and technical problems, and completing a given task.

The results further show that in relation to educational/academic needs, respondents need support regarding preparation for examination, information on choosing programme of study, relevance of programme of study, academic self-confident and time management. This means, it is always appropriate for counsellors to support students to belief that they can perform well in the field of academics, manage their time table and prepare for all examinations and also give students adequate information before they choose their programme of study. According to Obeng (2013), techniques such as effective study plan, time tabling and note taking can help to improve learning. This means, it is extremely important that students plan their learning throughout their studies. This can be done through an effective counselling programme. Such an intervention will help students cover all the subject material needed before examination as well as the use of acronyms and other mnemonics to learn.

In relation to time tabling, the finding further support the comments of Obeng (2013) who posits that there is the need for students to develop formal time schedule and a personal study time-table, so that they can regulate their movements. Effective time-tabling will help students to treat study times as serious commitments and to respect times for home chores and recreation (Mapolisa, 2012). This is particularly important for women who are required to do household chores every day. Because when time is not consciously controlled, old habits will control time and set limits on achievements.

The result shows that respondents have difficulty with the style of teaching in the study centres. This shows that tutors under the D.E. model or

system teaching strategies should differ from that of those in the regular system with regard to their teaching styles. This to a large extent may influence students learning skills and styles. Carey et al. (2016), posit that assisting distance education students to acquire effective learning skills through learner-learner, tutor-learner and instructional media learner systems help them to meet their expectations through successful study vis-à-vis reduction of examination anxieties/tension, alleviating the fear of studying alone and omission of handbook with hints to develop effective study guides. Carey et al. (2016) added that this will help them cope with their studies, despite the inconveniences that impact on their studies most often.

The finding that students of the College do not have difficulty retrieving from memory during examinations is inconsistent with the comments of France et al. (2013) who posit that most students under the D.E. programme face problems or have difficulties in retrieving from memory during examinations as a result of their tight and cumbersome schedules. France et al. (2013) asserted that counsellors need to deal with issues like study habits, difficulty in understanding lecturers/course tutors, inability to concentrate in class, inadequate learning materials and failure in examinations to help them to adopt to the DE academic environment appropriately. This may mean that distance education students' poor academic performance is not as a result of their inability to retrieve materials learnt but rather inability to plan their schedules to have adequate time for their studies.

The finding that students have difficulty meeting deadlines show that some of the educational/academic needs of students of CoDE, UCC had to do with tutors' teaching style and meeting of deadlines regarding submission of

assignments. The findings are in line with that of Kangai et al. (2011) who demonstrated how a DE institution can develop and provide quality and effective guidance and counselling services to its students through the use of a four-step model. Kangai et al. (2011) found out that the majority of students (80%) of whom live and work in the rural areas, needed quality and effective guidance and counselling and general academic support in the following areas: distribution of learning materials (modules), management of coursework (assignments), tutorials, processing of examinations, communication, and individualised counselling. Again, Kangai et al. (2011) study indicated that these students need these supports because they have problems in adapting to the teaching styles use in the DE system, problems in meeting deadlines regarding submission of assignments and problems when preparing for examinations.

The findings show that in relation to educational/academic needs, students of CoDE, UCC require specific needs in the area of tutor-students relationship and workload. These findings are congruent with that of Nyarangi (2013) who established that the challenges facing effective implementation of guidance and counselling programmes in TIVET institutions in Nyanza province include poor interpersonal relationship between tutors and students and the workload of their programme of study.

The results on career/vocational needs further show that respondents need guidance and direction regarding job requirement and the various programmes mounted by the institution. This is so because one's programme of study is largely shaped by what he/she wants to become in terms of profession. This finding supports the argument of Oladele (as cited in

Ogwokhademhe et al., 2014). They asserted that vocational counselling is concerned with problems of selection, training and adjustment to occupations. Vocational choice is important for the development of every individual as the happiness of each individual is in his/her career development. The happy individual constitutes a happy and productive nation (Oladele as cited in Ogwokhademhe et al., 2014).

The result again shows that students of the College need guidance and direction, regarding their vocational/career issues. This can be done through effective provision of adequate information regarding the various programmes and their related job opportunities and professionalism. The findings that students of the College need adequate information on job requirements, current programme of study/career and job placement after leaving school support the findings of Apreko (2010), Awabil and Akande (2013), Okyere et.al (2015) and Yakubu, Awabil and Nyarko-Sampson (2017).

According to Essuman as cited in Apreko (2010), it is important for all universities in Ghana to offer counselling services for students through occupational orientation and placement services in the form of colloquia between students and employers, vocational guidance in which students are helped to improve their performance at interviews and write applications for jobs. Also, counselling services should be given to the students regarding compilation and dissemination of career and educational information, orientation programmes for senior high schools on university programmes and other training opportunities for secondary leavers, and finally preventive counselling programmes for students (Essuman as cited in Apreko, 2010).

Again, results show that in relation to career/vocational needs, respondents specifically have problems regarding preparation of curriculum vitae, jobs in one's specialisation, job prospects, and preparation for interview. The finding supports the comments that students under the DE system must be assisted to choose an occupation, prepare for it, and enter upon it and progress in it (Rivera & Pellitteri, 2012). Therefore, there is the need to help students make decisions and choices involved in planning a future and building a career. Institutions must ensure that support services are provided with occupational information on the general nature of teacher-education, continuous professional development and career advancement opportunities. In addition, there is the need to help solve problems of students that militate against their studies as well as the provision of pre-admission guidance, on suitable courses and their relevance to current job as well as future prospects times (Smith, 2017).

The results again show that students of CoDE, UCC lack entrepreneurial information and attachment opportunities, and as a result are not able to meet their career/vocational needs. The findings support the submission of Abiri (2013) who established that students are generally guided to understand certain experience and job requirements. That is, the training and level of licensing and experience needed for the work, and other work activities and context, including the physical, social, and organisational factors involved in the work.

The result on personal/social needs of students show that, students of CoDE, UCC have interpersonal and intrapersonal problems that require effective counselling intervention to meet these needs. Alarming complexity

of modern society poses a variety of complicated interpersonal and intrapersonal problems leading to conflicts, frustration, and unhealthy rivalry that result in value crisis and serious maladjustment among distance education (DE) students ((Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2013). In such a complex society, the individual has to face many problems in life for a better adjustment in a social structure. Thus students under the DE system counteract problems and situations in all walks and phases of life, as a result, they need counselling to help in the solution of problems and thus avoid tensions and conflicts.

The results that students have problem dealing with disappointment, dating agrees with the findings of Awabil and Akande (2013) when they conducted a study among Nigerian polytechnic students and also lack freedom at home support the study of findings of Yakubu et al. (2017). Bayless (2012) and Thompson et al. also (2013) posit that there is the need for specific support services to be offered to students to help them adjust and live happily with the members of their environment inspire of indifference, rules and regulations.

This results show that respondents have certain challenges meeting the demands of their respective families. The findings are congruent with the submission of Kangai et al. (2011) who examined students' perceptions on the quality and effectiveness of guidance and counselling services at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). They found that majority of ZOU students are married with three children and three dependents. This means most students have family commitments that may negatively affect their studies. Students with families often experience difficulties in balancing their

academic demands with their family and social commitments (Brigman & Campbell, 2017).

The result shows that checking for HIV test is not one of the personal/social needs of students of the College. This may mean that students are adequately informed on the issue. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents require guidance and direction regarding needs that relate to the way in which they behave and interact and their quest for social belongingness. The findings are in line with that of Maslow (as cited in Drefs, 2012) who posits that social needs are needs that relate to the way in which people in groups behave and interact and their quest for social belongingness. Social needs include needs for belonging, love, and affection. Maslow described these needs as less basic than physiological and security needs. Relationships such as friendships, romantic attachments, and families help fulfil this need for companionship and acceptance. There is the need to guide distance education students on how they can satisfy this need, since this will help them concentrate more and better in their esteem needs.

The finding that the students' needs support regarding their relationship with their tutors is consistent with the view that assisting distance education students to acquire effective learning skills through learner-learner, tutor-learner and instructional media learner systems help them to meet their expectations through successful study vis-à-vis reduction of examination anxieties/tension, alleviating the fear of studying alone and omission of handbook with hints to develop effective study guides (Carey et al., 2016). This will help them cope with their studies, despite the inconveniences that impact on their studies most often.

The results show that financial need is one of the specific practical needs facing distance education students of the College which may require effective counselling intervention to deal with that. The finding supports the comments that stressors of interest among students offering distance education programme are occupational stress, family responsibility stress, academic activities stress, financial stress, and programme generated stress (Anyan & Pryor, 2012). Chuenyane (2013) added that a safe place to live, financial security, physical safety, and staying healthy are all concerns that might come into play as far as distance education students are concern.

The results show that facilities in the various centres of respondents and information about the College are not one of the practical needs required by students of CoDE, UCC; however, they are worried about the inadequate transport facilities in the study centres. This may also mean that the needs to set up mobile libraries and internet facilities to service the College students in remote areas may not be an urgent task. Also, the findings that lack of facilities and information about the College are not some of the practical needs of students are incongruent with the comments of Mapolisa (2012) who posits that some of the practical challenges faced by students include lack of time, lack of money, and lack of library facilities. Again, the findings are inconsistent with that of Nyarangi (2013) who found out that the major challenge facing effective implementation of counselling programmes in the Institutes of Technology was lack of sufficient facilities due to poor support by the principals and Board of Governors.

Also, the results show that inadequate transport facilities, inadequate available medical services, and poor facilities for the disabled persons in the

study centres are some of the practical needs of students of the College. These findings are consistent with that of Awabil and Akande (2013) who also listed the following as the components of the practical needs of students: school fees, transport facilities, facilities for disabled and medical facilities.

