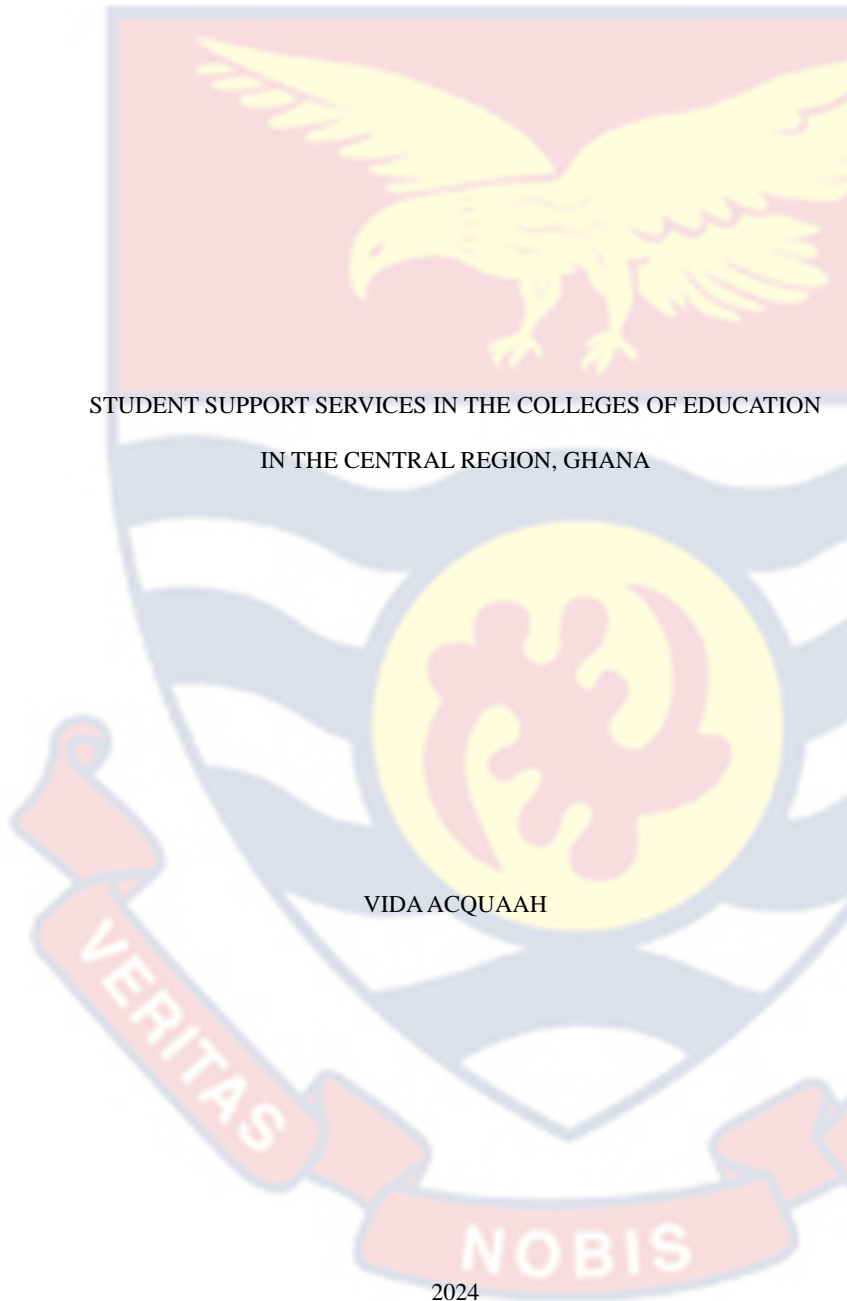UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

IN THE CENTRAL REGION, GHANA

VIDA ACQUAAH

2024

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

IN THE CENTRAL REGION, GHANA

BY

VIDA ACQUAAH

Thesis submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration,

University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

award of Master of Philosophy degree in Educational Administration

JANUARY 2024

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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.

Candidate's Signature……………………… Date……………………………
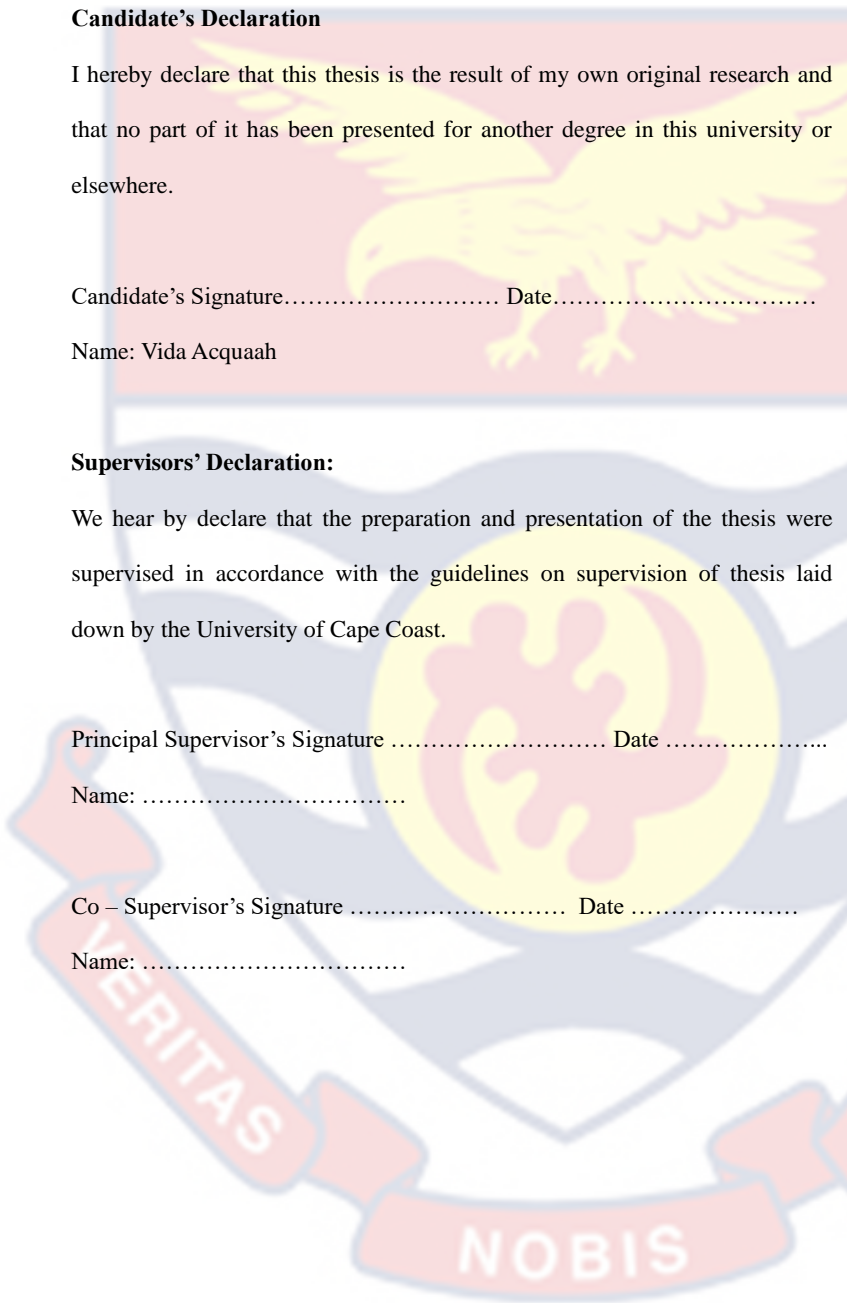
Name: Vida Acquaah

Supervisors' Declaration:

We hear by 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.

Principal Supervisor's Signature ……………………… Date ………………...

Name: ……………………………

Co – Supervisor's Signature ……………………… Date …………………

Name: …………………………

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore the available services Colleges of Education in the Central Region provide to students. The convergent parallel mixed method design was deemed more appropriate for the study. The study used students, tutors and service personnel in all the Colleges of Education as the case to ascertain the availability of student support services. The study used two instruments (Student Support Service Questionnaire and Tutor/Personnel Interview Guide) to obtain data from 366 respondents (students=354, tutors/personnel=12). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means) and thematic analysis were used to analyse data. The study sought to answer three research questions. The study revealed that Colleges of Education in the Central Region provide a number of student support services such as guidance and counselling, academic advising, residence, orientation, and health services. The study further showed that student is utilising support services in various forms, from resolving emotional difficulties and getting over their personal problems, seeking care for acute illnesses, treatment for colds and viruses, and accessing safe, comfortable, and well maintained and supportive on-campus accommodation. Furthermore, the study revealed that student services are hindered by challenges preventing their effectiveness. These challenges include fear of being ridiculed by peers/colleagues, personnel of student services not approachable, and fear of being ridiculed by personnel at the student support services. The study recommended that management of Colleges of Education should intensify efforts to raise awareness, accessibility, and benefits of student support services through informational campaigns, frequent workshops, and orientation programmes.

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KEY WORDS

Student support service

Academic advising

Guidance and counselling

Residential accommodation

Health service

Orientation service

Infirmary

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I am thankful for the support that I received from faculty members specifically, Dr. Michael Boaakye-Yiadom, Prof (Mrs.,) Marie Bakah, Dr. Ampah-Mensah and others who offered pieces to shape this study. I am also grateful to all the management and staff of the Colleges of Education in Central Region, especially, Mr. Bassaw, the Vice Principal at Komenda College of Education, and Mrs. Mensah at OLA College of Education. Finally, I am grateful to all the staff of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration and MPhil students who assisted in any form to the successful completion of this thesis.

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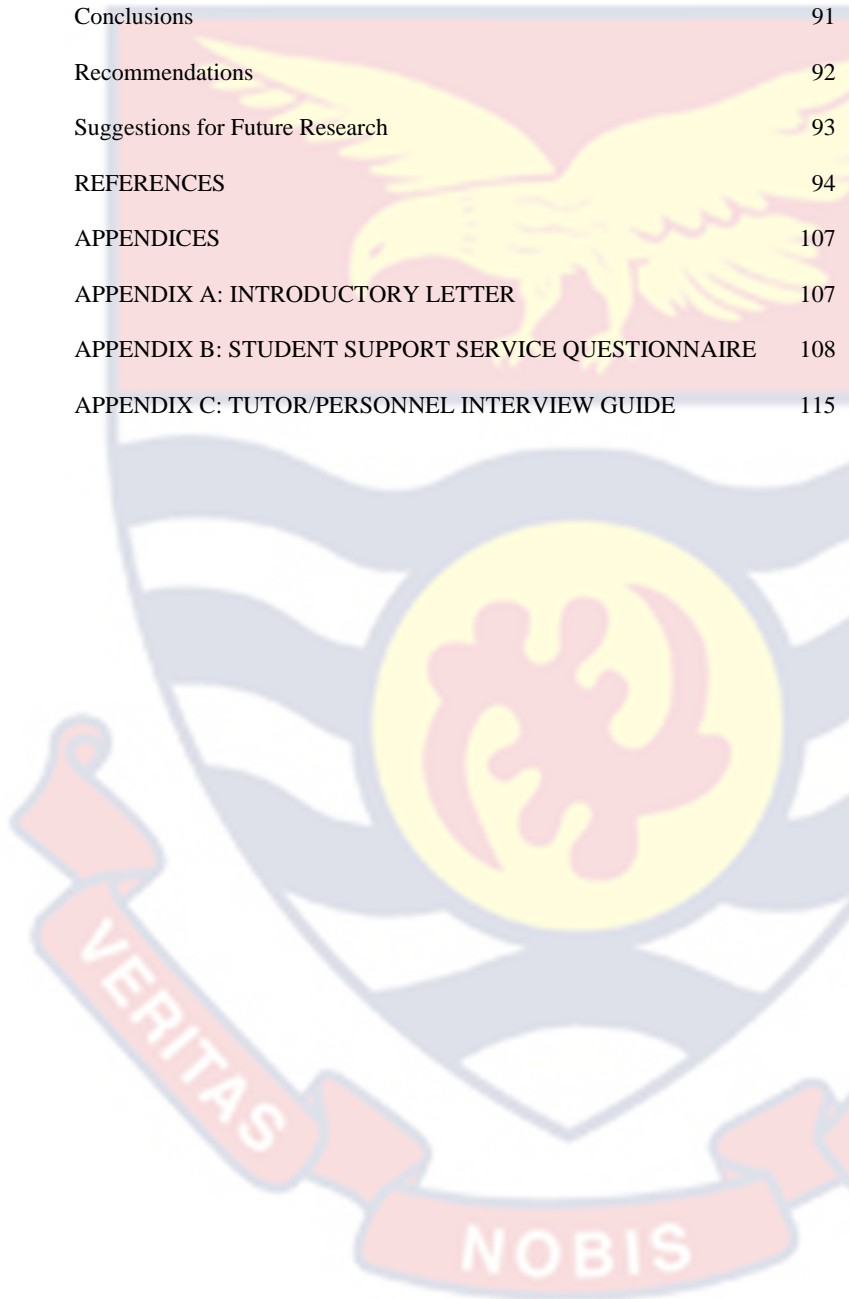**DEDICATION**

To my lovely mother, Mary Appiah

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalisation, coupled with the transition of teacher training institutions to Colleges of Education in Ghana, there is the need to put in place adequate students' services and to manage them adroitly in order to produce graduates that can meet the challenges of global competitiveness. Premised on these facts, the task of producing quality graduates in Ghanaian Colleges of Education depends greatly on the proper implementation and management of student personnel services. The students need to be properly admitted, oriented, organised, directed and guided in order to help them in their educational pursuit. This study, therefore, focuses on students' personnel services in Colleges of Education in the Central Region of Ghana.