Also, the high cost of cooked food around the study centres, high user fees charged by the College, and inadequate lecture theatres or rooms in the study centres are some of the specific practical needs of diploma students of CoDE, UCC. The findings are in line with the submissions of Awabil and Akande (2013), and Wunpini (2015). Awabil and Akande (2013) listed the following as the components of the practical needs of students: school fees, transport facilities, facilities for disabled and medical facilities. Wunpini (2015) who also assessed the challenges facing counsellors in SHS in the Tamale Metropolis found that lack of consulting rooms, classrooms, high school fees charges and financial challenges are the most significant practical needs of students.

In relation to this objective, the results show that the educational/academic needs of students were not adequately met by the counselling services provided by the College. The findings support the submission of Arko-Achemfour (2017). In looking at students support gap in an open learning context, Arko-Achemfour indicated that although most of the support services were in place and students also clearly indicated the importance they attach to learner support in their studies. This notwithstanding, the high needs gaps for all the learner support services items surveyed indicated that there are serious problems for students in accessing the services. The challenges that students face in accessing the support services included economic constraints,

social factors, physical barriers, transactional distance on the part of Unisa in the form of academic, effective and administrative problems.

Also, the findings support that of Sekyi (2013) whose study revealed that generally, while support for students in terms of face-to-face tutorials and learning materials were seen as satisfactory, there was more room for improvement with regards to guidance and counselling and administrative support services. In sum, it was evident from Sekyi's (2013) study that the role of support services in facilitating learning by distance education students helps in ameliorating the challenges they face and that, UCC's provisions are satisfactory in terms of face-to-face tutorial support and learning material support but inadequate with regards to guidance and counselling and administrative support services to students.

Furthermore, the findings that emerged from the study are in line with the assertion of Sampson (2013) who investigated how the needs of distance education students can be met. Sampson's (2013) study drew on the experience of a cohort of 22 multinational and multilingual students enrolled in a Master in Education distance learning programme administered by a British university. Sampson (2013) found that students were, on the whole, satisfied with the course materials, the choice of modules, assignment feedback, and length of time given to complete the assignments, but significant problems surfaced regarding issues of student support, and access to and provision of resource materials. Arguably, these are issues intrinsic to the successful provision of distance learning courses, and raise some interesting questions regarding the provision of distance education and its ability to meet the needs of learners. Sampson (2013) added that most of the

educational/academic needs of distance education students are not adequately met which in the long run influence their unsatisfactory academic performance. This shows that assessing the needs of distance education students will help in providing appropriate support services that will meet their needs.

Again, the findings that when students of CoDE, UCC were to indicate whether their career/vocational needs are adequately met, they were not adequately met means that the process of assisting students of the College to choose an occupation, prepare for it, and enter upon it and progress in it is not adequately met. That is, the College counselling services are not helping students to make decisions and choices that have to do with their future planning and their career building (Rivera & Pellitteri, 2012).

The findings that diploma students of CoDE, UCC career/vocational needs are not adequately met are in line with the comments of Owusu-Boateng and Essel (2011) who posit that academic and career/vocational needs of KNUST distance education students are not met. According to Owusu-Boateng and Essel (2011), to meet the counselling needs of distance education students, there is the need for education providers to teach the new students time management and encourage the students to draw private timetables and discuss them with their counsellors. Again, all students should be assigned tutors and should be given the opportunity to contact them at any time they encounter any problem, be it academic, personal or job related. Another factor that facilitates effective combination of work with study is the ability to relate concepts and ideas learnt in the books to everyday reality. The facilitators at distance programmes should encourage the students to relate whatever they

learn to the work they do and their experiences. Owusu-Boateng and Essel (2011) added that students should be encouraged to form study groups and get in touch with their study group members through the e-mail and mobile phone whenever they are in need.

Furthermore, the findings that career/vocational needs of students are not adequately met may mean that the various counselling services put in place by the Counselling Unit of the College are not working as expected. This finding confirms the call made by Sekyi (2013) that for counselling students on career choices, subject selection, learning habits and styles while at the same time directing students to relevant information are necessary. Sekyi's (2013) study provided evidence that the Ghanaian student need motivation to learn and excel. This is manifested in the fact that preparations of brochures describing study techniques, the setting up of resident course centres, the dispatch of audio-visual aids and the provision of quiet study rooms in public buildings, can all keep the student overcome his/her difficulties and improve dialogue. This shows that effective counselling programme for distance education students are relevance to ensure that these students meet their needs.

The results show that the students' personal and inter personal needs are not adequately met. That is, the counselling services put in place by the College to help diploma students know how to behave with consideration towards other people, to understand themselves, know how to get on with others, learn manners and etiquette, pursue leisure time activities, practice social skills, develop family and family relationships, and understand social roles and responsibilities are not adequately met.

The findings support the views of Wambu and Fisher (2015) who posit that in most schools in Kenya, guidance and counselling interventions are not able to meet the personal/social needs of students. As a result students are not able to adjust and live happily with the members of their environment in spite of indifference, rules and regulations appropriately. The findings further support the comments of Barrell (2015) who posits that family/marital concerns, friendship difficulties, difficulties with other students, problems with members of staff, disappointment in life, loss of loved ones, financial problems, and accommodation problems are significant needs of students that are not adequately met by school counsellors.

The results show that students' needs such as school fees, transport facilities, facilities for disabled and medical facilities are not adequately met. The findings are congruent with the assertion that most students under the DE system have practical needs such as financial and infrastructural facilities which are usually not met adequately (Kangai et al., 2011). In all the students indicated that the current counselling service was not effective.

The findings that demographic characteristics such as age, marital status, level of study and programme of study have significant influence on students' counselling needs support the assertion of the Astin's theory of AI-E-O model. The findings helped in explaining and understanding the interdependence between the students and the College environment with regard to the counselling services put in place by the College. The findings may mean that the various counselling services put in place by the College are not meeting the needs of students, which may be so as a result of the differences in the various categories. Based on the findings, using the I-E-O

model may mean that the demographic characteristics of the students do exert influence on their educational/academic, career/vocational, personal/social and practical needs. This is in line with the assertion that isolating the environmental variables of interest of students in order to measure their educational impact will not be appropriate (Hodge, 2015).

Through effective counselling strategies, institutions can help students to meet and satisfy most of their needs. The results show that students' needs are not adequately met by the College which to some extent may affect their academic performance negatively. The finding is consistent with the comments of Wanjala (2013) who posits that in most schools, a significant number of teachers are unwilling towards being assigned responsibility of being career teacher counsellor which could be a hindrance towards effective implementation of career guidance and counselling programmes in schools. Lack of training in career guidance and counselling was a hindrance to proper implementation of career guidance counselling programme in schools. Wanjala (2013) added that as a result of many social, personal, academic and vocational challenges, most counselling services provided in the schools are perceived to be ineffective.

The result shows that there are not enough counsellors to assist and guide distance learners to adjust to the distance academic environment. The finding supports the submission of Schlosser and Anderson (2012) who posit that the challenges facing the provision of guidance and counselling services includes lack of adequate guidance and counselling staff, inadequate resources, and lack of requisite support to guidance and counselling programmes among other challenges. This case is not different from that of

CoDE, UCC. In the case of inadequate resource, CoDE has 73 study centres across the ten regions of Ghana but has five counsellors (Dankyi, 2016). Dankyi (2016) added that the counsellors at the headquarters do not have counselling room let alone study centre coordinators getting an office for counselling. The finding is not therefore surprising.

In addition, the finding that students do not have time to seek the services of counsellors may mean that distance education students are faced with social, family, and work schedules that affect their time significantly since time does not increase but responsibilities do. The findings are consistent with the findings of Owusu-Boateng and Essel (2011) who found out that distance education students face many challenges that militate against their studies. Their study revealed that the challenges facing the students include how to combine their work with their studies, manage family and social activities. They are often misunderstood, isolated and some are contemplating dropping out from the programme they embark on. They also feel burdened with studies and do not know where to turn for help. Those who manage and co-ordinate their activities very well, receive constant feedback from facilitators and course mates as well as support from employers and family members are able to successfully complete their programmes.

The results further show that because distance student have issues with time management, accessing the service with part of their study time will be a challenge. They, therefore, expect workshops/seminars to address their needs. The findings are consistent with that of Arko-Achemfour (2017), whose findings revealed that students face challenges in accessing support services put in place by their various institutions. His article investigated the access

challenges that students face in their ODL mode of study in terms of students support services. Other challenges revealed by Arko-Achemfour's study in terms of the challenges that students face in accessing the support services included economic constraints, social factors, physical barriers, transactional distance on the part of Unisa in the form of academic, effective and administrative problems (Arko-Achemfour, 2017). Again, Arko-Achemfour (2017) indicated that most of the support services are in place at the institutions and its regional offices, some of the students, most especially those in the rural areas are not able to access the support services adequately which impact negatively on their studies and learning experience.

The results that emerged from this objective show that gender has an effect on the educational/academic needs of the students. Male students exhibited high level of educational/academic needs than their female counterpart. The results mean that relatively the male students may have high level of needs in the area of appropriate study skills, time tabling, note taking, self-confidence, academic work load, and effective study plan than the female students. The finding that there is a significant difference between male and female students with regard to their educational/academic needs is consistent with that of Obeng (2011) whose study showed that there was a significant difference that existed between male and female students with respect to educational/academic needs such as study skills, self-confidence, teaching styles, time management and workload.

However, gender has no impact on students' counselling needs. This shows that both male and female students of the College have same and significant levels of counselling needs with regard to the need to choose an

occupation, prepare for it, and enter upon it and progress in it. That is, both male and female students have same levels of need with regard to the need to make decisions and choices involved in planning a future and building a career. Similarly, both male and female students have relatively same level of needs with regard to their self-concept, individual differences, lack of information, money, food, and interpersonal relationship. Thus, both male and female students need personal and social counselling to help them understand themselves, know how to get on with others, learn manners and etiquette, pursue leisure time activities, practice social skills, develop family and family relationships, and understand social roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, both male and female students require needs in the area of family/marital concerns, friendship difficulties, difficulties with other students, problems with members of staff, disappointment in live, loss of loved ones, financial problems, and accommodation problems.

The overall finding that there is no significant difference between male and female students with regard to their needs are incongruent with that of Obeng (2011) who found out that there is a significant difference between students with respect to employment, educational information, drug information, and financial information needs. Again, the finding is inconsistent with the submission of Kangai et al. (2011) who suggest that male and female students have different needs with respect to the counselling services provided during their distance study. However, the finding is in line with that of Apreko (2010), Okyere et al (2017), Yakubu et al (2017) who found that there were no significant difference of the counselling needs of students in terms of educational, personal/social and vocational needs of

students. The findings that emerged from their study revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female students in terms of their needs. The finding is also consistent with the earlier findings of Awabil (2007). This suggests that male and female students experience similar problems and needs

Furthermore, Sahaya and Chamundeswari (2013) also examined psychological counselling needs and academic achievement of students at the secondary level. In their study, they found that there were significant differences that existed between the concerns of male and female students with respect to the guidance needs they studied. Similarly, Gökhan and YalçÖna (2014) who investigated the counselling needs of educational sciences students at the Ankara University discovered that gender was a factor in students' perception of some of their needs.

The results further show that gender has an influence on the educational/academic needs of the students. That is, male students exhibited high level of educational/academic needs than their female counterpart. However, in all, gender has no influence on the students' counselling needs. Also, the finding that gender has no influence on counselling needs of students does no corroborate with that of Brouzos et al. (2016) who found out that students counselling needs varied according to their gender. Unlike Sahaya and Chamundeswari (2013), Gökhan and YalçÖna (2014) and Brouzos et al. (2016), France et al. (2013) and Chuenyane (2013) discovered that gender was not a factor in students' perception of their needs. Thus, no significant differences existed between the counselling needs of male and female students. The findings are therefore, in line with that of France et al. (2013)

and Chuenyane (2013) who all found out that gender has no influence on students' counselling needs. However, the finding is incongruent with that of Awabil and Akande (2013) who found that students differed significantly in their counselling needs on the basis of gender.

The results show that older students have higher counselling needs. Generally, age had a significant relationship with the counselling needs of the students. This shows that age has an effect on the counselling needs of the students. The findings are consistent with that of Forde (as cited in Obeng, 2011) which revealed that there was a significant difference between the guidance needs of mid and late adolescents. This finding is also consistent with the findings of Nyarko-Sampson and Dabone (2016) who revealed that there is a significant difference between the counselling needs of students and their age. In contrast to Forde's study, the findings are incongruent with that of Awabil (2007) who surveyed SHS students in the Balsa and Kassena-Nankana districts in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Awabil (2007) recorded no significant difference between the concerns of mid and late adolescents with respect to the eight counselling needs that he studied. However, the findings are in line with that of Awabil and Akande (2013). In assessing the counselling needs of students in the Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, Nigeria, Awabil and Akande (2013) found that there was no significant difference in the counselling needs of students on the basis of age.

Furthermore, the findings show that age influence the needs of individuals, this Maslow and Erickson have established (Gautam, 2017). Wong and Kwok (as cited in Webb et al., 2017) found that coordinating childcare and studies, as well as job and studies was a major concern of

college women aged above 25 years. Early adults, according to the study, have more vocational/career problems than late adults. Also, with regards to support services, young students are likely to need general academic advisement whilst older students seem to need individualised counselling services since they may experience more personal problems as they try to balance their studies with work and family responsibilities (Kangai et al., 2011).

The results that emerged from this objective show that married students have more career/vocational, personal/social and practical problems than students who are single. The findings support the submission of Anyan and Pryor (2012) who posit that under family counselling, it has been observed that most married women in developing countries are more stressed than their partners. This may be as a result of the patriarchal nature of such societies. Again these findings support the findings of Nyarko-Sampson and Dabone (2016) who found out that there is significant difference among the marital status of students. Anyan and Pryor indicated in their study that the stressors of interest among married women offering distance education programme are occupational stress, family responsibility stress, academic activities stress, financial stress, cultural roles stress, religious roles stress and programme generated stress.

Furthermore, the findings of Anyan and Pryor revealed significant differences in the level of stress experienced by married female workers when compared with single female student workers under the distance programme. That is, stress was experienced differently among the female distance education students with regard to those who were married and those who were single. This may mean that the counselling needs of married and single

women under the distance programme vary since they face different level of problems in the family.

Again, the findings corroborate with the assertions of Wong and Kwok (as cited in Apreko, 2010) who posit that higher percentage of married students with children experience difficulties in specific areas, particularly in relation to time constraints and study difficulties than single students and those married with no children. Mature full-time students, according to Sen and Kamat (2016), experience more difficulties in the area of finance and a variety of circumstances related to study, work, family and social life. It was also found that married students have more educational/academic problems than students who are single. According to Brigman and Campbell (2017), students with families often experience difficulties in balancing their academic demands with their family and social commitments.

The results shows that programme of study have a significant effect on students counselling needs. The results further show that students offering DSME are faced with more problems as compared to other programmes, and for that matter may require more needs. The findings are consistent with the perception in most communities that mathematics and science are the most difficult programmes of study and for that matter students offering these programmes or subjects are face with more challenges that increases their needs. The results further show that difference exists between students offering business and those offering education programmes.

The findings are not in line with that of Dankyi (2016) who examined the study habits of UCC distance education students, focusing on students at the Cape Coast study centre. The results of Dankyi (2016) revealed that there

was no significant difference between distance education students with regard to those reading business and education programmes. Also, with regard to study skills, the needs of students in terms of programme were the same. However, the findings are consistent with that of Webster and Hackley (2017) who found out that there was a significant difference between science and arts students with regard to their performance in mathematics and counselling needs. This gives the indication that counselling needs of students may defer in terms of programme of study.

The results show that the longer a student stays in the College, the greater his/her counselling needs. The results further show that generally level 100 students of the College have lower level of counselling needs as compare to those in levels 200 and 300. This means that the academic level of students have an effect on their counselling needs. The findings are inconsistent with that of many researchers who found out that in relation to grade level or form of students, there is no significant effect on students counselling needs (Apreko, 2010; Awabil, 2007a; Sen & Kamat, 2016). The findings of Awabil (2007) revealed that the guidance needs of secondary school students do not depend on grade level. Furthermore, Apreko's (2010) study revealed that there was no significant difference in the needs and problems of 2nd and 3rd year students. This probably suggests that both academic levels experience similar problems and in the same magnitude. Furthermore, the finding is incongruent with that of Awabil and Akande (2013) who found that there is significant difference in the counselling needs of students on the basis of academic level.

Furthermore, Sen and Kamat (2016) also investigated student support services in open and distance learning institutions for achieving education for

all. They found out that most of the support services provided by the distance learning institutions do not meet the needs of the students in all the levels adequately. This means, the class or level of a student has no effect on his/her needs. The findings however, support that of Gökhan and Yalçın (2014), who found out in their study of 400 undergraduate students at the Ankara University that there were significant grade differences in the counselling needs they tested among students.

The findings that background characteristics such as age, programme of study, marital status and level of study have significant influence on students' counselling needs support the argument that if background characteristics of students interact with the environment with regard to the various counselling services, the environment becomes effective. Furthermore, the findings confirm the argument of the study that, the identified background characteristics of the students, which are treated as input and independent variables, determine the various needs of students. With effective and comprehensive counselling services delivery, the needs of the students can be identified and can be met. Therefore, the counselling unit of the College can help bridge the gap between the needs of students and the counselling services provided by the College through this intervention. This shows that the various counselling services provided to students must go along with their background characteristics as well as their priority needs with appropriate, effective and comprehensive counselling service delivery mechanism to ensure that the counselling needs of students are met.

Chapter Summary

The chapter presents results and discussion regarding the assessment of counselling needs of the students, focusing on diploma students of CoDE, UCC. The results have been presented with associated explanations. With the help of tables and the narratives, the study analysed and presented the data using both descriptive, inferential statistics and narratives. The results show that the students' four broad categories of needs are not met adequately. The results further show that married students, older students and level 300 students have greater level of counselling needs than the other group of students. However, gender has no influence on the students' counselling needs. This means, age, marital status, programme of study and academic level have influence on the students' counselling needs.

Furthermore, the findings show that there are many challenges confronting students in accessing the counselling services delivered by the College. The challenges include none availability of professional counsellors at the study centres, lack of information regarding how to get to counsellors, lack of facilities/offices, and lack of organised workshops/seminars on counselling in the various study centres.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions drawn as well as recommendations made. The contribution of the study to knowledge and suggestions for further research have also been presented.

Summary

Generally, the present study assessed the counselling needs of distance education students, focusing on College of Distance Education, University of Cape Coast diploma students. It sought to examine the effects of gender, age, marital status, academic level of students, and programme of study on students' counselling needs. The challenges confronting students in accessing the counselling services in CoDE, UCC were also identified. The study adopted the mixed methods approach. The explanatory sequential mixed methods design was adopted for the study. The population for the study was all diploma students at the various study centres of CoDE, UCC. The total population was 36,798 (CoDE, UCC, 2017b). This figure was 3.0 percent of the accessible population.