Background to the Study

Education is a very critical tool and plays a very important role in the development of the human capital of any country. Bartlett, Burton and Peim (2001) assert that the concept of education in its broadest sense is normally thought to be about acquiring and being able to use knowledge, and developing skills and understanding cognitive capabilities. According to Acheampong (2006), education enables individuals to develop and fulfil aspirations aimed at achieving economic progress, by developing their abilities and talents; it also enhances people's development of general reasoning faculties, causes values to change progressively and increases the receptivity of new ideas and attitudes towards society. In this regard, Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) are of the view that if nations' desire is to raise the cognitive skills of their young population through schooling, they will have to depend on

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autonomous, motivated, diligent and skilled professional teachers trained in public institutions to do so. This intensive teacher education calls for exploration of the effectiveness of services offered..

Blimling and Alschuler (1996, as cited in Elkins, 2015) and Arifin (2018) contended that services provided at colleges enhance student learning and well-being because it is grounded in theory concerning human development and individual and group instructional methods. Applied to an educational setting, this theoretical background manifests itself in the provision of workshops, individual and group counselling, advisement of student organisations, and the facilitation of educationally enriching living environments. Blimling and Alschuler asserted that in terms of instructional methods, these types of programming efforts would be classified as 'direct intervention, active learning, mentoring, skill development, and applied learning' (Blimling & Alschuler, 1996, as cited in Elkins, 2015). As part of this discourse, Astin (1996) raised the issue of affective versus cognitive student outcomes in higher education. In their mission and vision statements, colleges and universities make claim to affective student outcomes such as character development, civic responsibility, and leadership skills.

With the added importance being placed on the value of a college diploma certificate, colleges and universities often make it their mission to assist students with achieving their overall future goals (Arifin, 2018; Astin, 1996; Kaur, 2016). The importance of delivering services to students that nurture success is growing. The objective of this study is to find out the student services at the campus of a colleges of education in Central Region, Ghana. Colleges are faced with providing services for students with various

academic and background characteristics. Many students are often in periods of transition as they return to school. Decker (2013) surmises that this is the time for college personnel to assist them with transition to more complex ways of thinking. This involves validating their current level by encouraging them to move to the next. To ease the transition, it is crucial that colleges provide enough support activities and services. Student services in this context, refers to all the non-academic services rendered to the students at the schools setting outside the formal classroom instruction, for the purpose of healthy, physical, emotional, social and moral development as part of their preparation for a responsible and productive adult life (Francis, 2012).

Schulz and Szekeres (2008) insisted that the development of service provision be more compatible to the institution's organisational structure and budgetary and physical limitations. The authors state that developers of service provisions should take these constraints into account rather than create a formulaic process for how services are provided. There are certain "principles" that should inform how services are provided. The first principle is to start with the customers (identified as the students) in mind. This principle should be adhered to because it ensures that all processes and provisions will take into account the needs of the student. The second principle is that students are capable of autonomy and can access many services through self-service with additional support as needed from staff members. Schulz and Szekeres further described another principle is that of integrity and consistency for administrative services by providing a single service point for information and services that match accountability with responsibility. It is also important to reduce double handling and minimise the

number of people involved processes and to design information technology systems to take account of this. The authors also designate a principle of being explicit about service outcomes for staff working in service areas to both staff and students receiving these services. The authors assert that based on their experiences, those principles will help to provide a framework for how colleges and universities make decisions about improvement and focusing people's attention on the goals of service delivery.

The school as a community of its own is supposed to be provided with essential services such as water, electricity, health facilities, food, library and counselling services among others. According to Onuma and Ada (2016), these services otherwise called student personnel services or education services act as lubricants or catalysts towards the effective teaching and learning in the schools. Student personnel services in this context, refers to all the non-academic services rendered to students at the school setting outside the formal classroom instruction.

These services are complementary to the academic programme in making holistic and balanced education of the students. The task of intellectual and skill development can be accomplished through curriculum planning and implementation, while the task of developing responsible attitudes and morals can only be achieved through the provision and administration of student personnel services that should always be evaluated. According to Francis (2012) the general objectives of student personnel services are to assist students to attain maximum self-realisation, to assist students to become effective in their social environment and to complement the academic programme of the institution. Specifically, student personnel services seek to

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provide orientation for students to facilitate adjustment to campus life, perform individual inventory and testing to aid towards self-knowledge and self-realisation, perform individual and group counselling. Student personnel services provide placement and follow-up services, provide adequate assistance to student on finance, health, food and housing, provide variety of co-curricular activities, approve and monitor activities of recognised student organisation, implement students code of conduct and recommend appropriate disciplinary action to school authorities (Onuma & Ada, 2016).

Student personnel services have received very little attention in professional literature and social administration. Duffy (as cited in Ejionume, 2010), and Swartz, Russel Huut and Reilly (as cited in Ogbuji, 2009), observed that it is an administrative task area that is critical to the effective operation of any school system. This assertion is also affirmed by Ndu, Ocho and Okeke (as cited in Nwuche, 2012) when they stated that in addition to curriculum implementation, school administrators have a duty to provide adequate student's personnel services in their respective schools as both services are complementary to each other. Consequently, the major concern of any educational institutions, such as Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education inclusive, should be committed to the implementation of specified student personnel services in their various institutions of learning. These services enhance the achievement of institutional objectives. While their absence creates situations that constitute obstacles to the achievement of goals and objectives of educational institution, the level not-withstanding.

According to Flanagan (2006), students who feel connected to their institution both academically and socially are more likely to graduate.

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Examining student needs is important. Brock (2010) states that it has become evident that student services are associated with student persistence in completing college. In the view of Flanagan, understanding student satisfaction with their student services department can be useful for institutions of higher education to help them to identify their strengths and pinpoint areas that could be improved.

The dynamic nature of society calls for periodic reforms in our educational system. In view of this, a lot of concerns were expressed by the public that the number of subjects in Basic Schools were too many and for that matter should be reduced (Owusu-Kwarteng et al., 2018). Following the concerns raised, Mr. J.A. Kuffour, the second President in the fourth Republic of Ghana, inaugurated a twenty-nine-member Committee on Review of Education Reforms in Ghana on 17th January, 2002. It was under the Chairmanship of Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah, the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Education, Winneba. The committee was to review the entire educational system in Ghana with the view to making it more responsive to current challenges confronting Ghana as a nation (Owusu-Kwarteng et al., 2018). It was to study the pre-school, basic, secondary, technical, vocational, teacher and tertiary education. Certain recommendations were made by the committee to improve teacher education delivery in Ghana. These included the upgrading of teacher training colleges to diploma-awarding institutions.

The College of Education ACT 847 is "AN ACT to upgrade teacher training colleges to tertiary education institutions to be known as college of education and to provide for related matters" (Ministry of Eduction [MoE],

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2012, p.1). This mandate further highlights the need for colleges to perform additional responsibilities to aid students' development. According to MoE (2012), one important function of the colleges spelt out in ACT 847 is "making provision for the general welfare, recreational and social needs of staff and students of the college" (p.5). This function is essential for the establishment of student service centres as well as its effective delivery to aid in the holistic development of students in the colleges.

It is important to understand the student services offered by the Colleges of Education in Ghana, how they access it, and the challenges with accessing those services. Scholars have highlighted that student affairs professionals must be colleagues with shared values, goals, language and committed to creating a single cohesive educational environment and experience for each student (Akpan, 2016; Astin, 1996; Colwell, 2006; Kaur, 2018). According to Colwell (2006), a cohesive and seamless environment is what significantly contributes to student success. In order to accomplish this, a strong, collaborative relationship between academic and student services should exist.

Statement of the Problem

The extent to which a wide array of student services and programmes are provided in a College of Education, depends greatly on the financial status of the institution as controlled by the College Council (ACT 847 [MoE, 2012]), this further impacts the College's ability to cater for student support services. Akpan (2016) highlighted that each higher education institution has to include in its yearly budget major provisions for the necessary student services that would be met. Similarly, students' personnel services and

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activities should be developed in such a way that they blend with the instructional process of the institution (Akinnubi & Kayode, 2012; Akpan, 2016; Francis, 2012; Kaur, 2016; Onuma & Ada, 2016; Patton et al., 2016). In this way, the desired students' learning outcomes would be enhanced.

Colleges of Education in Ghana are expected to stipulate goals for the provision of student services. These goals and functions are hardly met and part of the explanation is linked to the absence of adequate and conducive environment for effective learning (Akinnubi & Kayode, 2012; Onuma & Ada, 2016). Essential services such as academic, resident life, orientation, social, emotional, health, and financial support are crucial for fostering a well-balanced personality in students, yet their availability and effectiveness remain unclear, especially in the wake of significant reforms in the education system.

The education system in Ghana has undergone a number of reforms. In 2008, the Colleges of Education became diploma-awarding institutions and were affiliated to an education-oriented university (Government of Ghana, 2004; Newman, 2013). Since the elevation and re-designation of teacher training institutes as Colleges of Education (tertiary institutions), the institutions have faced various challenges which threaten the consolidation of their new status as tertiary institutions. Additionally, it imperative to note that the Colleges of Education ACT 847 highlight the need for institutions to provide student services to solve students' challenges such as academic, social, emotional, financial, and other welfares need to propel them towards a well-balanced personality. While ACT 847 underscores the necessity of establishing well-equipped resource centres to assist staff and students, there is

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a lack of clarity on the current state and effectiveness of student services post these reforms.

Furthermore, ACT 847 stipulates that colleges "Set up well-equipped resources centres where staff, students and serving teachers will be assisted to acquire skills in making and using teaching and learning materials for effective classroom teaching" (MoE, 2012, p.4). However, it is not known what the situation regarding student services as a result of the change in status. It appears the available student services offered is not known (Akinnubi & Kayode, 2012; Akpan, 2016; Kaur, 2018) and, therefore, called for this study to be conducted to find out the services Colleges of Education in Central Region provide for their students. By examining the services offered, their alignment with legislative requirements, and the challenges faced (Akpan, 2016; Francis, 2012; Kaur, 2018; MoE, 2012; Onuma & Ada, 2016), the study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the support provided to students in these evolving educational institutions.

Purpose of the Study

This study sought to find out the available services Colleges of Education in Central Region provide to students.

Research Questions

This study sought to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What available student services are offered at the Colleges of Education in Central Region?

2. How are students using the available services at the Colleges of Education in Central Region?

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3. What challenges are students facing in relation to the use of available student services at the Colleges of Education in Central Region?

Significance of the Study

The foremost importance of this study is that it will document the student services activities that are provided in Colleges of Education in the Central Region. The findings of the study are anticipated to help students to realise the importance of student service knowledge in the colleges of education. This study may help determine the roles of service personnel which enhance students' development and synthesising students' educational experiences with their aspirations which extend learning beyond the campus. In addition, the findings of the study may help curriculum planners to place a premium on the need for student services in colleges of education, thereby incorporating student services in the college of education curriculum. Another importance of this study is to help policy makers and other stake holders understand the need for the delivery of student services and outline the challenges in delivering these services at the colleges of education. The findings of the study may serve as a source of reference materials for future research.

Delimitations

The study was conducted in Central Region. It covered the three Colleges of Education in the region. The study was restricted to students, tutors and student service personnel of the selected colleges. The scope of the study covered student services. Thus, available student services and challenges associated with the delivery of student services. This research was conducted over a period of six months (January 2022 to June 2022). In order to guarantee

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a targeted and controllable analysis and to offer a glimpse of the phenomenon being studied within a predetermined time range, this particular time frame was selected.

Limitation of the Study

In the conduct of the study, the issue of bias cannot be ruled out completely since questionnaire was used in collecting the data. Data from all the Colleges of Education would have to be clarified issues investigated better and that would make the findings more authentic with no shadow of doubt about them. Furthermore, the use of descriptive statistics and questionnaire and interview guide pose a challenge, since they are self-report in nature.

Organisation of the Study

The study was organised into five chapters. The first chapter presents the background, purpose and significance of the study. It also presents the problem studied and formulated research questions which guided the study. It described the limitations and delimitations of the study. Conceptual, empirical, and theoretical literature relevant to the study were reviewed in chapter two. The second chapter examined the view of authors on issues like the concept of student service, student needs, availability of student services, and challenges associated with the delivery of student services in the Colleges of Education.

Chapter Three gave a description of the methodology. The chapter described the research design, the population, the sample and method of sample selection. It discussed the design of instruments, pilot testing and method of collecting data. The chapter ended with a plan for data analysis. Data analysis and discussion were presented in chapter four. Chapter Five

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consisted of summary of the major findings of the study, conclusions drawn

from the study, recommendations and areas for further research.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Taking cognisance of the importance of student services at the Colleges of Education in Ghana where the majority of students are at the peak of their development. This chapter reviewed related literature. The literature review chapter will be segmented into the following themes: theoretical framework, types of student services available in tertiary education institutions, challenges faced by student services in tertiary institutions and summary of key points that emerged out of the review.