The sample size for the study was 1115, made up of 1110 respondents and five participants. This was obtained based on the recommendations of Ary et al. (2010) and Kumar (2014). The proportional sampling procedure was also used to allocate three percent (3.0%) of each of the accessible population to the various strata of the study with regard to gender, programme and academic level. The purposive sampling procedure was employed to select the regional capitals from each of the three zones and the participants. The regions selected

were Greater Accra, Ashanti and Northern Regions. All study centres in the selected regions that run diploma programmes were captured for the study.

In addition, the stratified sampling procedure was used to select respondents from each of the selected regions based on gender, level and programme of study. In each of the regions or zones, various sampling frames were designed based on the data provided by the College. The sampling frame was designed in line with the three main strata in each of the zones. The computer generated random number sampling technique was used to generate the random numbers that were in line with each of the frame designed by the researcher using a Microsoft Excel tool.

Both questionnaire and interview guide were the instrument used to collect data from the respondents and participants respectively. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument that was used for the study, a pilot study was carried out. The Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire generated was 0.895. The various ethical issues stipulated by the IRB of UCC were adhered to as expected. In addition, the researcher maintained objectivity, presented the true research findings and used the research results for academic purposes only as outlined in the research protocol of IRB of UCC.

The quantitative data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Specifically, data on the background characteristics of the respondents were analysed, using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentage distributions while that of the specific research questions were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. The independent samples t-test was used to analyse data

regarding hypothesis one and the one-way between groups ANOVA were used to analyse data. However, in the case of the qualitative data, they were analysed manually using thematic approach. The major findings of the study are presented in line with the research questions and hypotheses.

The first research question of the study identified the most prevalent counselling needs of students with respect to the four broad categories of students' needs. The main findings that emerged were personal/social needs, practical needs, educational/academic needs and career/vocational needs. Thus, all the four broad categories of students' needs were priority needs.

The second research question of the study also looked at the most prevalent specific counselling needs of students under each of the four broad categories of students' needs. It was found that:

- The major needs of students on their specific educational/academic needs were meeting deadlines, lack of confidence in their ability to succeed academically, problems allocating time for studies, difficulty discussing academic problems with course tutors, difficulty preparing for examinations, difficulty coping with course workload, poor study skills and difficulty in resolving incomplete results (IC).
- The most important needs in the specific career/vocational needs were difficulty in job placement, lack of information about how to prepare and attend job interviews, lack of information on how to start a business, and preparation for job interview, inadequate information on job requirements, regret choosing current programme of study and difficulty preparing curriculum vitae.

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- The most prevalent specific personal/social needs of students were problems relating well with lecturers/instructors, problems with dating, self-understanding, lack of freedom at home, difficulty relating well with other students, difficulty in making new friends, problem meeting family demands, problems dealing with disappointment and problems with resolving interpersonal conflicts.
 - The priority needs of students with regard to specific practical needs were financial problems in school, inadequate medical services around study centres, inadequate lecture rooms, poor facilities for disabled students, high cost of cooked food and high user fee charge by the College.

The third research question examined the extent to which the counselling needs of students were met. The key findings that emerged were that students' needs were not adequately met. Specifically:

- Educational/academic needs that were not met were the need for study skills, the need to have confidence, need to know how to prepare study timetable and the need to retrieve information from memory during examination.
- Career/vocational needs that were not met were the need to have information on job requirements, knowledge on how to prepare a good curriculum vitae, information about careers in areas of specialization and information on how to prepare and attend job interviews.
- Personal/social needs that were not met were self-understanding, information on how to maintain healthy relationships, combining work with study and family responsibilities, resolving interpersonal conflicts and relating well with others.

- Practical needs that were not met were facilities at the study centres, cost of cooked foods, classroom space, information about the College and information on financial assistance.

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The last research question of the study looked at the challenges militating against students in accessing counselling services in the College. The factors that are responsible were:

- Non-availability of counsellors at their respective study centres;
- Non-availability of time to seek counselling;
- Lack of information regarding how to get to the counsellors in the College;
- Lack of offices for counselling at their respective study centres; and
- Lack of organised workshops/seminars on counselling at their respective study centres.

In examining the influence of demographic characteristics on students counselling needs, five research hypotheses were formulated and tested. The main findings that emerged were:

- There was a significant difference between male and female students of the College with respect to their counselling needs except for educational/academic needs.
- There were significant differences in the counselling needs of the students in terms of age, marital status, programme of study, and academic level.

Conclusions

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Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn.

The two most prevalent counselling needs of students in the College were personal-social and practical needs, educational/academics and career vocational needs. Whiles the most prevalent specific counselling needs of students in the College were lack of confidence, inability to meet deadlines for submission of assignments, poor time management, lack of information on how to start a business, difficulty in job placement, lack of freedom at home, financial problems in school, inadequate medical services around study centres, and poor facilities for disabled students.

The counselling needs of distance education students are not related to gender. However, the variables namely age, marital status, programme of study and academic level were significant determinants of students' perception on their counselling needs.

The counselling needs of distance education students are not adequately met. Particularly, in relation to needs such as preparation of study timetable, self-confidence, study skills, information on job requirements, good curriculum vitae preparation, interpersonal relationship, lack of facilities, and the need to have additional classroom space in the study centre.

Input variables such as age, academic level, marital status, and programme of study have significant influence on the students' perception of their counselling needs.

Challenges confronting students in accessing counselling services in the College has to do with non-availability of professional counsellors at the

study centres, lack of time on the part of students to seek counselling services, and lack of information regarding how to get to the counsellors of the College.

The results from the study indicate that the counselling needs of students are not adequately met by the current counselling services provided by the Counselling unit. The result further showed the Counselling Unit of the College of Distance Education is not effective in discharging its core mandate. As a result, a model has been proposed for effective service delivery at CoDE. The model is presented in Figure 6.

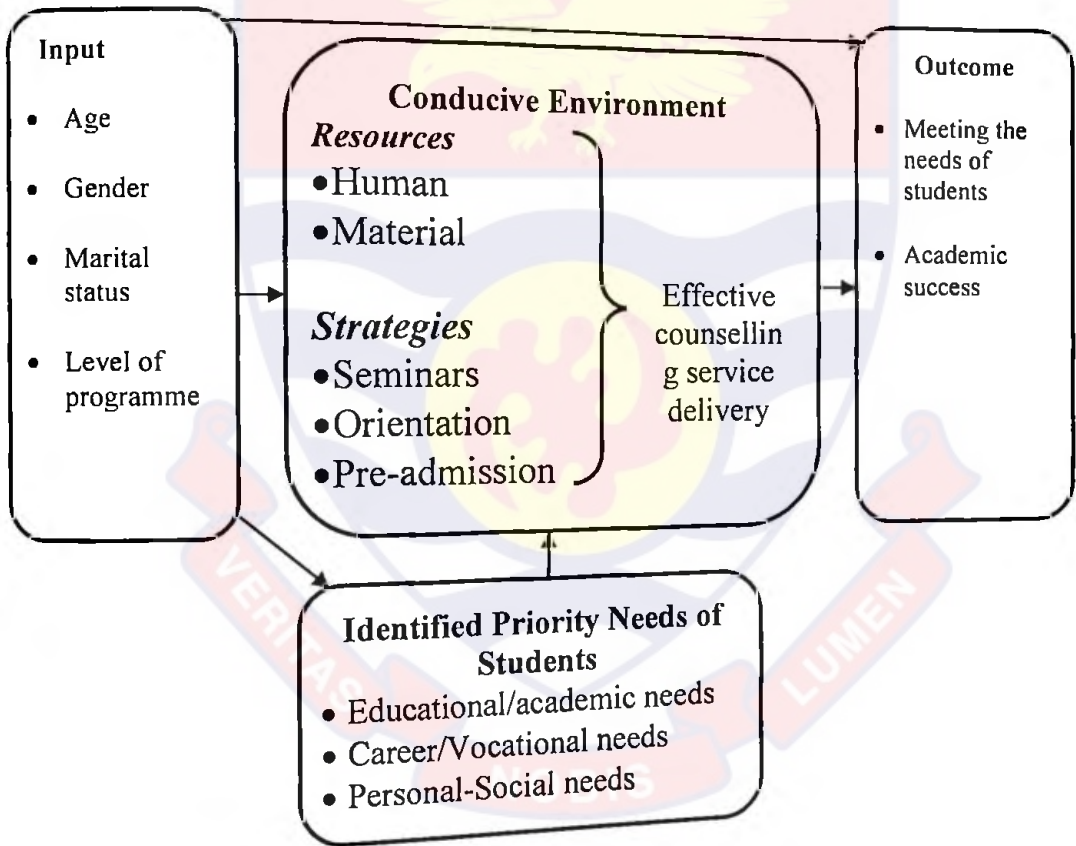


Figure 6: Model for Effective Counselling Service Delivery at CoDE, UCC.

Input Variables

The output variables refer to the demographic characteristics of students that have shown to have significant influence on the needs of students. Counsellors should bear in mind the demographic characteristics of distance education students such as age, marital status, academic level and programme of study

should be taking into consideration when planning any counselling services for distance education students. Input variables have shown to have influence on the needs of students.

Priority Counselling Needs

These are the actual needs of students as identified in the study according to the four broad categories of needs. The needs as identified in the study are presented in Table 31.

Conducive Environment

The environment signifies the effective counselling service delivery by counsellors of distance education. Counsellors should consider the input and the counselling needs of students before planning any counselling programme for students. However, effective counselling service delivery is dependent on resources and strategies. The resources include both human and material.

Resources

The priority counselling needs of students cannot be effectively addressed without resources. Human resource is the most valuable asset of any organisation in the delivery of its core mandate. It is the human resource component of any institution that makes all other structures and facilities work. To make the counselling service effective, the human resource component has to be strengthened. There should be counsellors at all the regional study centres. Quite apart from recruiting professional counsellors, training of course tutors to be paraprofessionals and the guidance and counselling course tutors who are professionals is required. To ensure effective counselling service delivery, counsellors could employ strategies such as:

Strategies for Effective Counselling Service Delivery

1. Seminars/workshops: While students are on the programme, counselling services should be organised periodically for them in the form of workshops/seminars. This should be organised to meet the four broad categories of needs identified by the study.
2. Study habits clinic: Study habits clinic can be organized for all first year students at the beginning of the first semester.
3. Communication: Strategies such as telephone and voicemail, to alert students when the semester is about ending to highlight examination rules and how to answer questions. Again students' portals can be linked with e-counselling, using Whatsapp platforms for example. This can be designed in such a way that as soon as a student gets two referrals in a semester's examination that student is automatically linked to the counsellor's portal to start an online counselling or face-to-face counselling based on the student's choice.
4. Orientation: The orientation activities of the College should be properly organised, detached from all major activities of the College such as modules distribution and matriculation which has been the practice. This is because the findings from the study showed that students do not even have an idea of whom and where to turn to when there is an issue of concern. Students also had many issues with course facilitation styles that also indicate that students are not aware of the difference between how they were taught at their regular institutions before enrolling as distance education students. There is the need for students to be well-oriented into

dedicated for orientation of students.

5. Pre-admission counselling: The outcome of the study indicated that majority of the students regretted choosing their current programme of study. The study further found out that students had little or no ideal about their programmes of study and their job prospects. This implies that students did not have any information on their programmes of study before enrolling. Pre-admission counselling should be included in the College's counselling strategies for prospective students. It should be done in such a way that details of each course are outlined alongside job prospects and institutions for further studies. This can be done with the use of leaflets accompanying the sale of forms at the various study centres. It can also be done with the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) where the page before selection of programme will be designed such that there will be a link that will take prospective students to a page that has a voicemail or a write up on the various programmes of the College. It should be designed in such a way that until a prospective student visits the page he/she will not be permitted to choose a programme of study. This will help students to make informed choices.

Material resources for effective service delivery, on the other hand, include office complex, equipment, finance, and time. There should be offices in the various study centres. The offices should be fully furnished to create a conducive environment for counselling. In the delivery of counselling services, confidentiality is of paramount importance. This can only be achieved when counselling is done indoors. There should be regular sources of

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funding for the running of the Offices. Materials such as psychological tests and inventories, journals, leaflets, students' handbooks and stationeries should be made available. All these resources facilitate the effective delivery of counselling services.

Outcome

The outcome variable is the expected effect of the conducive environment put in place by the study institution. It is the expected outcome of the interaction between the conducive environment and the needs of students. It is expected that recourses will coupled with the counsellor's strategies will create a conducive environment which will in turn meet students' needs adequately and also to ensure academic success. Academic success here is not only looking at the good academic performance of students with good CGPA but also students developing interest in the activities of the institution. When academic success is achieved, students will always want to come back to the institution that train them either for fun or to help in its development. Academic success also means that whatever programme the student offered in the institution will be beneficial in their field of work.

It is anticipated that if this model is implemented well, the importance of seeking counselling service will be part of students' life. If students are attracted by counsellors in addressing their needs, they will be motivated to personally take time out of their busy schedules to seek counselling services. This will improve the delivery of counselling services to distance education students.

Largely, within the context of doctoral research, an original contribution to knowledge is a very shaded term since it does not mean an enormous breakthrough but rather to demonstrate that one has a good grasp of how research is normally done in a proposed area of study being specialised in. According to Creswell (2014), the ability of any research to contribute to knowledge could be displayed in four key areas. These are developing a concept, thinking through the methodology, building on an existing study and being able to change directions. In this regard, this study can be seen as generally building on existing studies to add to knowledge in the field of counselling with regard to the four broad categories of counselling needs and changing the direction of counselling to the distance learner. Among the modest contributions made by this study in this area is that the findings from earlier studies reviewed show that regular and sandwich students exhibit various needs in the area of educational/academic, career/vocational, personal/social and practical. The present study unearthed the needs of distance education students of CoDE, UCC in relation to these four broad categories of needs. The study also examined the extent to which the various counselling services put in place by the College are able to meet the needs of these students.

The study has made available findings relating to the priority needs of distance education students of CoDE UCC. The study also adopted, modified and expanded a counselling needs assessment instrument. Therefore, the data have provided a comprehensive needs assessment instrument for research purposes in Ghana. Finally, the proposed model would be useful to

Recommendations

Based on the key findings and conclusions of the study, a number of recommendations for enhancing counselling services delivery at CoDE, UCC are made:

The study revealed that the two most prevalent counselling needs of students in CoDE, UCC with respect to the four broad categories of students needs are personal/social and practical needs. Based on this, it is recommended to management of the College that in the planning, organising and implementing of counselling programmes of the College, students' personal/social and practical needs such as self-concept, interpersonal relationship, time management, and financial difficulties should be adequately considered and catered for. In other words, the personal/social and practical needs of students should receive greater attention than their educational/academic and vocational/career needs.

Again, the study revealed that under educational/academic needs study skills was the least met. It is therefore recommended to management of the College that study skills and habits programmes should be mounted in the study centres to enable students to acquire effective study skills and habits with particular emphasis on good study skills.

The study also revealed that the most prevalent specific counselling needs of students under the four broad categories of students' needs in the College were lack of confidence, inability to meet deadlines, poor time management, lack of information on how to start a business, difficulty in job

medical services around study centres, and poor facilities for disabled students. The study, therefore, recommend to management of the College to ensure that counselling as a support service of the College is improved by increasing visibility in the various study centres and also providing offices for counselling in each of the study centres. The results of the study show that a majority of the students indicated that they regretted choosing their current programme of study. It is therefore recommended that pre-admission counselling should be done. Again, management of the College should ensure that the needs of each student are easily identified through counselling and planned individual responsive services. This implies that the relevant resources should be provided.

The study found that personal characteristics such as age, academic level, marital status, and programme of study have a significant effect on the students' counselling needs. Based on these findings, it is recommended to management of the College to ensure that regular in-service training programmes are offered to counsellors and co-ordinators to equip them with the necessary skills for understanding the differences that exist among students in order to offer appropriate counselling services to students. That is, the counselling programme should be sensitive to age, level of study, marital status, and programme of study.

With reference to the finding that the counselling services put in place by the College are not able to meet the needs of students adequately, it is recommended to management of the College to ensure that their counselling programme and responsive services are structured to address human

and learning skills. Also, the counselling services should be an integral part of the College's education process and that more funds and time should be allocated.

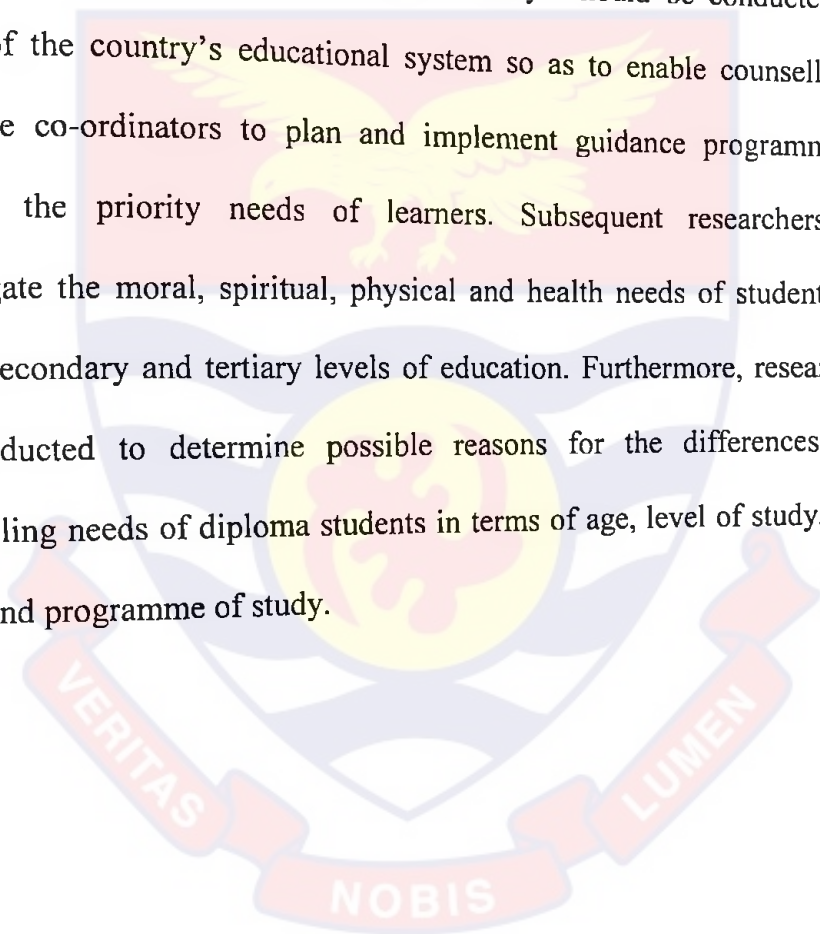
The study established that the non-availability of professional counsellors at the study centres, lack of time on the part of students to seek the counselling services, and lack of information regarding how to get to the counsellors of the College are the major challenges confronting students in accessing the counselling services delivered by the College. Based on this finding, it is recommended to management of the College to ensure that there are professional counsellors attached to each regional study centre of the College, incorporate counselling into students' lecture timetable, and make the College's counselling services visible and attractive enough to students. Again, it is recommended to the management of the College to ensure that the College's counselling services are conceptualised in a broader and more comprehensive and holistic view, incorporating academic, vocational, personal and practical aspects of development.