Theoretical Framework

This section presents a review of the theory that underpinned the study. Basically, the Identity Development theory was reviewed in for this study. The theory holds the proposition that students' identities are developed through a seven-stage process, and this occurs during their years in the college. The support services provide to students during these college years are critical for the identity and personal development of the individual student.

Identity Development Theory

Chickering's (1969) "seven vectors" theory of identity development is arguably one of the most widely known and widely applied theories of student development. According to Long (2012), Chickering referred to identity as students' concepts of themselves as autonomous, independent people with carefully articulated opinions, beliefs, talents, skills, and ethics. Chickering (1969) suggested that the development of students' identities is the foremost issue during students' college years and that students' move through seven distinct vectors.

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Attending a university provides two means for discovering one's identity: a new social group and a more dynamic environment that promotes development. Consequently, university students undergo dramatic changes in their thinking, feeling, behaving, valuing, and relating to others and to the self (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Chickering and Reisser (1993) believed their theory could provide a researcher or educator with the lenses to observe these changes and to help students along the path to selfhood.

In the view of Long (2012), each vector can be considered a developmental stage or phase of the students' lives. Developing competence is the first vector of identity development. During this vector, students acquire a wide range of new cognitive, psychosocial, and technical skills as they encounter new academic challenges, living environments, diversity, and technology. Theorists believe that development in these areas will contribute to various positive outcomes, including an overall sense of competence and the confidence to overcome obstacles (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Taub, 2008). When students gain confidence in themselves, they are more likely to accept additional challenges in other areas of their lives. Students develop new competencies and, subsequently, confidence as they master new skills.

In the vector of managing emotions, students develop the ability to recognise the appropriateness of certain emotions and reactions in different contexts. They are able to control and express their emotions accordingly. The transition from high school to university is characterised by intense positive and negative emotions including anxiety, anger, depression, guilt, frustration, hope, anticipation, and exhilaration (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Christie, Cree, Hounsell, McCune, & Tett, 2008; Edjah, Domey, & Ankomah, 2019).

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Moran (2001) explains that there are two emotional categories: emotions that nourish identity development (positive emotions) and emotions that silence identity development (negative emotions). According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), Vector 2 involves acknowledging, accepting, expressing, and controlling positive and negative emotions.

According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), it is difficult to reach agreement on what intellectual competence entails. They describe three broad areas of intellectual competence, namely 1) the acquisition of subject matter knowledge and academic skills (including the ability to listen, question, reflect, and communicate), 2) gains in cultural, aesthetic, and intellectual sophistication, and 3) the development of general intellectual and cognitive skills (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This description corresponds with Baxter Magolda's findings (2009) that students are intellectually competent when more complex structures of meaning making is acquired and higher-order intellectual abilities are developed, including communication skills, reasoning ability, critical thinking, and conceptual complexity. Like Chickering and Reisser (1993), Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, and Renn (2010) believe that intellectual competence involves active participation in gaining skills and knowledge with regard to specific subject matter. Students who develop along this vector will become more interested in understanding learning material and not simply memorise the facts (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

A student moving away from home has to develop a sense of responsibility as well as individuality (become one's own person) (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Erikson, 1968). Young adults need to rely less on their parents and more on their own capacities. Josselson (1987, p.19) describes this

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process as a "revision of relationships with parents". However, it is important that students understand that greater autonomy must enable healthier forms of interdependence (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Initially, Chickering (1969) described interpersonal competence as having communication skills, functioning in different relationships, and being able to work effectively with others. In 1993, Chickering and Reisser proposed the inclusion of more interpersonal components. For instance, an individual with interpersonal competence will be able to provide effective feedback, have the ability to ask reflective questions, and be able to demonstrate appropriate self-disclosure. Furthermore, these individuals will be able to distinguish between when to speak, when to listen, and when to use verbal, non-verbal or written communication. Benson, Scales, Hawkins, Oesterle, and Hill (2004) state that interpersonal competencies assist individuals in being able to interact with different people in different settings, be able to share personal ideas, and adapt to the ideas of others.

In the vector of establishing identity, students construct a secure and comfortable sense of identity in regard to physical appearance, gender, race, and sexual orientation. According to Long (2012), they are aware that their identity is composed of multiple dimensions and how their identity is integrated with the broader society, culture, and history. In developing purpose, students develop a set of clear career goals, personal aspirations, and commitments to family, friends, and self. In the final vector, developing integrity, students' progress from "black and white" thinking on complex moral and ethical issues to acknowledging the perspectives of others as valid. Students' behaviour aligns with the values and goals they have established

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previously. According to Chickering, students' progress through the first four vectors during their first and second years of college and through the last three vectors during their third and fourth years of college (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). Students move through the vectors at different rates and may move back and forth between vectors as they re-examine issues and experiences. Other researchers and theorists have examined the applicability of Chickering's theory of identity development to specific groups, such as women, African Americans, non-traditional-aged students, and gay, lesbian, and bisexual students. Other theories of identity have subsequently been formulated in regard to each special population of students.

Chickering's theory on identity development is one of the best-known and widely used theories on the psychosocial development of higher education students (Long, 2012). According to Long, theorists choose this theory because it provides the reader with in-depth understanding and description of the identity formation process. Furthermore, various studies have proven the validity of the theory, which considers internal and external influences and is applicable to a diverse student population (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Renn, 2010). Yet, it does not mean his theory is flawless. The inclusive focus on emotional, interpersonal, ethical, and intellectual development ensures a holistic approach to student development. However, Evans *et al*. (2010) argue that, because of the inclusivity of this theory, the theory is deemed too broad and not applicable to specific student subgroups.

As students develop emotional and instrumental independence, they realise the importance of interdependent relationships in their lives. Chickering and Reisser (1993) propose that, for individuals to be

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interdependent, they must accept that complete dependence or complete independence is not possible. An interdependent individual is aware of his or her interconnectedness with others and the benefit it holds to depend on others and be the person others depend on (Evans *et al*., 2010). These individuals are also able to distinguish between when to ask for help and when to stand alone (Scholl, 2001). Finally, Chickering and Reisser (1993) emphasise that interdependent individuals are aware of their responsibility to the greater community.

Evans *et al*. (2010) summarise some of the main limitations other studies have identified regarding Chickering's vectors: 1) Studies that attempted to confirm Chickering's theory through experiments, identified too many parallels between the vectors concerning identity, purpose, and integrity. 2) Critics pointed out that the theory lacks specificity. The definition of each vector is somewhat general, which in turn makes it difficult to measure. 3) Other studies challenged the order of the vectors by providing evidence that developing purpose (Vector 6) occurs earlier in a student's university experience. There are clear inconsistencies regarding vector attainment in the literature. For instance, Chickering and Reisser (1993) originally asserted that the first three vectors develop during the first university year. Later, Valentine and Taub (1999) and Taub (2008) proposed that the first four vectors are attained during the first two years of university. Several recent studies (Gardner, 2009; Hadley, 2006) show that students traditionally explore the first three vectors during the first three years at university, while post-graduate students begin to discover the remaining vectors. Thus, measuring the

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attainment of Chickering's vectors is a daunting challenge (Evans *et al*., 2010).

Chickering's theory has been tested, refined, partly validated, partly revised, and partly reconfigured (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009). Nonetheless, continued change and development in higher education constitutes the need to, firstly, enrich the knowledge of identity development in distinct domains and, secondly, to identify factors that affect identity development (Evans *et al*., 2010; Jones & Abes, 2013; Torres *et al*., 2009).

The adaption of Chickering's theory to a higher education student population of this millennium is crucial. Since the college years is the milestone of the development of the identity of the individual student, it is important the student receives adequate social and environmental support to facilitate the total growth and development of the student. In the Colleges of Education, these environment and social support manifest in the form of provision of guidance and counselling services, orientation services, health services, academic advising, and financial support, among others. When these support services are not provided to the students, hinder their full functioning.

Unlike Student Affairs and student services, student development is less an active entity as it is a conceptual and theoretical foundation used to understand and work with students in higher education institutions. It is the application of student development theories and principles which guide our work with students, and which helps us properly aid them in their change, growth and development. Student development theory is a body of human development theories focused on how individuals who are enrolled in college coursework develop. It merges physical, biological, physiological,

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psychological, social and environmental factors. Students need the services provided by the university to enhance their abilities. Students, especially in colleges, need to take responsibility for their progress in learning, but most are not at a developmental stage where they are capable of doing that right away (Burge & Howard, 1988).

Much of the work that student affairs professionals do contribute to the development of the student. One of the key components to student development in the college years is the establishment of "identity" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Chickering's seven vectors contributing to the formation of identity include developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity.

Student affairs professionals develop programmes and services to help students traverse through the seven vectors. The University infrastructure plays a critical role as well and its influential factors include (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) institutional objectives; institutional size; faculty-student interaction, for interaction is crucial to the success of a learner in both face-to-face instruction and distance learning (McHenry & Bozik, 1995); curriculum; teaching practices; diverse student communities; and student affairs programmes and services. As the search continues for the most effective programmes and services to foster student development and facilitate the co-curricular learning experiences in college, we search for a comprehensive model of the college environment that describes various features and assists

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campus participants in understanding how such features can encourage student development (Strange & King, 1990).

According to DiCapri (as cited in Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998), the field of student development and research justifies the profession of Student Affairs and legitimises relevance of student affairs professionals in the college setting. It also provides qualitative and quantitative data to base work with students and helps student personnels to understand where students are within a human development continuum (where they are and where they are going, developmentally).

Mandate of Colleges of Education in Ghana

Colleges of education, formerly known as teacher training colleges, have gone through several stages in Ghana. Such stages could be traced back to the introduction of Certificate "A". Colleges were established in 1930's to train middle school leavers. In 1937, a two-year Certificate "B" was introduced. This was later changed, and this change has been going on in the then teacher training colleges (Effah, 2003). In all the stages and changes, the idea of using education to get quality teachers to fill middle and basic education schools was at the centre.

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It is as a result of the changes in teacher training colleges, that we now have colleges of education as the newly official name and with tertiary status (Ghana Colleges of Education Act, Act 847, 2012). This status now qualifies colleges of education to be included in the list of tertiary institutions and function as such. As tertiary institutions, the colleges of education are expected to play important roles in the socio-economic development of the nation. Again, when change in functions and aims are invoked, goals, tools,

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condition, resources and practices are subject to change and changes of these kinds call for staff development, especially training with distinct purposes, and the more crucial are the staff development concomitants (Kochan & Chalykoff as cited in Harris, Monk, McIntyre & Long, 1992).

Tertiary educational institutions operate according to their mandates as spelt out in the Acts establishing them. Colleges of education had the mandate to produce qualified and professional teachers for the basic education system of Ghana. The Colleges of Education Act, Act 847, stated that the colleges of education are established to offer admissions to suitably qualified students who are to be trained to acquire the necessary professional and academic competencies for teaching in pre-tertiary institutions and non-formal education institutions. As part of the training, colleges are mandated to provide essential services to aid students' development.

The Colleges of Education as tertiary institutions had to practice or engage in purely an academic administration style. This was stated by Effah (2003) that tertiary institutions such as universities, polytechnics, institutes, and colleges receive academic administration. Farlex (2012) explained academic administration as a branch of a university or college employees responsible for the maintenance and supervision of the institution and are separated from the faculty or academics. Key responsibilities of academic administration as identified by Bulin (2001) included: admissions; supervision of academic affairs such as hiring, promotion, tenure, and evaluation; maintenance of official records; maintenance and audit of financial flows and records; oversight of student life and activities (student services), such as religious or cultural groups, career centres and public service centres;

maintenance and construction of campus buildings or resident life (the physical plant); maintenance of the campus grounds; safety and security of people and property on the campus; supervision and support of campus computers and network (information technology) and public affairs (including relations with the media, the community, and local, state, and governments). In effect, college education is the service that these institutions provide that make the students gain the sense of usefulness that they want.

Concept of Student Support Services

The school as a community of its own is supposed to be provided with essential services such as water, electricity, health facilities, food, library and counselling services among others. These services otherwise called student services or education services act as lubricants or catalysts towards the effective teaching and learning in the schools. Student services in this context, refers to all the non-academic services rendered to students at the school setting outside the formal classroom instruction. Student services in this context, refers to all the non-academic services rendered to the students at the schools setting outside the formal classroom instruction, for the purpose of healthy, physical, emotional, social and moral development as part of their preparation for a responsible and productive adult life (Francis, 2012).

These services are complementary to the academic programme in making holistic and balanced education of the students. The task of intellectual and skill development can be accomplished through curriculum planning and implementation, while the task of developing responsible attitudes and morals can only be achieved through the provision and administration of student services that should always be evaluated. According to Francis (2012), the

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general objectives of student services are to assist students to attain maximum self-realisation, to assist students to become effective in their social environment and to complement the academic programme of the institution. Specifically, student services seek to provide orientation for students to facilitate adjustment to campus life, perform individual inventory and testing to aid towards self-knowledge and self-realisation, perform individual and group counselling, provide placement and follow-up services, provide adequate assistance to student on finance, health, food and housing, provide variety of co-curricular activities, approve and monitor activities of recognised student organisation, implement students code of conduct and recommend appropriate disciplinary action to school authorities.