Suggestions for Further Research

Firstly, the instruments used in this study may be used in the study of other institutions in order to test their reliability and validity in other contexts, and to broaden the understanding of distance education students' four broad categories of counselling needs. This should, however, be done taking into consideration the characteristics of the subjects of the future study. It is, therefore, suggested that this study should be replicated in the various public and private universities in Ghana, especially those that operate a distance

the same research design and instrumentation as the current study, using both private and public universities offering a distance education model. This would greatly increase generalizability to other institutions and populations. Again, it would be prudent to compare regular and distance learning environments in terms of learner needs and support services.

Also, general needs assessment surveys should be conducted at all levels of the country's educational system so as to enable counsellors and guidance co-ordinators to plan and implement guidance programmes that address the priority needs of learners. Subsequent researchers could investigate the moral, spiritual, physical and health needs of students at the basic, secondary and tertiary levels of education. Furthermore, research may be conducted to determine possible reasons for the differences in the counselling needs of diploma students in terms of age, level of study, marital status and programme of study.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CoDE, UCC List of Study Centres that Run Diploma Programmes

Zones	Regions	Study Centres
Southern	Greater Accra	Tema SHS; Papafio Hills; SHS, St. Margaret Mary; Ada College of Edu.; WASS, Adenta; Tema Parents;; Tema Datus; Ebenezer SHS,
	Volta	Mawuli SHS; Ho Poly; Akatsi College of Edu. St. Theresa College of Edu.; Jasikan College of Edu
	Central	UCC; SWESBO; SWESCO; Obiri Yeboah SHS; Breman Asikuma; Ngleshie Amanfrom; Apam SHS; Twifo Praso SHS; Boa Amponsem SHS; Dunkwa-on-Offin SHS; Kasoa Datus Comp.
	Western	Holy Child College of Edu.; ST. John's SHS, Sekondi Enchi College of Edu.; TADISCO
Middle	Eastern	Oyoko Methodist Sch.; GHANASS; Abetifi College of Edu.; Attafuah Oda; Akwamuman SHS; Somanya Sec.Tech; Begoro Presec
	Ashanti	KSTS; Simms SHS; Kumasi Anglican SHS; WESCO; Mmofraturu SHS; Kumasi Poly; Serwaa Nyako SHS; T.I AMASS; Konongo Odumase SHTS; Obuasi SHTS; Asante Mampong College; Dwamena Akenten SHS; Offinso SHS; SIMMS SHS; Nkawie SHS; K.T.I; Mansoman SHS
	Brong-Ahafo	Sunyani Poly; Techiman SHS; Dormaa SHS; Hwidiem SHS; Kintampo SHS; Drobo SHS; Nkoranza Sec Tech; Nkorman SHTS
Northern	Northern	Tamale College of Edu.; Tamale Poly; Gambaga Girls; Salagga SHTS; Damango SHTS
	Upper East	Bolga Girls; Notre Dame SHS; Zibilla SHS; Zamsi SHS
	Upper West	Wa SHS; Nandom SHS; Lawra SHS; Tumu College of Edu.

Computer Random Number Generated for Level 100 Male DBE Students in the Southern Zone

83	117	343	97	372	254	271	<u>18</u>	140	319	240
187	271	188	83	<u>15</u>	285	197	125	92	316	246
<u>3</u>	115	322	120	62	<u>8</u>	207	160	332	226	133
180	292	<u>10</u>	156	107	265	201	269	362	288	<u>19</u>
266	181	297	136	359	94	185	322	312	297	306
241	369	256	<u>9</u>	99	103	115	338	106	129	122
107	98	159	66	188	322	269	307	28	31	236
364	245	133	244	263	233	<u>22</u>	93	332	136	316
139	<u>6</u>	84	367	30	267	345	224	320	365	46
134	61	326	118	66	365	361	119	269	269	280
352	93	113	309	293	<u>14</u>	272	228	351	224	88
289	303	<u>12</u>	106	333	273	294	320	329	203	202
278	318	342	309	107	63	292	60	125	247	215
292	341	125	302	112	286	339	330	172	214	276
<u>21</u>	127	85	302	<u>16</u>	354	214	137	142	363	95
228	304	219	248	344	77	84	38	222	164	132
372	45	317	135	260	137	109	<u>2</u>	134	48	<u>1</u>
<u>24</u>	115	142	79	254	330	341	58	177	51	331
223	289	353	230	370	353	274	352	325	328	363
352	348	279	271	66	332	317	284	168	250	149
278	345	32	337	<u>7</u>	260	121	216	295	294	228
196	207	204	208	13	139	100	29	328	83	99
295	297	<u>11</u>	357	130	89	322	93	347	156	73
92	320	184	338	144	265	275	258	245	172	69
<u>5</u>	25	44	131	<u>20</u>	185	301	221	368	222	115
269	<u>4</u>	50	86	83	84	256	279	232	81	358
280	329	114	82	67	158	238	230	232	57	39
151	265	243	211	128	284	188	347	40	134	81
250	346	129	<u>13</u>	197	244	131	149	242	61	<u>17</u>
61	71	199	39	170	239	<u>23</u>	271	317	336	237

APPENDIX C

Computer Random Number Generated for Level 100 Female DBE Students in the Southern Zone

467	474	19	390	625	298	467	634	101	350	22	245	524	608	92	161	38	590	537	367
349	233	504	400	232	220	30	305	591	230	203	187	514	607	79	591	564	21	167	47
2	301	131	570	154	97	81	607	141	562	147	548	352	461	374	11	106	469	537	566
561	166	592	543	448	362	550	269	495	451	576	369	617	24	267	535	503	185	235	220
459	577	274	193	94	342	66	461	121	243	53	392	657	574	585	199	242	420	278	155
302	347	363	496	245	323	152	20	45	525	168	563	199	624	505	563	628	362	667	333
514	33	599	5	8	171	151	53	319	610	227	368	255	283	321	347	103	270	542	31
149	444	93	128	297	663	393	650	376	546	581	458	613	504	62	225	181	167	544	179
242	249	86	630	450	469	335	205	128	335	642	66	636	241	23	32	12	325	432	323
244	596	502	631	176	519	598	192	580	458	192	664	536	83	55	378	404	318	662	349
435	464	385	324	345	453	12	495	647	156	499	523	325	234	570	603	118	608	66	101
401	93	193	56	197	222	408	598	552	295	540	590	377	538	223	599	573	612	499	663
646	74	320	582	471	606	589	487	160	49	247	120	176	21	322	417	664	660	454	649
150	8	48	554	89	647	100	176	66	167	500	561	34	291	569	216	398	80	261	539
456	16	3	534	177	342	537	240	489	77	332	165	575	583	220	446	633	26	334	25
540	218	164	264	571	649	108	376	309	462	126	614	377	60	39	406	332	241	259	472
13	374	520	530	268	468	316	519	501	170	387	74	80	583	343	586	354	60	7	605
597	171	421	416	25	137	636	244	592	406	644	112	313	544	488	509	382	136	235	575
445	418	15	571	657	410	242	26	246	637	31	641	473	94	433	508	327	130	222	203
51	281	173	606	317	505	203	635	466	141	640	196	188	6	531	319	333	661	118	61
20	160	482	381	566	238	366	536	190	637	271	160	335	618	84	18	68	44	172	516
643	528	164	412	277	364	327	402	234	182	562	249	650	159	158	533	489	350	10	73
36	449	75	586	131	174	589	397	211	658	548	436	50	589	340	597	602	389	572	17

434	652	425	654	43	565	359	100	553	375	298	249	277	385	453	149	285	140	190	168
471	264	276	575	643	618	494	91	644	222	411	267	441	17	225	203	484	46	520	657
335	333	396	74	610	499	233	657	498	339	423	84	261	611	143	74	482	4	226	378
416	79	631	150	235	459	314	185	223	244	9	302	664	228	476	146	314	29	204	173
407	235	116	565	543	622	631	606	571	525	488	150	96	419	232	48	127	536	37	565
258	360	386	464	166	269	549	496	631	231	408	610	66	14	645	171	86	147	27	137
155	427	465	571	300	6	158	42	228	245	126	641	98	133	580	306	554	118	1	178
362	341	621	291	467	564	234	226	40	272	343	94	377	326	173	328	115	221	343	35
511	530	339	180	149	559	215	427	201	270	32	98	74	213	116	185	340	271	582	387
461	352	441	147	28	620	321	283	352	423	336	454	49	141	348	187	464	285	473	305
258	83	507	52	510	325	140	491	521	422	493	455	344	140	318	378	371	553	233	418
256	258	150	277	311	2	552	87	554	528	169	522	279	332	463	234	50	588	299	405

APPENDIX D
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DIPLOMA STUDENTS OF CoDE, UCC

TOPIC: Counselling Needs of Distance Education Students of University of Cape Coast, Ghana: A Model for Effective Counselling Service Delivery

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire has been designed to solicit information for a research work being undertaken on the above topic. The various diploma students of the College have been selected as a unit of analysis. You have been selected as one of the respondents. The survey is completely voluntary; however, your co-operation and opinions are very important to the success of the study and will be kept strictly confidential. Please, kindly respond to the questionnaire by filing in as appropriate. The information given through this questionnaire is purely for academic purposes, but the recommendations may be beneficial to your institution. Should you have any questions concerning the administration of the survey, please feel free to contact the researcher with this phone number (0206161481). I look forward to your participation and appreciate your support in this important effort. Please, do not indicate your name on the questionnaire.

Consent to Participate in Research:

I understand that any information I share will remain confidential and that when the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal my identity. I am 18 years of age or older. By agreeing to continue with the survey and submit a response to the researcher in question, I am giving consent to participate in this study.

I consent to participate in this survey: Yes No

SECTION A: Background Characteristics of Respondents

Please tick (✓) or provide responses to the questions which follow:

Please indicate your gender by ticking in the relevant box

Male []
Female []

Please indicate your programme of study. []

Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) []

Diploma in Psychology and Foundations of Education (DPFE) []

Diploma in Science and Mathematics Education (DSME) []

Diploma in Commerce (DCO) []

Diploma in Management Studies (DMS) []

Academic level of respondents []

Marital status of respondents	[]
Married	[]
Single	[]
Age group of respondents	[]
Less than 20 years	[]
20 – 24 years	[]
25 – 29 years	[]
30 years and above	[]
Study zone/region of respondents	[]
Southern Zone	
Greater Accra Region	[]
Volta Region	[]
Central Region	[]
Western Region	[]
Middle Zone	
Eastern Region	[]
Ashanti Region	[]
Brong-Ahafo Region	[]
Northern Zone	
Northern Region	[]
Upper West Region	[]
Upper East Region	[]

SECTION B: Counselling Needs of Students

In relation to this section, please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements that focus on counselling needs of students. The responses to the items are represented by unilinear scale such that one (1) represents the least agreement to the issues while four (4) represents the strongest agreement to the issues.

Statements on Counselling Needs of Students	1	2	3	4
Educational/academic Needs				
I have poor study skills/habits				
I have difficulty preparing for examinations				
I lack confidence in my ability to succeed academically				
I have problems allocating time for my studies				
I have difficulty with the style of teaching in the study centre				
I have difficulty retrieving from memory during examinations				
I have problems meeting deadlines for submission of assignments				
I find it difficult discussing my academic problems with my course tutors				
I have difficulty coping with course workload in my study centre				
I have problems attending lectures regularly	1	2	3	4
Career/Vocational Needs				
I lack adequate information on job requirements				

I regret choosing my current programme of study/career				
I am worried about job placement after leaving school				
I have difficulty preparing good curriculum vitae				
I need more information about occupations or careers or jobs in my area of specialisation				
I am confused about the kind of job I will do in future				
I need information about how to prepare and attend job interviews				
I have difficulty getting information about how to start my own business after leaving school				
I need help to find placement for industrial attachment				
I am worried about not visiting any industrial while in school to get acquainted to the industrial environment				
Personal/social Needs				
I need to understand more about myself	1	2	3	4
I have difficulty relating well with other students				
I need to know how to solve interpersonal conflicts				
I have problem making new friends				
I have problem dealing with disappointment				
I have problem with dating				
I lack freedom at home				
I have problem meeting family demands				
I find it difficult to go for an HIV test				
I have problem relating well with my lecturers/instructors				
Practical Needs	1	2	3	4
I face financial problems in school				
I get emotionally disturbed when I fail to meet my financial demands				
I am worried about the poor facilities in my study centre				
I do not have adequate information about the College				
I feel the medical services offered near my study centre are not adequate				
I am worried about the poor facilities for the disabled persons in my study centre				
I am worried about the inadequate transport facilities in the study centre				
I am disturbed about the high cost of cooked food in and around my study centre				
I am worried about the high user fees charged by the College				
I am worried about the inadequate lecture room space in the study centre				

SECTION C: Providers of Counselling Services <https://uir.ucc.edu.gh>

From the following, tick (✓) those from whom you have received counselling support to help you solve or address your problems (Tick those that apply to you).

- Family members []
- Friends []
- Course tutors []
- Religious leaders (Eg. Pastors, Imams) []
- Centre coordinators []

Indicate how often you get your problems solved

- Very often []
- Sometimes []
- Rarely []
- Not at all []

The Extent to which Counselling Needs of Students are met by the College of Distance Education

Indicate the extent to which the following needs are met using the four-point unilinear scale. In filling this questionnaire, read each item first. On the right side of the item there is a row of boxes. Indicate in one of the boxes a tick (✓) to show how adequately the item applies to you.

Statements on Counselling Needs of Diploma Students				
Educational/academic Problems	1	2	3	4
Need for study skills				
Need to know how to prepare for examination				
Need to have confidence				
Need to know how to prepare a study time table				
Need to have techniques on how to retrieve information from memory during examination				
Career/Vocational Problems	1	2	3	4
Need to have information on job requirements				
Need to have information before choosing a programme of study in future.				
Need to have knowledge on how to prepare good curriculum vitae (CV).				
Need for more information about occupations or careers or jobs in my area of specialisation				
Need to have information about how to prepare and attend job interviews				
Personal/social Problems	1	2	3	4
Need to know my strengths and weaknesses				
Need to have information on how to relate well with other students				
Need to have knowledge on how to resolve interpersonal conflicts				
Need to know how to combine work with study and family responsibilities				
Need to have information on maintaining healthy relationship				

Practical Problems

	1	2	3	4
Need for information on where to seek financial assistance				
Need to improve the facilities in my study centre				
Need for information about the College/university				
Need for the College to monitor the cost of cooked food in and around my study centre to ensure fair price				
Need to have additional classroom space in the study centre				

SECTION D: Effective Service Delivery Mechanism

Please rate the overall effectiveness of the counselling services provided by the College/university using the following.

- Not effective []
- Less effective []
- Effective []
- Highly effective []

Mention three most important challenges confronting effective delivery of guidance and counselling services at CoDE, UCC?

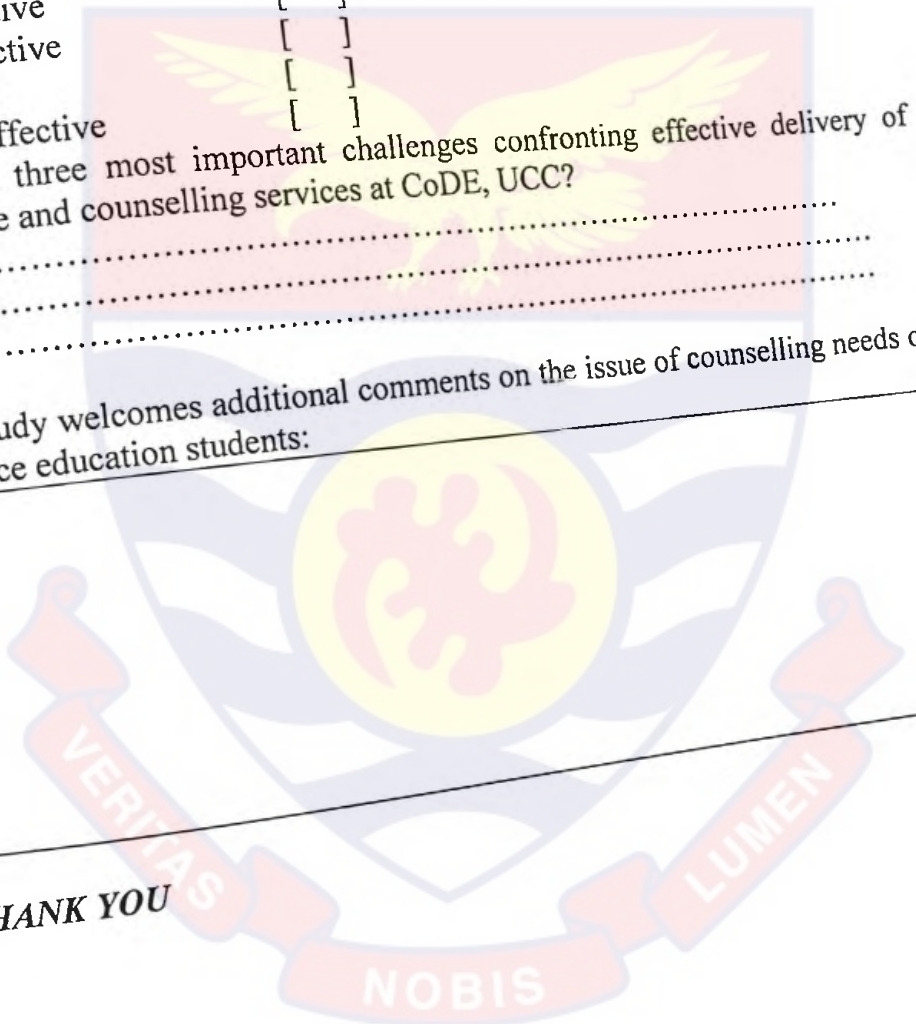
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The study welcomes additional comments on the issue of counselling needs of distance education students:

THANK YOU



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR REGIONAL DESAG PRESIDENT

TOPIC: Counselling Needs of Distance Education Students of University of Cape Coast, Ghana: A Model for Effective Counselling Service Delivery