Student services have received very little attention in professional literature and social administration, Duffy (as cited in Ejionume, 2010), Swartz, Russel Huut and Reilly (as cited in Ogbuji, 2009), observed that it is an administrative task area that is critical to the effective operation of any school system. This assertion is also affirmed by Ndu, Ocho and Okeke (as cited in Nwuche, 2012) when they stated that in addition to curriculum implementation, school administrators have a duty to provide adequate student services in their respective schools as both services are complementary to each other. Consequently, the major concern of any educational institutions, such as universities, Polytechnics, colleges of education inclusive, should be committed to the implementation of specified student services in their various institutions of learning. These services enhance the achievement of institutional objectives.

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While their absence created situations that constitute obstacles to the achievement of goals and objectives of educational institution, the level not-withstanding. Some goals of education as spelt out by Ministry of Education and National Tertiary Council of Education demand services that are beyond classroom instruction of national values is summarised as follows as respect for the worth and dignity of the individual, faith in main's ability to make national decision, moral and spiritual principle in interpersonal and human relation and promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children.

Service that come under student services are many and varied. They include admission exercise, orientation, accommodation, medical services, library services, and student academic records, guidance and counselling, financial aid, municipal services, security services, co-curricular activities. Also included are adequate classroom blocks, information materials, sports facilities, maintenance of roads and teaching facilities (Mgbodile, 2013). Colleges of education contribute a lot to educational development, but students constitute not only the largest input, but also the reason and the main focus for all other inputs. All outputs are judged by the quality of graduates from institutions and all processing activities are centred on the students. For effective teaching and learning, there should be adequate provision, proper evaluation of student services and supervision of certain services for the students in order to achieve stated objectives of colleges of education. Colleges of education are tertiary educational institutions established to give professional training for the production of highly qualified classroom teachers. These institutions are of paramount importance in the production of teachers

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for primary and secondary school levels of education. Colleges of education are specially designed to develop, pursue and improve regular and liberal courses of study for the training of various categories of teachers and promote the advancement of learning and educational research. Colleges of Education are categorised into Regular, Technical and Special College of Education (Enugu State of Nigeria Gazette, 2011). This is similar to the Ghanaian context whereby the categorisation reflects the type and quality of teachers that each college produces.

In another development, Ezeadi (2012) explained that student services are lubricants for the teaching-learning machinery. He stated further that student services create conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning activities to take place in schools. According to him, guidance services aid students to adjust in the school, health services, boarding facilities, psychological needs and co-curricular activities mould the character of the students, library services, catering services, bursary services, all these play good roles in the lives of students. The values of education are so important that all societies tend to always strive to optimise educational services delivery for improved attainment of the goals of education at all levels.

In Ghanaian colleges of education, students face various problems, apart from academic matters like attending lecture, writing term papers, doing written and oral examination. Students face various social, psychological and financial problems. Student services appear not only to be inadequate but appear to be neglected and ineffective. For instance, hostel accommodations appear inadequate and un-conducive and these affect students' academic performance and their all-round development (Ejionueme, 2010). School

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buildings are seen with cracked walls, aging roofs, blown-off roofs and bushy surroundings are common phenomenon in schools. There is an observation that this situation does not augur well for effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, the importance attached to student services implies that they should not only be adequately provided but should also be evaluated periodically. Assessment of student services refers to the provision, supervision, maintenance, and replacement of the facilities and services (Ogbonnaya, 2015). Authorities of the colleges of education are not only concerned with, the planning and coordinating but also with the maintenance of student personnel services.

The assessment of student services therefore rests on the hand of the college managements who are in position to appropriate as well as administer the school on a productive manner so as to achieve the goals and objectives of the educational system (Omu, 2014). Colleges of Education in Ghana, like other institutions, face some challenges of survival, but also to attain the level of sustainable development necessary for them to achieve the objectives for which they were established. The attainment of these goals depends not only on the right type of personnel or practitioner, but also on the availability of adequate student services and financial resources made available. Hence, there is need for adequate funding of colleges of education in the Colleges of Education in Central Region. Eze (2012) also observed that financial problems of colleges of education are increasing because of financial mismanagement, embezzlement and fraud. The apparent relegation of student services in school administration is the fact that the entire school system is examination centered. The premium placed on evaluation of academic performance as determined by

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examination results, this explains why majority of school administrators seem to pay less attention to the provision of student services in their schools. Student services are basic needs that ought to be provided to a reasonable extent before students can be expected to make any meaningful achievements in their academic pursuit.

Nkwocha (2014) observed that students are often alienated when certain decision concerning students' behaviour, academic activities, and social life and press activities are taken against them. He also stressed that participation of student in school administration means getting the students involved in discussions and seeking their views on the solution to problems affecting their welfare. The unavailability of student services, inadequacy and quality of student services call for more effective strategies to be applied (Arifin, 2018; Francis, 2012; Kaur, 2018). This situation informs the researcher's interest to assess student services in Colleges of Education in Central Region in Ghana and to develop strategies for improvement. Student services involve all the activities and services provided for students in schools for the achievement of the educational goals and objectives (Arifin, 2018; Francis, 2012; Kaur, 2018). They are the non-instructional functions rendered to students to enhance quality learning outcomes and are therefore very important to the efficient and effective functioning of higher institutions.

Types of Student Support Services

Different methods have been developed for delivering services to students. Services that are typically offered by colleges and universities are admissions, orientation, assessment, advising, financial aid, tutoring, and support activities (Blimling & Alschuler, 1996; Francis, 2012; Kaur, 2016;

Patton et al., 2016). While community colleges offer these services and programmes to support their success, these services are often underutilised (Blimling & Alschuler, 1996; Kaur, 2016; Richman *et al*., 2013). Richman *et al*. noted that students are aware of these services by creating a literal map which describes how students can achieve graduation.

Guidance and counselling services

Students come from varying socio-cultural background with a plethora of problems ranging from psychological, emotional and physical to spiritual and academic deficiencies (Akpan, 2016; Kaur, 2016). Some of them come from poor socio-economic background that makes them feel inferior to others. They manifest these problems in various dimensions which can affect their studies and discipline behaviour. Therefore, the provision of guidance and counselling services for students becomes necessary to ameliorate their academic and psychosocial problems. Akpan highlighted that guidance and counselling services require that students be helped and advised to behave well both within the campus and outside the school. They are advised and encouraged on good study habits and learning strategies that can help them to complete their studies successfully. It involves assisting the students to make good decisions about their careers and personal lives. Guidance and counselling services are also provided for students in the areas of health and moral issues.

Okobiah and Okorodudu (2004) added that guidance can also be looked at as a programme or services to individuals based upon the need of each individual, an understanding of his/her immediate environment, the influence of environmental factors on the individual and the unique features of

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each school. Guidance is designed to help each individual adjust to his/her environment, develop the ability to set realistic goals for him/herself, and improve his/her education. The primary purpose of the counselling programme is two-fold:(1) to encourage constructive utilisation of the student's abilities, time and energy in pursuing his scholastic work; and (2) to provide the student with the necessary information and help for solving his personal problems and thereby to aid him in the development of a more wholesome personality.

Guidance, therefore, encompasses those services and programmes of the school, which are specifically intended to promote an educational, career, and personal-social development of students (Denga, 2001; Kaur, 2016). Ubana (2008) maintains that guidance services include processes of consultation, coordination, collaboration, instruction, information-giving, appraisal, referral, and institutional support. As a process, Eyo, Joshua and Esuong (2007) add that guidance involves a series of actions or progressive steps, which move towards a goal. As a service, it involves four major services, namely, those of educational, vocational, personal and social guidance.

Aidoo (2011) examined counselling services provided in the colleges of education in Ghana. The study utilised the descriptive survey design. A sample of 269 comprising 45 tutors and 224 students selected from three colleges of education in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Questionnaire was used to collect data from both the students and the tutors. Findings from the study revealed that the majority of both the students (78.1%) and the tutors (91.1%) indicated that guidance and counselling centres exist in their colleges, and they offer counselling services to the students. the following were some of the

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services available: orientation, appraisal, counselling, follow-up, and evaluation.

In a related study, Ocansey (2018) explored the experiences of students regarding counselling services provided in universities in Ghana. The study adopted the qualitative phenomenological design. Using the purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling techniques, data was gathered from 13 students from three selected public universities in Ghana. Data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions. Data collected were analysed using the interpretive phenomenological analysis. Findings of the study revealed that counselling services were available in the universities. It was further revealed that the students had some misconceptions about counselling services, and that hindered their participation in the services provided by the respective counselling centres.

Further, Atta-Frimpong (2013) investigated the counselling services available among colleges of education in Brong Region, Ghana. The study, which was descriptive in nature, sampled 60 students and 21 tutors from a college in the Bono Region. Questionnaire was used to gather information for the study. The study found that counselling services were available in the college, and the students were much aware of the counselling unit as well as the services they provide.

Academic advising service

Academic advisors are one of the key links between student populations and higher education (Boakye-Yidaom, Hackman, Acquah & Mensah, 2019). According to Boakye-Yiadom *et al*. (2019), developmental advising identifies, encourages, recognises, and tailors advising practices for

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special student populations. When students join university for the first time, they are exposed to a lot of freedom which is a big contrast to the strict discipline and restriction that characterise many Colleges of Education in Ghana, specifically Central Region. Academic advising office or department provide student academic services related to course selection, finding a major, study skills, and referrals to tutoring and academic success skills. Academic success skills/tutoring the office providing intensive tutoring and academic success skill interventions with math, science, writing, and other academic subjects (Boakye-Yiadom *et al*., 2019; Kaur, 2016). Assessment and research focused on assessment, programme evaluation, and research implementation in student services and other academic departments for both accreditation and continual improvement of student services and academic departments.

Academic advising programmes in higher educational institutions are designed to provide professional relationships between advisors and students and intended to guide, direct and assist students to solve their problems as well as develop their potentialities. Unfortunately, this programme is not being given the desired patronage by students. A student throughout his/her schooling may not experience the academic advising service, if at all, to the degree that is beneficial. Nelson (1992) revealed that many drop-outs are gone before the secondary school guidance programme touched them in any way, others are present only physically. Much of the academic advising done by the personnel deans is of a general nature and consists of directing the student to the person or persons who can give assistance of a more specific nature. The personnel deans counsel with students who are repeatedly absent from classes. Once a student is officially registered for a course, he is required to attend that

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course at the periods stated on the official class schedule as announced by the Dean of Students (personal communication, Dr. Michael Boakye-Yiadom, 2016). The dean is also required to observe particular attendance regulations as announced by the instructors of the courses for which he is registered.

Akpan (2016) postulated that academic advising is one outstanding student service function in any higher institution because it is an essential support that students need even on daily basis throughout their period of study. The person in charge of this function is called the academic or course adviser. In the view of Akpan, this officer should be someone who has a good knowledge of the work. The adviser should be someone with a good sense of purpose. The personnel should be humble, emotionally stable and has the capacity to withstand stress and the ability to manage time effectively (Akpan, 2016; Kaur, 2016). These qualities are important because of the work load associated with academic advising. Akpan further stressed that the functions of the academic adviser include among others to:

1. Helps students with decision-making and career direction.

2. Advises students on registration procedures both at the departmental and faculty levels. This includes advice on course registration, payment of approved school charges and others.

3. Provides accurate information to students concerning choice of courses in their areas of study in each semester.

4. Advises students on credit load per semester.

5. Advises students on class attendance. The students should be made to know that it is mandatory to have a minimum of 75% class attendance as a requirement for writing the end of course examination.

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6. Advises students on repeat and carry over courses, dropping of courses and procedures for change of programme or course. They should be properly informed of the implications.

7. Provides accurate information to students on institutional policies, procedures and programmes and the standard of achievement expected of them.

Spanier (2006) posit that the main purpose of academic advising is to provide effective guidance so that students can maximise the educational opportunities available and make critical decisions regarding education, career and life goals. He highlighted the responsibilities of the academic adviser to include:

1. Helping the advisee to understand the academic and administrative processes of the institution and the nature of its academic programme.

2. Helping the advisee to understand the expected standards of achievements and likelihood of success in certain areas of study.

3. Discussing the educational and career objectives suited to the advisee's demonstrated abilities and expressed interest. The adviser helps the students to understand the relationship among the courses, programmes, undergraduate research opportunities, internship and other academic experiences provided by the institution.

In a study, Boakye-Yiadom *et al*. (2019) evaluated the academic advising services in the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Using a multistage sampling technique, 356 students and 27 academic counsellors were selected from sub-populations of 4655 and 35, respectively.

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Questionnaires were used for the data collection. It was revealed that advisors use multidimensional approach to academic advising. Academic advising services cover the five main domains of academic advising namely integration, referral, information, individuation and shared responsibility. On resource availability, the study revealed the availability of offices which make academic advising sessions effective and efficient. Finally, it was found out that the students were satisfied with academic advising services rendered to them.

Residential services

Campus-based student residences provide accommodation to many students every year as they pursue their academic studies. The quality of such accommodation and its environment are imperative in facilitating student learning and well-being. In a wider sense, the importance of residential characteristics in enhancing human well-being has been well documented. Rojo-Perez, Fernandez-Majoralas, Rivera and Rojo-Abuin (2001) and Prieto-Flores, Fernandez-Majoralas, Forjaz, Rojo-Perez, and Martinez-Martin (2011), for instance, have shown that residential satisfaction is an important predictor of elderly individuals' well-being, where being satisfied with the particular residence reduces negative emotions such as loneliness. Living facilities are furnished at the lowest possible cost for the use of those persons living on campus. All students living on the campus must be registered for and carrying satisfactorily at least 12 semesters of course credit during the entire study period.

Botha, Snowball, de Klerk and Radloff (2013), residences build unity, a commonness of purpose. First-year students look up to their seniors and find

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the support and encouragement that accrue from loyalty to the residence. Botha *et al.* (2013) further stressed that students find residences a crucial bridge to the complexities and uncertainties of a large research college. Residence culture appears to be much more accommodating of social diversity, but equally important in shaping social relationships, since students living on campus reported socialising mainly with other students living in residence (Akpan, 2016; CHE, 2010; Kaur, 2016). Some residences also provided academic support in the form of mentoring programmes and study groups. Problems experienced by students appeared to be largely related to communal living, such as loud music and other noise, lack of recreational and shopping facilities on campus and hygiene in residences.

In the view of Akpan (2016), accommodation for students is one important service that the authority of Colleges of Education in Central Region should address properly. The problem of accommodation has made higher institution to adopt unpopular policies of giving preference to new students, final year students and foreign students (Kaur, 2016; Manga, Goshe & Nkazalle, 2014). The allotment of hostel spaces to students is usually handled by the students' affairs division. In some higher institutions, students are asked to apply for hostel accommodation and thereafter they are invited for balloting. This method is adopted because of the high population of students. Students who pick "Yes" are given accommodation while those who pick "No" are regarded as not qualified. This system has resulted to selling of a bed space in hostels at a very exorbitant price to those who are anxiously looking for spaces. Inadequate provision of accommodation facilities for students leads to overcrowding in hostels caused by squatting.

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The purpose of students' accommodation services in higher institutions as highlighted by UNESCO (2012) include:

1. To provide a safe, comfortable and well maintained and supportive on campus accommodation for students.

2. To integrate student accommodation goals with those of academic programme of the institution.

3. To maintain a long-range facility, plan for on- campus students' accommodation that is in keeping with instructional goals.

4. To provide a residential environment in which all members promote respect and hold each other accountable for those actions.

5. To develop a code of conduct expectations for students in relation to on-campus living.

6. To create opportunities for students to get involved in leadership and governance opportunities in residence life, organisations and activities.

7. To provide sound management of hostel facilities in an effective and efficient manner.

Health services

Health services provide medical and/or mental health care, counselling, consultation and public health education for individual and groups of students (Akpan, 2016). The provision of health services is very important because the health problems in our higher institutions are much the same as those in the larger society. According to Akpan, some of our higher institutions are characterised with poor sanitary conditions, overcrowded hostels and lecture halls, students' poor dispositions toward health issues and drug abuse. All these can generate varying degrees of health problems in students.

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Additionally, academic stress and poor feeding by students can also create health problems in them (Akpan, 2016). It is a general belief that a sound mind is found in a sound body. This means that the students need to be in a state of good health in order to think critically and exhibit the knowledge and understanding required in academic work in Colleges of Education in Central Region.

Akpan (2016) indicated that health services are aimed at promoting and enhancing students' health and well-being that support their academic activities in school. Effective management of health services promotes students' health education, awareness and well-being programmes. Most higher education institutions in the Ghana appear to have medical clinics/hospitals that provide health services to students. The clinic is headed by the Director of health services. The medical clinic provides outpatient and primary health care diagnosis, treatment and consultations for students with health problems. It also carries out outreach programmes to sensitise students about outbreak of epidemic and measures for prevention and the treatment available. Counselling on health issues is also provided for students. Nevertheless, these medical services are accessible to only bona-fide students of the institution who have registered with the medical clinic or centre. In addition to the stated functions, the medical clinic keeps and maintains medical records of all registered students. However, one teething problem affecting the provision of effective medical services to students is shortage of essential drugs in institutions' medical centres (Akpan, 2016).

Orientation services

Orientation is a systematic organisational effort to minimise the problems of new students so that they can settle down for effective study (Akpan, 2016). It is the means through which new students are assisted in meeting their needs for security, belongingness, information and the direction about their new school. Orientation is aimed at familiarising newly admitted students with the staff, policies, rules and regulations and the physical layout of the school. It is during orientation, that students formed their initial impression about the new schools they found themselves. According to Akpan, new students need guidance, direction and information that will help them to adjust quickly to the new school environment. Orientation at the institutional level is always organised by the students' affairs division in collaboration with the management of the institution. A well-organised orientation should provide for resource persons to speak on agreed topics. According to Apkan (2016), the purposes of students' orientation include but not limited to the following:

1. To welcome new students and make them feel part of the school community.

2. To familiarise them with the institutional administrative structure, history and physical facilities.

3. To facilitate the integration of the new students into the school system.

4. To facilitate students' understanding of the purposes and mission of the institution.

5. To prepare them for the diverse campus activities.

6. To facilitate their understanding of the intellectual, cultural and social climate of campus life.

7. To inform the new students of the services and programmes available in the school.

8. To help them in understanding their academic responsibilities as students.

9. To help the new students to effectively utilise the institution's educational opportunities.

10. To provide opportunities for new students to interact with faculty, staff and continuing students.

11. To provide the new students with information relating to their personal health and safety on campus.

12. To facilitate students' adjustment to the new school environment.

Wu, Garza, and Guzman (2015) examined the support services available to students in the United States (US). The qualitative research design, specifically, the case study design was adopted to carry out this investigation. The study, through the purposive sampling method, sampled 10 international students reading undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. These students came from the following countries: Saudi Arabia, China, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, and Japan. Data were collected with the help of an interview guide. From the findings of the study, the students mentioned services such as recreation centres, counselling services, academic advising, language support, and student organisation as support services they receive from the schools.

In a related study, Möwes (2005) evaluated the support services provided to facilitate students' academic work in the University of Namibia. The study employed the simple random sampling procedure to engage 110 students in University of Namibia. The study employed the causal-comparative research design. The study also adopted the qualitative design to interpret findings of the study. Findings from the study revealed the following student support services, counselling, photocopying facilities, study facilities, orientation for new students, library facilities, access to internet, access to computers, online tutorials, and study groups. The study recommended a periodic re-evaluation of the support services provided to help the students.

Onuma and Ada (2016) conducted a study on evaluation of student services in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The purpose of this study was to investigate evaluation of student services in colleges of education in Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted; three research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The population comprised 6184 and 8,569 staff and students of federal and state colleges of education respectively. A stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 770 staff and students from federal and state colleges of education in South-East geo-political zone of Nigeria. Evaluation of student personnel services questionnaire (ESPSQ) was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using t-test statistics to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that there was low extent of adequacy of student services in both colleges. With this, the college administration can appreciate why students indulge in demonstrations about poor provision of the services. There was no significant difference on the extent of availability of

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student services in both colleges of education. Educational implications and conclusion were drawn.

Ejionueme (2010) carried out research on the management of student services in Federal and State Universities in Nigeria. The researcher formulated five research questions and four null hypotheses that guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A sample of 1320 subjects were used for the study. A 76-item questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection. Mean scores and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions, while the z-test was sued to test the null hypotheses. The study showed that all the 20 student services studied were available with exception of financial assistance to students; admission was rated highest. And that student services are available but of poor quality. Non-participation of private sector in the provision of student services hindered effective student services. some measures adopted to improve the management of student services include adequate funding of the education sector and engaging internally generate funds for the provision of student services.

Akuchie (2000) undertook an evaluation of student services in Nigerian Federal and State Universities. The purpose of the study was to determine the availability, adequacy, and quality of student services in public universities in Nigeria. Nine research questions guided the study. The design adopted for the study was evaluative survey. A sample of one thousand, two hundred (1200) final year undergraduate students drawn from six universities across the country were used for the study. The students were drawn from two universities from the North and one from the South. Three of the universities are federal, while three are state universities. A 20-item questionnaire was the

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major instrument used in eliciting information from the respondents. The instrument was structured on a four-point Likert-type scale. The researcher used mean scores to analyse the data collected. The highlight of the findings includes, only three student services: student records, admission exercise, and students' disciplinary measures, were adequate and of quality in Nigerian universities. Secondly, the quality of student services is higher in federal than in state universities; student services are more adequate and of higher quality in the northern universities than in the southern universities.

Ogbuji (2009) carried out a study on evaluation of student services in secondary schools in Cross River State. The main purpose of Ogbuji's study was to evaluate the administration of student services in secondary schools in Cross River State. Nine research questions and four null hypotheses were formulated that guided his study. The design adopted for the study was evaluative survey. A sample of 327 principals and 692 teachers were used for the study. Two instruments were used to elicit information, a structured 52-item questionnaire and a 30-item check list. Data collected were analysed using mean scores while the t-test statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypotheses. The findings revealed that orientation programme is carried out in secondary schools in Cross River State; effective health care services are lacking and municipal services are lacking too; students participate actively in co-curricular activities and in school administration; there is significant difference among public, mission, and private schools in the provision of student services in secondary school in the state; there is no significant difference among the three groups of schools

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on the constraints to the provision of student services in secondary schools in Cross River State.

Pansiri and Sinkamba (2017) carried out a study on Advocating for Standards in Student Affairs Departments in African Institutions. According to Pansiri and Sinkamba, the Student Affairs Departments have seen immense growth over the years, from a discourse which had no academic relevance in higher education, to that which is expected to add value to the attraction, retention, and graduation of students. However, the latest developments have seen the role of Student Affairs Departments grow from 'in-loco parentis' to educators who are expected to strategically position the image of their institutions to ensure that students are equipped with relevant, tried and tested skills in preparation for their studies, work, and civic engagement. The level of personal growth of students as they transition from secondary to tertiary institutions is now also traced to the effectiveness of Student Affairs personnel, policies, and structures. Thus, the need for the visibility of such departments and the need to add value to higher education in the 21st century has escalated. In the view of Pansiri and Sinkamba, more innovative ways of engaging students and academics in this social discourse has a bearing on a professional approach that places emphasis on standards. The argument is made for advancing standards in the sphere of Student Affairs as a method of enhancing needed visibility and adding value to African higher education, the focus of which is leading the continent's transformation agenda towards socio-economic development.

From the literature review the following were some of the services provided to students. Guidance and counselling services, academic advising

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services, residential services, health services, orientation services, and language support services, among others. These services are provided as support services to enable the student stay comfortably, and also complement their academic work.

How College Students Use Support Services

The use of support services by college students is essential to their growth as individuals and as learners (Akpan, 2016; Arifin, 2018; Astin, 1996; Kaur, 2016; Patton et al., 2016). These services, which include guidance and counselling, health service, resident life, orientation, and academic advising among others are very important in determining how students enjoy college. The foundation of student support is academic advising, which helps students choose their courses and make other academic decisions (Boakye-Yiadom et al. (2019; Francis, 2012; Kaur, 2018; Patton et al., 2016). Advisors are essential in helping students make sure that their course load is balanced and that their academic goals are in line with their long-term professional objectives. Following this advice is essential to keeping up a strong academic status and graduating on schedule.

With college students encountering stressors like academic expectations, relationship, social obstacles, and the adjustment to independence, guidance and counselling has become more and more important Arifin, 2018; Astin, 1996; Francis, 2012, Long, 2012; Kaur, 2016). Students can explore and address concerns like anxiety, sadness, and stress management in a secure environment by using guidance and counselling services. These services teach pupils resilience techniques and coping skills,

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which improves their general well-being and helps them succeed academically (Elkins, 2015).

In a college setting, health services are a vital component of student support because they help students maintain and improve their physical and mental health (Akpan, 2016; Arifin, 2018; Patton et al., 2016). Basic medical care, such as treatment for common illnesses and accidents, immunizations, and general health check-ups, is usually provided by college health services. Students will be able to swiftly handle any health concerns without having to use off-campus medical facilities because to this immediate access to healthcare. Health education and prevention programmes are frequently included in health services (Akinnubi & Kayode, 2012; Akpan, 2016; Arifin, 2018; Patton et al., 2016). These may address issues with stress management, nutrition, substance misuse, and sexual wellness. According to Akpan (2016), teaching students about these topics encourages a healthy way of living and aids in the prevention of health disorders.

In a college or university setting, residence services play a critical role in giving students a secure, cozy, and supportive living environment that promotes their academic success and personal development (Akinnubi & Kayode, 2012; Francis, 2012; Onuma & Ada, 2016). Offering students, a range of accommodation alternatives, including hostels and dorms, with varying sizes, features, and prices, is the main purpose of residence services. The varied needs and preferences of the student body are taken into consideration when designing these facilities (Akpan, 2016; Long, 2012; Kaur, 2016; Patton et al., 2016). Kaur (2016) and Onuma and Ada (2016) indicated that students living in hostels and dorms expressed dissatisfaction with the

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amenities offered to them. Again, students are also dissatisfied with the physical infrastructure, particularly the differently abled students (Akan, 2016; Francis, 2012; Kaur, 2016; Onuma & Ada, 2016; Patton et al., 2016). In order to meet academic, emotional, and professional demands while navigating the challenges of college education journey, college support services are essential. These services not only help students succeed academically right away, but they also set the stage for future success on the personal and professional fronts (Akan, 2016; Francis, 2012; Kaur, 2016; Onuma & Ada, 2016; Patton et al., 2016).