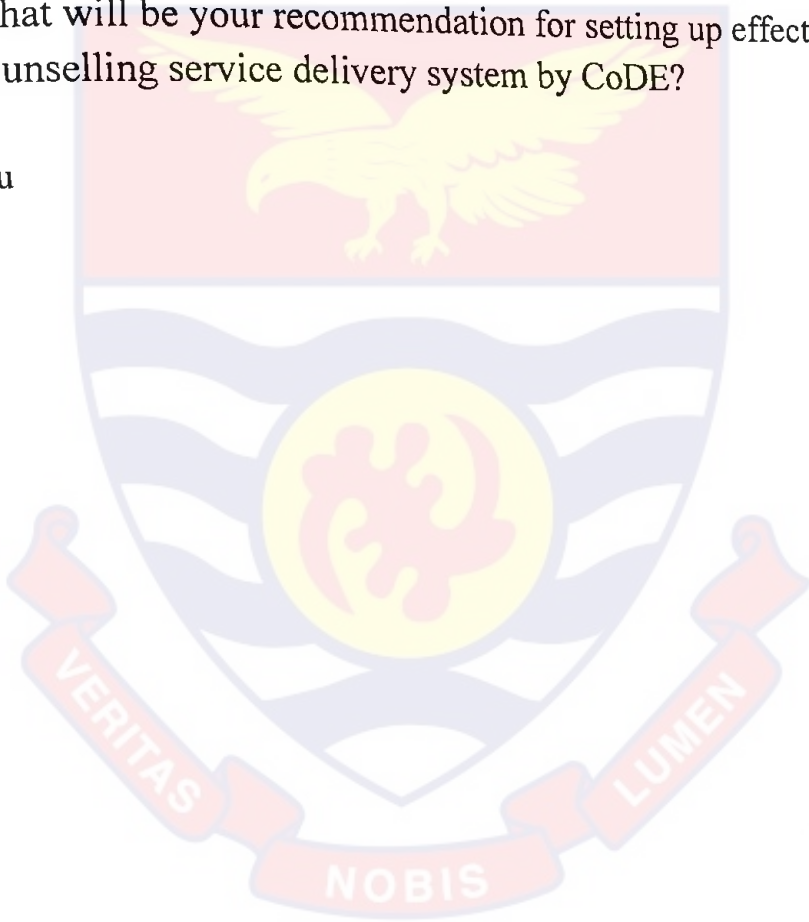
Dear Sir/Madam

My name is LYDIA AFRAMEA DANKYI, conducting a research on the above topic. This interview is meant to gather information for research work participants. I would be most grateful if you could take some time to respond to the interview questions. Information obtained from this interview will be treated with utmost confidentiality. I appreciate your co-operation in advance for taking part in the study.

1. What are your duties as a Regional DESAG President?
Probe for administrative, academic, financial, counselling duties).
2. During your tenure in office, what are the dominant counselling related issues that have come to your attention in the course of discharging your duties? **Probe for educational, personal, academic, career, etc counselling related issues.**
3. Which category of students dominate the counselling related issues enumerated above? **Probe for gender, age, programme, level of programme, etc).**
4. How do you handle such counselling related issues? **Probe whether handled by DESAG Executives, referred to CoDE counsellors, referred to external professional counsellors in the communities, etc).**
5. If referred to CoDE Counselling Unit, how many of such issues have been referred since you assumed office)

6. If none, why? Probe for challenges in accessing the CoDE Counselling services? **Probe for challenges related to availability, professionalism of the counsellors, counselling environment, adequacy/inadequacy of the counsellors, etc.**
7. Do you do a follow up the reported counselling issues to the Counselling Unit? **If yes, probe for general outcome.**
8. What will be your recommendation for setting up effective counselling service delivery system by CoDE?

Thank you



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS
(NATIONAL DESAG PRESIDENT)

TOPIC: Counselling Needs of Distance Education Students of University of Cape Coast, Ghana: A Model for Effective Counselling Service Delivery

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is LYDIA AFRAMEA DANKYI, conducting a research on the above topic. This interview is meant to gather information for research work being undertaken on the above topic. You have been selected as one of the key participants. I would be most grateful if you could take some time to respond to the interview questions. Information obtained from this interview will be treated with utmost confidentiality. I appreciate your co-operation in advance for taking part in the study.

1. What are your duties as a National DESAG President?
Probe.
2. What counselling related issues are reported to you from the regional level? **Probe.**
3. Which category of students (gender, age, and programme) dominate in the reporting of counselling related issues?
Probe.
4. As an association, do you have a unit that handles such counselling related issues? **Probe.**
5. How many of such issues are referred to the counselling unit? **Probe.**
6. How do you do a follow up on the referred cases? **Probe.**
7. What will be your recommendation for setting up effective counselling delivery system?

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS
(COORDINATOR FOR COUNSELLING UNIT, CoDE)

TOPIC: Counselling Needs of Distance Education Students of University of Cape Coast, Ghana: A Model for Effective Counselling Service Delivery

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is LYDIA AFRAMEA DANKYI, conducting a research on the above topic. This interview is meant to gather information for research work being undertaken on the above topic. You have been selected as one of the key participants. I would be most grateful if you could take some time to respond to the interview questions. Information obtained from this interview will be treated with utmost confidentiality. I appreciate your co-operation in advance for taking part in the study.

1. When was the Counselling Unit set up?
2. What are the core functions of the unit?
3. What is the nature of counselling issues that are reported to the Counselling Unit? **Probe for educations, financial, academic, etc**
4. What are the challenges associated with the delivery of counselling services?
5. What will be your recommendation for setting up an effective counselling service unit by CoDE? **Probe for office space, number of counsellors, logistics, training needs of Coordinators, etc.**

APPENDIX H
Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT
C/O Directorate of Research, Innovation and Creativity
P.O. Box 17008, Maitama, Accra
Tel: +233 (0) 30 221 2211
Fax: +233 (0) 30 221 2212
Email: uir@ucc.edu.gh
27 AUGUST 2018

Ms Lydia Afaana Dankyi
Department of Guidance and Counselling
University of Cape Coast

Dear Ms Dankyi,

RE: ETHICAL CLEARANCE ID (UCCIRB/CES/2018/03)

In response to your request letter dated 20th August, 2018, referring to your ethical approval letter with number UCCIRB/CES/A/2016/259, the UCCIRB has accepted and given approval for the revised topic *Counselling Needs of Distance Students of University of Cape Coast, Ghana: A Model for Effective Service Delivery*.

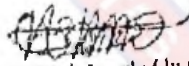
On the basis of that:

1. The research aims and objectives remain as approved.
2. The study design, sample and sampling procedure remain unchanged.

Any modification to the above nullifies your ethical approval. However, you are permitted to continue using the old approval letter.

The UCCIRB appreciate your effort and concern for improving and maintaining rights of participants.

Yours faithfully,


Samuel Asiedu Owusu, PhD
UCCIRB Administrator

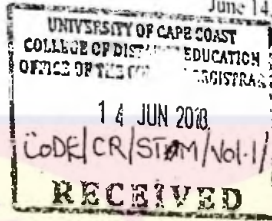
ADMINISTRATOR
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
Date:

117

College of Distance Education
University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast

The College Registrar
College of Distance Education
University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast

June 14, 2018



Dear Sir,

PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA AT THE COLLEGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDY CENTRES.

I am Lydia Aframea Dankyi, a Ph.D. Guidance and Counselling student at the University of Cape Coast and currently working on the thesis topic "Assessment of Counselling Needs of College of Distance Education Students, University of Cape Coast, Ghana".

With reference to the above, I would like to seek your permission to collect data from diploma students at the various study centres of the college.

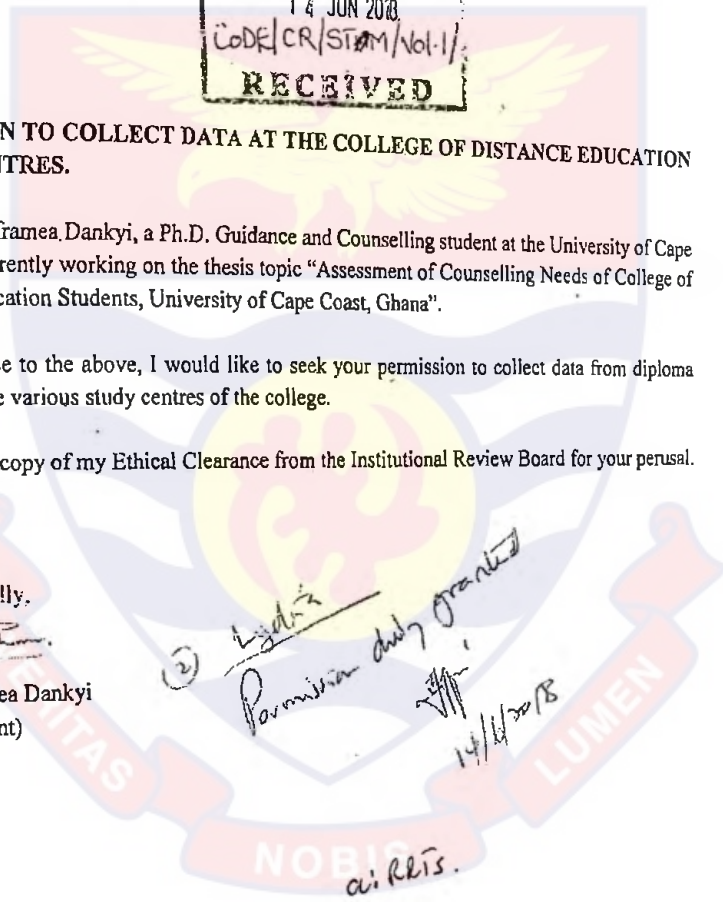
Attached is a copy of my Ethical Clearance from the Institutional Review Board for your perusal.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Lydia Aframea Dankyi
(Ph.D. Student)

② Lydia
Permission duly granted
14/6/2018



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