Challenges of Providing Student Services

Among the major challenges faced by student affairs practitioners and professionals in the Colleges of Education in Central Region today are the influxes of technology, parental involvement, changing characteristics of student populations, and the commercialisation of higher education. The influx of technology into student affairs has created a need for increased technological literacy. It is every practitioner's responsibility to become computer literate. Simply knowing how to use word processing programmes is not the answer. Computer literacy means being able to access the internet and whatever it evolves into; knowing how to use email to converse with colleagues, researchers in the field, and students and staff; and working with campus technicians to improve student services (US Department of Education, 2006). According to US Department of Education, technological changes are here to stay, and because of this, student affairs practitioners are faced with a new responsibility of being knowledgeable about the changing uses of technology. Student affairs practitioners need to take responsibility to become

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knowledgeable and begin to develop competency in this field because it will be a core competency in the next century.

A US nationwide study has confirmed that many university students have become over reliant on computers, the internet, and the social media (Gohn & Albin, 2006). Recognising that students have become increasingly dependent on technology provides rationale for student affairs administrators to be more vigilant in their focus of the services they offer students. The increased student dependency on technology has caused a tremendous need for student affairs practitioners to provide technologically-based services (Upcraft, 2003). This trend also places greater responsibility on managements and governing councils of colleges to provide future practitioners with knowledge of the trends and issues regarding technology.

Parents' involvement with their children in colleges poses a challenge for student affairs professionals. This involvement is influenced by students' rights and privacy, rising tuition costs and consumerism, accountability movement in higher education, and advances in technology (Cutright, 2008). Parents are unsure of the rights of their children as adults and students. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements confuse some parents (Cutright, 2008). In their attempt to understand these acts, parents tend to be perceived as being overly involved. Many parents become involved as advocates because they want the best return for their investment and may assert purchasing or property rights (US Department of Education, 2006). Parents' expectations of college are affected by consumerism (National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE], 2008). Values have shifted from the

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perceived societal good of college education to the view that college education is a personal investment. Rising costs of tuition have increasingly outpaced inflation. In many recognised magazine reviews and popular rankings, education is now regarded as an expensive commodity that both the poor and the rich aspire to invest in (NSSE).

College student demographics continue to change, resulting in changing student needs and services (Gohn & Albin, 2006). The number of non-traditional students is increasing in many US colleges, and more international students are enrolling in American higher education, resulting in changing student characteristics (Andres & Finlay, 2004). Student affairs professionals therefore have to create intentional, innovative programmes to meet these changing needs. The need for regular professional development in the wake of these emerging trends cannot be over-emphasised. However, the current economic difficulties have made it almost impossible for many colleges to adequately support the professional development needs of student affairs professionals (Magolda & Baxter Magolda, 2011). Student affairs divisions in the US are now embarking on fund-raising activities to support their budget, and for many of them, the slogan has been doing more with less resources. Even though higher education administrators in Ghana may share similar challenges with their counterparts in African countries, it will be presumed that some of the issues and needs facing the former may be different. The study aims to uncover particular challenges facing student service in Colleges of Education in Ghana, especially Central Region.

Among the main problems and challenges facing student services are included: internationalisation in higher education, lack of network resource

professionals, lack of funds and insufficient funding, and especially student's diverse needs and growth requirements due to increased mass recruitment into of higher education (UNESCO, 2009). Universities generally support the importance of student life outside classrooms. However, many of them do not fully address the constantly changing learning environment. Students' expectations, operational pressures and access, demands for services and technology costs have the biggest impact so far (Haugen, 1999).

According to Haugen (1999), to be effective student services require integrated solutions with three major components:

1. Strategies based on executive vision, commitment, planning and performance. This requires resources relocation and reorganisation, and a rethinking of institutional culture reform and functioning.

2. Redesigned processes focused on students and parents in the role of customers served by the university employees (which become service providers). Although the development strategy is based on reporting best practices, it is important that services (which copy good practices) to accommodate the institutional culture, resources and technology.

3. Efficient use of tools. Possibilities of modern technology should be exploited in a consistent manner with the strategies, mentioned above, and implemented in a coordinated, targeted, practical and cost.

In their study, McKay, Naidoo, and Simpson (2018) explored the funding opportunities available to undergraduate students in South Africa, and the challenges with the funding activities. The study, which was qualitative in nature, sampled seven participants purposively. These were made of employees of in the student finance offices in the various schools holding

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positions such as senior manager, business analyst, managers for loan and bursaries, and recruitment and selection officers. Interview guide was used to solicit the views of the participants. The study found the following challenges: funding design, communication, student support, and finance. In terms of finance, the study found that there were lot students who needed funding; however, the available funds were not adequate to cover all the qualified applicants. Regarding communication, the study revealed that information on the funding was not well communicated to the students, and that, some were not even aware of such funding opportunities.

In another study, Musingafi, Mapuranga, Chiwanza, and Zebron (2015) examined the challenges students face. The study was conducted among students in Zimbabwe Open University, Zimbabwe. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The study targeted both postgraduate and undergraduate students who have enrolled in various programmes in the university. Through the stratified sampling procedure, 20 students were engaged in the study. The study revealed that the following challenges in accessing student facilities and learning facilities: difficulty in fee paying and registration, lack of effective institutional network of technical assistance, delays in accessing valuable information related to students and their studies in general, access to computer and internet services, and financial constraints, among others.

Amuchie (2015) explored the challenges students face in accessing the library in Ardo-Kola and Jalingo, Taraba State, Nigeria. Findings of the study revealed that there was a challenge in raising money to train students and staff on how to access library facilities. The study specifically found that constraint

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in raising funds to procure modern library facilities such as software, photocopiers, scanners, and computers. The library authorities indicated that though their mother institutions support them in the provision of facilities for the library, the support was inadequate.

Ukonu, Wogu, and Obayi (2012) assessed the challenges university students face undergraduate students face in accessing students' support services, specifically, library facilities in University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The study made use of the descriptive survey design. Through the simple random and stratified sampling techniques, 390 students for the study. Questionnaire and interview guide were used to survey the responses of the participants. Findings from the study indicated that the majority of had no knowledge on the spectrum of facilities available to them. For the few who were aware of the support services of the library, indicated the difficulty in accessing electronic books and poor internet connectivity as some problems that hinder their use of the library services.

Harryba, Guilfoyle, and Knight (2012) examined the challenges in accessing support services by students and staff of a university in Australia. The study made use of 73 participants after reaching data saturation point. The sample was made up of 38 teaching and non-teaching staff, and 35 students. Interview guide was used to gather data from the participants, for which each interview session lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. The interview was recorded with a digital recorder, after which the responses were transcribed with the help of the NViVo software. The data collected were analysed using the framework of the constructivist grounded theory. It was found that the university students were challenged with where and how to get access to the

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students' services. Even though the students indicated they could access some information from the school's website, they considered the procedure as difficult and even worsen their situation. Though the students acknowledged the university held orientation service for them, they were still unaware of some facilities and services provided for them. On the part of the staff, they mentioned lack of confidence among students seeking support services. The staff indicated that some students were shy, felt ashamed and uncomfortable to approach service providers.

Jumani, Bhatti, and Malik (2013) investigated the challenges students face in accessing student support services in a university in Paskitan. Questionnaire was employed for the data collection form experts on support. The opinion of 15 experts including heads of support services, alumni, and heads of departments. Results from the study revealed the following challenges: adequate resources, identification of and targeting students-at-risk, provision of trained professionals, lack of collaboration between academic and support departments, inadequate finances, and marginalised status of student support services.

The foregoing, the following were some challenges faced by student services: technology, parental involvement, changing characteristics of student populations, lack of funds and insufficient funding, difficulty in accessing electronic materials, unapproachable nature of staff, and the commercialisation of higher education.

Chapter Summary

The reviewed literature identified some services that are provided as support services to students. Some these services include guidance and

counselling services, academic advising, health/medical services, and orientation services, among others. It is important to note here that, although many works have been done on student services and related topics, some gap still exists. The gap stems from the fact that the study conducted by researchers (Onuma & Ada, 2016; Akinnubi & Kayode, 2012, Akpan, 2016; Ejionueme, 2010; Akuchie, 2000) are not in Ghanaian context. There was, therefore, the need to ascertain the effectiveness of student services provided by Colleges of Education in Central Region. Again, failure by all preceding studies to take cognisance of the delivery method of student services is an obvious gap which this work tends to bridge.
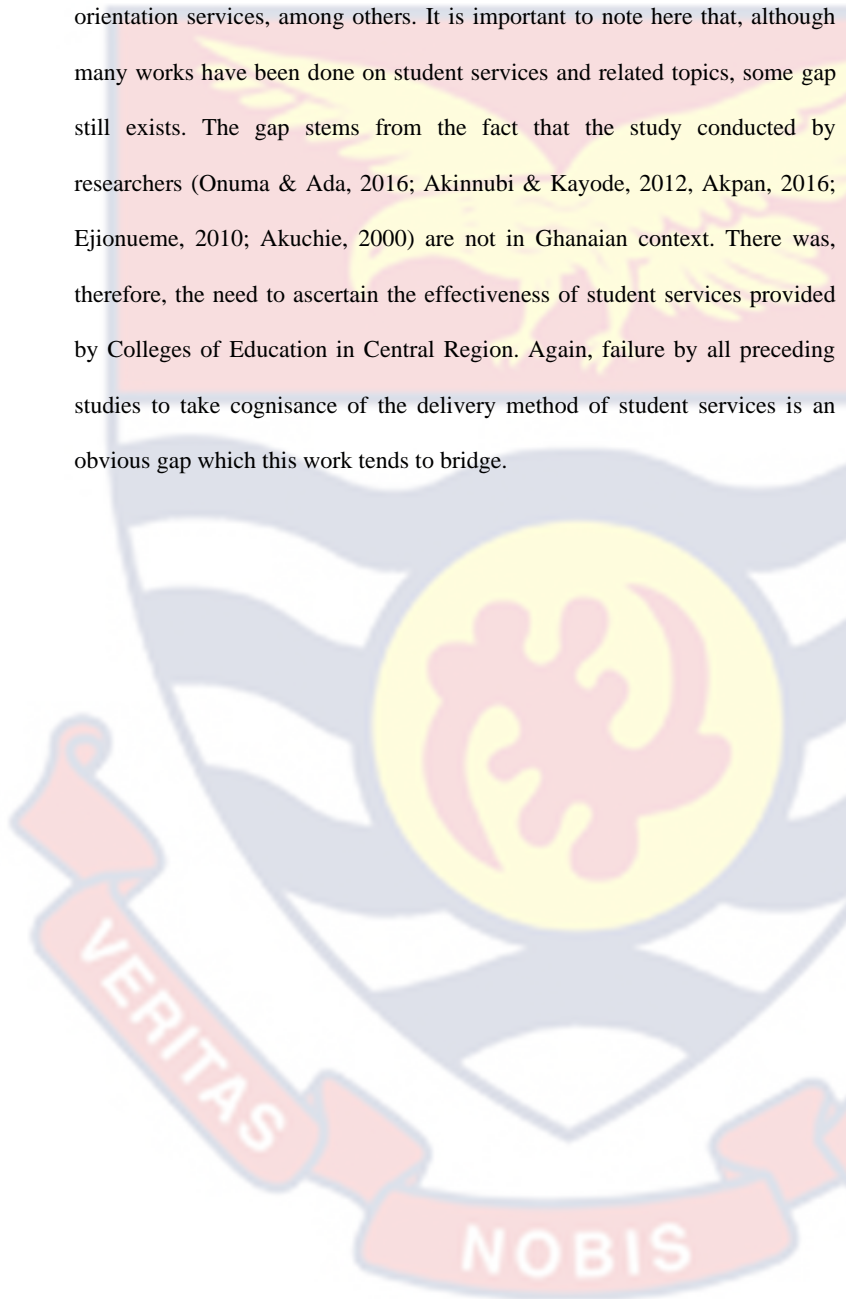
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter presents an overview of the methods and procedures that were used in the study. The following were discussed: research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instruments used in the data collection, administration of instruments and the procedure for data analysis are also discussed.

Research Design

The convergent parallel mixed method design was deemed more appropriate for the study. According to Creswell and Clark (2018), the convergent mixed method design is one of the mixed methods designs where both quantitative and qualitative data are taken on the same topic. In convergent mixed method design, both the qualitative and the quantitative data are collected concurrently. The analyses are also performed separately, however, results from both strands are mixed during the interpretation. This design was selected for this study because for all the three research questions, data were collected from three actors: students, tutors, and personnel at the student service centres. While quantitative data were collected from the students, qualitative information was taken from both the tutors and personnel at the student service centres.

The data collected from both the qualitative and quantitative strands complement each other, and therefore provide a better insight into the problem under investigation. The design also provides the opportunity to triangulate the two strands of data (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2016). The data collected from each of the strands are independent, and that equal

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importance is placed on both data. The strength with this design is that it saved time since both qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time. One does not precede the other, nor does one base on the results of the other. The major challenge with this type of design is the unevenness in terms of sample selection (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Different sample sizes are used for the quantitative and the qualitative data, however, the qualitative samples are mostly very few, compared with the quantitative.

Population

The population of this study comprised all students, student service personnel and tutors in the Colleges of Education in Ghana. The target population of this study was all the students, student service personnel and tutors in all the Colleges of Education (OLA, Fosu, and Komenda) in Central Region during the 2019/2020 academic year. The target population for the study was 4475. Table 1 presents details of the target population.

Table 1: Distribution of Target Population

College	Tutors	Student Service Personnel	Students	Total
Fosu	69	8	1673	1750
Komenda	64	5	1411	1480
OLA	59	6	1180	1245
Total	192	19	4264	4475

Sampling Procedure

Sampling is the act, process or technique of selecting a suitable smaller size of a population of a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Kombo &

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Tromp, 2006). The study employed stratified random and purposive sampling techniques in the selection of the sample for the study. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select students in the Colleges of Education in Central Region, while the purposive sampling technique was used to engage tutors and personnel at the student service centres in the three Colleges of Education. Stratified random sampling involves dividing the population into a number of homogeneous groups or strata. Ensuring that each subgroup is fairly represented in the total sample is the aim of this strategy (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Strata were based on individual colleges within Central Region. Table 2 highlights number of participants selected from each stratum. The simple random sampling technique was then used to select the students. Specifically, the table of random numbers approach was used to select individual students.

The sample size for the students was chosen based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of determining the sampling size. The sample determination table indicates those population figure of 4264 requires sample sizes of 354. The sample of 354 was proportionally stratified among the three colleges. The equation following expresses how the sub-samples were selected from each college:

$$Sample\ size\ (CoE) = \frac{Total\ population\ at\ college}{Total\ population\ of\ students} \times$$

$sample\ size\ required$

On the part of the tutors and the personnel at the student service centres in the various colleges, purposive sampling technique was used to select two tutors each and two student service personnel each from each of the three colleges. This constituted a sample of 12, thus, 6 tutors and 6 student

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service personnel. In all, the sample of the study was 366, comprising 354 students, 6 tutors and 6 student service personnel. Table 2 portrays the distribution of the sample based on colleges.

Table 2: Sample Distribution Based on Colleges of Education

College	Tutors	Student Service Personnel	Students	Total
Fosu	2	2	139	143
Komenda	2	2	117	121
OLA	2	2	98	102
Total	6	6	354	366

Source: Field survey (2019)

Data Collection Instruments

The study used questionnaire and interview guide to collect data. Both the questionnaire and interview guide were personally designed. The questionnaire offers greater assurance and anonymity and promises wider coverage since the researcher can approach respondents more easily than other methods (Amedahe as cited in Nyarko-Sampson, 2010). The questionnaire was used to gather data from the students, while the interview guides were used to gather information from both the tutors and student service personnel.

Items on the questionnaire were derived from information obtained from the review of related literature. The questionnaire was made up of 31 items. The student service questionnaire had two parts (part one collected background information (gender and age range). The part two of the questionnaire was divided into three sections, labelled from 'A' to 'C'. Section 'A' contained five items covering information on type of services available at the Colleges of Education. Section 'B' contained 20 items soliciting

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information on the usage of the available student support services in the colleges. Section 'C' contained 7 items eliciting information on the challenges students face in accessing student services.

The interview guide for tutors and service support personnel contained six items. The items covered types of available service, usage and the challenges students face in accessing these available services.

Pre-Testing of Instruments

The questionnaire and interview guide were pre- tested on 100 students, 2 tutors, and 2 student service personnel from Akrokeri College of Education. Akrokeri College of Education was considered for the pre- test because they had similar characteristics such as age, gender characteristics, etc., as the colleges used in this study.

The main purpose of the pre-test was to check clarity of the items, the time given, the consistency and content of the items. It helped in assessing whether the sampling frame and technique were effective. Again, the format and order of the statements were improved. Based on the inter-item correlation, some of the items were modified.

Validity and reliability

The data collection instruments were given to my supervisors to determine content validity. The experts' comments and suggestions were incorporated in the corrections for the final instruments. That is, ambiguous, biased and deficient items were reframed as irrelevant items were duly deleted. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated using the Cronbach's alpha. The reliability estimates after the pre-testing of the

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questionnaire was 0.81, this figure means that the questionnaire was very reliable for data collection (Crocker & Algina, 1986).

Data Collection Procedures

An introductory letter was collected from the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, University of Cape Coast, to introduce the researcher as a student, and also to seek permission from the principals for the conduct of the study. I visited the selected colleges to seek permission, and then arranged for convenient days and time for the administration of copies of the questionnaire. The researcher used three months to collect the data. During the administration of the instruments (questionnaire and interview guide), tutors and students were briefed on the purpose of the study and the need to respond frankly to the items. The questionnaire was then distributed to the selected students in each of the colleges. Any concern on the questionnaire raised by a student was addressed after which they were given time to respond to the items. The completed copies of questionnaire were retrieved the same day with the assistance of the tutors and some national service personnel.

For the interview, the selected tutors and personnel at the student service centres were interviewed on the various days scheduled for the interview. The interview was done on one-on-one basis. Each session lasted between 45 minutes to one hour. First, introductions were made and the consent of the respondents were duly sought. The interview sessions then began upon consenting to participate in the study. The interview was orally recorded with a recorder.

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Data Processing and Analysis

Data obtained for the study were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The data from the questionnaire were entered using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21. Quantitatively, descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation) were employed. The researcher used descriptive statistics to simplify complex data sets, making them understandable and interpretable. This approach provided a concise summary of the data, which helped especially when dealing with large volumes of students' responses. The analyses were done base on research questions.

The first research question sought to find out the types of services offered at the Colleges of Education in Central Region. The data obtained from the respondents on this research question were coded. Frequencies and percentages for each of the items were run.

Research Question Two sought to examine how accessible student services at the Colleges of Education in Central Region. The data obtained from the respondents on the questionnaire were scored for individual students after which individual item means and standard deviation were calculated. The responses that were coded from 1 – 4 from 'Never' to 'Always'. Individual item means were computed. The criterion for judging the challenges was that a total mean score of 2.50 or higher shows the item is a challenge, while a score less than 2.50 indicates that the item is not a challenge.

The third research question is on what challenges are students facing in relation to the use of available student services at the Colleges of Education in Central Region. The data obtained from the respondents on the questionnaire

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were scored for individual students after which individual item means and standard deviation were calculated. The responses that were coded from 1 – 4 from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. Individual item means were computed. The criterion for judging the challenges was that a total mean score of 2.50 or higher shows the item is a challenge, while a score less than 2.50 indicates that the item is not a challenge.

The qualitative data collected by the use of the interview guide were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This procedure involves the use of six steps, namely, (step one) becoming familiar with the data where the researcher transcribed the audio-recorded data verbatim and read over several times. The second step involved generating initial codes. I used open coding to organise the data into manageable segments so that you can begin to identify significant patterns and trends. It helped in uncovering hidden meanings and relationships within the data. During the open coding, the researcher read through interview transcripts and field notes and labelled the sections of the text with codes. These codes are words or short phrases such as service, health service, guidance and counselling among others that succinctly summarise the essence of that portion of the text. The researcher identified and reviewed themes in in the third and fourth steps respectively. The fifth step covered definition of the themes, and the final write-up in the sixth step.

Ethical Consideration

Research ethics are extremely important and should be carefully considered. Thus, prior to the start of data collection, an introductory letter explaining the purpose of the study and its significance to staff (tutors and

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personnel) and students at the Colleges of Education in the Central Region was obtained from the Institute of Educational Planning and Administration in order to establish a rapport and mutual benefit with the study participants. Participants in the study were encouraged to volunteer, and they were assured of privacy, security, confidentiality, and risk-free conditions.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the methodology and the design of the study were outlined and situated within the convergent parallel mixed methods design. It detailed the accessible population with gender and age characteristics. Building on the research design, this chapter further discussed the sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data processing and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study sought to explore the available services colleges of education in Central Region provide to students. This section provides a pathway to understand the results and discussion of the study. The research questions were analysed using frequencies, percentages and descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for the quantitative data. The qualitative data collected were analysed using thematic analysis. The results of the study are presented under the following sub-headings:

1. Demographic characteristics

2. What available student services are offered at the Colleges of Education in Central Region?

3. How are students using the available services at the Colleges of Education in Central Region?

4. What challenges are students facing in relation to the use of available student services at the Colleges of Education in Central Region?

Demographic Characteristics

The study used a sample of 366 respondents comprising 354 students and 12 student service personnel from the Colleges of Education in the Central Region. The demographic characteristics of respondents (students) include their gender and age range. The demographic data were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The results are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

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Table 3: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	132	37.3
Female	222	62.7
Total	354	100.0

Source: Field survey (2022)

From Table 3, it is evident that 222 of the respondents representing 62.7% were female students while 132 (37.3%) of the respondents were male students. Thus, more females participated in the study as may perhaps be ascribed to the fact that one of colleges used was single sex (female) and the others been co-education colleges.

Table 4: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
17-21	163	46.0
22-26	178	50.3
27-31	11	3.1
32-36	2	0.6
Total	354	100.0

Source: Field survey (2022)

Table 4 shows the age distribution of students among the selected colleges. It is seen that 178 (50.3%) of the student respondents were in the age range of 22-26 which constitutes the modal age range. This was followed by 163 (46.0%) of the student respondents falling between the ages of 17 and 21 years, 27-31 years recorded 11 (3.1%) and 32-36 years recording 2 (0.6%). The subsequent section delt with how the research questions were addressed.

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Research Question One: What available student services are offered at the Colleges of Education in the Central Region?

This research question sought to determine the available student services that were offered at the Colleges of Education in Central Region. The essence was that the availability of these student services would make them gain awareness and therefore seek for support when needed. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the data collected from respondents. The results are presented in Table 5.

There were 343 (96.9%) of the respondents who responded positively with 'Available' to the statement "Orientation service that assists students to get familiar with a new school, history, rules, policies and its vast opportunities" with 11 (3.1%) answering 'Not Available.' Next to this, the statement "Guidance and counselling service designed to strengthen the individual student's ability to solve his or her own problem" recorded 340 (96.0%) of 'Available' with 14 (4.0%) saying 'Not Available'; the statement "Health service designed to provide medical health care, health education and prevention and control of disease among individual and groups of students" recorded 327 responses of 'Available' representing 92.4% and 7.6% (27) were recorded for 'Not Available'. "Academic advising service designed to provide professional relationships between advisors and students and intended to guide, direct and assist students to solve their academic problems as well as develop their potentialities" followed a positive response (Available) of 320 (90.4%) of the respondents; and the statement "Residence service designed to provide accommodation and other utilities to students every year as they

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pursue their academic studies" recorded 313 of the respondents who indicated

'Available.'

Table 5: Types of Services Available to Student Respondents

Statement	Available		Not Available	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Orientation service that assists students to get familiar with a new school, history, rules, policies and its vast opportunities.	343	96.9	11	3.1
Guidance and counselling service designed to strengthen the individual student's ability to solve his or her own problem.	340	96.0	14	4.0
Academic advising service designed to provide professional relationships between advisors and students and intended to guide, direct and assist students to solve their academic problems as well as develop their potentialities.	320	90.4	34	9.6
Residence service designed to provide accommodation and other utilities to students every year as they pursue their academic studies.	313	88.4	41	11.6
Health service designed to provide medical health care, health education and prevention and control of disease among individual and groups of students.	327	92.4	27	7.6

Source: Field survey (2022)

The responses from the student respondents suggest that the Colleges of Education in the Central Region had some kind of services provided for students so as to make their stay on campus comfortable to pursue their education. These services were orientation for freshmen, guidance and counselling, academic advising, residence service and health service. The services also provide intellectual and interpersonal skills which are two of the

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three types of competence that Chickering's theory indicates is critical for the development of students in college.

To complement and validate the quantitative data obtain from the students, tutors and service personnel were asked to share to their encounters and experiences with respect to the available services the Colleges of Education in Central Region offered. The responses of the tutors and service personnel were grouped into themes. The themes that emerged predominantly were orientation, guidance and counselling, residence and health services. Some of the tutors and service personnel were able to identify other forms of available services that were offered to students. Below are extracts of the tutors and service personnel's responses.

> For support services we have a number of them in the college. At the beginning of each academic year, we orient new admitted students. We have the guidance and counselling centre as the main service to assist student with their personal and academic problems, the infirmary to attend sick students, the library for students to prepare and do research. We also provide student accommodation to house them for their entire college experience. (**Tutor 2, College A**)
>
> There are so many services that we provide for our students on campus and those who are off-campus doing their field teaching experience. The college do orientation for newly recruited students, provide residence facilities for students to feel safe to enjoy academic work, there is library for them to

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do learning, assignment and research activities. We have the infirmary as we are lobbying to get more resources to expand the services they offer. Additionally, we have the counselling centre with a coordinator to help in student issues. (**Personnel 1, College C**)

These observations from the tutors and service personnel gave credence to the fact that some services are offered at the colleges. The staff's and students' corroborated observations support the efficacy of these programmes. But it is also critical to continuously evaluate and modify these services in light of evolving student requirements and feedback. Again, the responses highlight the management's efforts to guarantee that the offerings satisfy the requirements of the students and enhance their general happiness. This finding demonstrates the institution's dedication to the growth and welfare of its students. It is imperative to note that their responses reflected the effort of management to ensure that all students were served and satisfied.

Research Question Two: How are students using the available services at the Colleges of Education in the Central Region?

This research question sought to establish whether student used the available services offered at the Colleges of Education effectively. Means and standard deviations were used to analyse the data obtained from respondents. A higher mean indicated that most respondents use the services colleges offered. A smaller standard deviation (SD < 1.00) indicates more consistent data, while a larger standard deviation indicates greater variability (SD>1.00). The results are presented in Tables 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

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Table 6: Guidance and Counselling Service offered Students

Statement	M	SD
Assistance to develop students' effective learning skills.	3.48	.71
Support for students to get over their personal problems.	3.21	.87
Assistance to resolve students' emotional difficulties.	3.21	.84
Assistance to develop good relationship skills and sense of responsibility.	3.47	.79
Total	3.34	.80

Source: Field survey (2022)

Outcomes from Table 6 indicate the statement "assistance to develop students' effective learning skills" showed the highest mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 0.71 indicating consistency in participants' responses. Next to this, assistance to develop good relationship skills and sense of responsibility (M=3.47, SD=0.79), "assistance to resolve students' emotional difficulties" (M=3.21, SD=0.84) and "support for students to get over their personal problems" (M=3.21, SD=.87).

The results in Table 6 also indicates that the total mean score of guidance and counselling service is 3.34 with 0.8 standard deviation. This figure is higher than 2.50, implying that guidance and counselling service is effectively utilised by students at the Colleges of Education in the Central Region. Moreover, this finding suggests that the institutions provided opportunity for students to develop students' effective learning skills, good relationship skills and sense of responsibility, resolve students' emotional difficulties and get over their personal problems. The student respondents were homogenous and consistent in their expression (SD=0.8).

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Table 7 focuses on academic advising services offered by the Colleges of Education in Central Region to the students. The statement "advise students on credit load per semester" indicated the highest mean of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 0.74. Next, to this, "provision of intensive tutoring and academic success skill interventions in specific courses" (M=3.49, SD=0.85), "provision of accurate information to students concerning choice of courses and major in their areas of study in each semester" (M=3.29, SD=0.87), and "support students with decision-making and career direction" (M=3.03, SD=1.13). Table 7 presents the findings of academic advising services.

Table 7: Academic Advising Service to Students

Statement	M	SD
Provision of accurate information to students concerning choice of courses and major in their areas of study in each semester.	3.29	.87
Support students with decision-making and career direction.	3.03	1.13
Advise students on credit load per semester.	3.54	.74
Provision of intensive tutoring and academic success skill interventions in specific courses.	3.49	.85
Total	3.34	.90

Source: Field survey (2022)

Table 7 also portrays that the total mean score of the academic advising service is 3.34. This figure is higher than 2.50 and this depicts that academic advising service is effectively utilised by students at the Colleges of Education in Central Region and students did not differ much in their expression (SD=0.9). The smaller standard deviation shows the consistency in participants' responses. The current finding implies the colleges had created

spaces for advising students on credit loading per semester, intensive tutoring and academic success skill interventions in specific courses, accurate information to students concerning choice of courses and major in their areas of study, decision-making and career direction.

The orientation service to students in the Colleges of Education in Central Region is captured in Table 8. It is evident that the statement "orientation given to help new students know and understand college rules and regulations" recorded the highest mean of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 0.30 indicating consistent responses by the participants. Next, to this, assistance given to new students to get familiar with the college (M=3.87, SD=0.35), "orientation service enables new students to be introduced to study skills" (M=3.83, SD=.44) and "assistance for new students to know the history, staff and other students at the college" (M=3.80, SD=0.54). Table 8 presents the results of orientation service.

Table 8: Orientation Service to Students

Statement	M	SD
Assistance given to new students to get familiar with the college.	3.87	.35
Orientation given to help new students know and understand college rules and regulations.	3.91	.30
Assistance for new students to know the history, staff and other students at the college.	3.80	.54
Orientation service enables new students to be introduced to study skills.	3.83	.44
Total	3.85	.41

Source: Field survey (2022)

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Furthermore, Table 8 depicts that the total mean score of the orientation service is 3.85. This figure is higher than 2.50 which implies that orientation service was effectively utilised by students at the Colleges of Education in Central Region. The current finding suggests the colleges prioritise orienting new students by helping them to know and understand college rules and regulations, get familiar with the college environment, introduced them to study skills and helping them to know the history, staff and other students at the college. The expression of participants are homogenous and consistent based on the 0.41 standard deviation.

Table 9 shows the statement "provision of safe, comfortable and well maintained and supportive on campus accommodation for students," indicated the highest mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 2.22. Next, to this, provision of adequate residential facilities and utilities (bed, light, water, internet, etc.) (M=3.66, SD=0.67), "provision of residential environment in which all members promote respect and hold each other accountable for those actions" (M=3.65, SD=0.67), and "opportunities available for students to get involved in leadership and governance opportunities in residence life, organisations and activities" (M=3.40, SD=.78).

The total mean score of the residence service is 3.60 with a standard deviation of 1.08. This figure is higher than 2.50 and this depicts that residence service is effectively utilised by students at the Colleges of Education in Central Region (Table 9) with a higher variability in responses. The current finding implies residence service covers provision of safe, comfortable and well maintained and supportive on campus.

Table 9: Residence Service to Students

Statement	M	SD
Provision of safe, comfortable and well maintained and supportive on campus accommodation for students.	3.67	2.22
Provision of residential environment in which all members promote respect and hold each other accountable for those actions.	3.65	.67
Opportunities available for students to get involved in leadership and governance opportunities in residence life, organisations and activities.	3.40	.78
Provision of adequate residential facilities and utilities (bed, light, water, internet, etc.).	3.66	.66
Total	3.60	1.08

Source: Field survey (2022)

Accommodation; adequate residential facilities and utilities (bed, light, water, internet, etc.); residential environment in which all members promote respect and hold each other accountable and getting them involved in leadership and governance opportunities in residence life, organisations and other college activities.

Table 10 presents the health services provided by the institutions to students. The statement "provide care for acute illnesses" indicated the highest mean of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 0.68. Next, to this, provide basic care in the form of treatment for colds, viruses, bacteria and minor injuries (M=3.39, SD=0.79), "provide health and wellness education to campus community and students with continued and chronic illnesses" (M=3.33, SD=0.80), and "carries out outreach programmes to sensitise

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students about outbreak of epidemic and measures for prevention and the treatment available," (M=3.20, SD=.92).

Table 10: Health Services to Students

Statement	M	SD
Provide care for acute illnesses.	3.53	.68
Provide health and wellness education to campus community and students with continued and chronic illnesses	3.33	.80
Provide basic care in the form of treatment for colds, viruses, bacteria and minor injuries.	3.39	.79
Carries out outreach programmes to sensitise students about outbreak of epidemic and measures for prevention and the treatment available.	3.20	.92
Total	3.36	.80

Source: Field survey (2022)

Moreover, Table 10 portrays that the total mean score of the health service is 3.36 with a standard deviation of 0.8. This figure (with respect to mean) is higher than 2.50 and this depicts that health service was effectively utilised by students at the Colleges of Education in Central Region. Additionally, the small standard deviation (0.8) shows consistency in participants' responses. The current finding implies health service covers providing care for acute illnesses, treatment for colds, viruses, bacteria and minor injuries, health and wellness education and outreach programmes to sensitise students about outbreak of epidemic.

Tutors and personnel's perspective on how often student use the support services sheds light on their experience. The tutors/personnel enlighten that students' usage of service was both high and low. Orientation

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and residence services been mandatory for newly admitted students and accommodation for all students made its patronage high. Some of the comments from tutors/personnel are as follows:

> Student usage of the services we provide is both high and low as it depends on the needs of the students. I will start with orientation of students, over the years our services have been effective, taking students through the policies, rules and regulations. New students are taken through various activities for them to familiarise themselves with campus environment. They usually use the library services and accommodation facilities. For health services it [is] only when they fall sick that is where they make themselves available. The counselling centre sees low patronage due to negative perception of students and lack of trust and this happens when a student is experiencing relationship and financial challenges. **(Personnel 1, College B)**

> I think student use support services most often when they first enter college. They get used to all other services through orientation. At orientation, we provide them with information on rules and regulations, buildings and services to support their studies. As an assistant dean of student, I am privileged to know more about the services we need to provide but the challenge has been students not seeking support early from the coordinators in charge of the services. We expect them to visit the guidance and counselling centre

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regularly but this does not happen, tutors testify that students visit them for advise concerning courses that they need to take and research direction and sometimes tutors will call on students to discussion academic progress if they have been performing poorly. Though we [have] a nurse and an assistant sometimes we are overwhelming by the numbers they record each. **(Personnel 1, College A)**

It can be inferred that the student respondents and the tutors/student personnel generally agreed to the services provided to students by the Colleges of Education in Central Region. The perception alignment is an encouraging sign of the overall agreement regarding the services rendered between student respondents, tutors and student staff. It implies that everyone is in agreement about the importance of these support services and their availability in the classroom. The efficient provision and enhancement of student services depend on this alignment. However, with respect to the utilisation of the services, the student respondents' responses connote they were more positive (mean range, 3.03 to 3.91) than that of the tutors/student personnel who indicated that students' patronage of facilities were high and low. It is especially interesting to see the disparity in opinions about using these services.

The mean range (3.03 to 3.91) suggests that students' opinions on their interactions with the services are more optimistic. This could imply that students believe they are utilising the resources at their disposal well. Again, the more positive response from the students may also be a result of the colleges' successful engagement initiatives. Though there is potential for

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development in making these services more desirable or accessible to a wider range of students, the tutors and personnel's perspective of varying patronage levels indicates otherwise.

Research Question Three: What challenges are students facing in relation to the use of available student services at the Colleges of Education in the Central Region?

Research question three sought to determine the challenge facing students in relation to the use of available student services at the Colleges of Education in Central Region. Means and standard deviations were used to analyse the data obtained from the colleges. A higher mean above the cut-off point (2.50) indicated that most respondents agreed that the student face such challenges in accessing these services offered at the colleges. The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Challenges in Accessing Student Services

Statement	M	SD
Lack of knowledge/awareness about student services.	2.66	.98
Personnel of student services not approachable.	2.76	1.08
Breach of confidentiality by personnel at student services centres.	2.54	1.01
I do not feel comfortable accessing student support services.	2.62	.97
Negative perception held by peers/colleagues prevent me from accessing student support services.	2.57	1.19
Fear of being ridiculed by peers/colleagues.	2.81	1.13
Fear of being ridiculed by personnel at the students support services centres.	2.66	.98
Total	2.66	1.05

Source: Field survey (2022)

This research question sought to explore the challenges hindering the access of student services at the colleges. It can be seen from Table 11 that the statement "fear of being ridiculed by peers/colleagues" recorded the highest mean of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 1.13. This was followed by the statement "personnel of student services not approachable" (M=2.76, SD=1.08), "fear of being ridiculed by personnel at the students support services" (M=2.66, SD=0.98), "lack of knowledge/awareness about student services" (M=2.66, SD=0.98), "I do not feel comfortable accessing student support services" (M=2.62, SD=0.97), "negative perception held by peers/colleagues prevent me from accessing student support services" (M=2.57, SD=1.19), and "breach of confidentiality by personnel at student services centres" (M=2.54, SD=1.01). The current findings suggest that student services are hindered by challenges preventing its effectiveness. These challenges include fear of being ridiculed by peers/colleagues, personnel of student services not approachable, fear of being ridiculed by personnel at the students support services, lack of knowledge/awareness about student services, negative perception held by peers/colleagues prevent me from accessing student support services and breach of confidentiality by personnel at student support service centres.

In addition to the views expressed by the students, interviews were conducted with some tutors/support personnel to explore their views on the challenges facing students in relation to the use of available student services. The perspectives from the staff corroborated with the students' responses. The predominate themes that emerged throughout included fear of being ridiculed by peers and personnel, poor attitude of personnel and negative attitude

towards support service, lack of facilities and resources to effectively implement these services. Below are extracts of the tutors and service personnel's responses.

> We are confronted by numerous challenges, but we are trying our best to resolve some of them. The challenges cut across all aspects from the students to staff. I talk a little more on students' attitude because they see some of the services as a form of victimising them so they develop bad attitude towards coordinators. I know we as human beings have our own downs because we teach them and so they don't feel uncomfortable approach support service. This perception of being ridiculed by peers/colleagues and tutors is high among students. Resources is another issue hindering the activities to carry out to support student effectively. We need funds to organise some educative programmes for students beside we lack requisite facilities to run effective services. Apart from the guidance and counselling centre, how many tutors have their own offices, computers and other resources to function well in their roles? **(Personnel 2, College A)**
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> The challenges can be seen from college, students and tutors. How many of the tutors and students have detailed understanding about student services we provide. The resources of the college are not enough to support the provision of certain services but we are putting things in

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order to ensure all students are attended to. We actually need facilities such as offices to assist students on one-on-one, funds to organise training and programmes for them. From my encounter with some students, they believe in sharing their problems with their colleagues rather than approaching staff because of the hostile attitude some show. From this lens, I think we need to professionalise most of the roles tutors play in handling support services. **(Tutor, College B)**

This study findings shed lights on the intricate and multifaceted difficulties associated with providing and utilising student support services. This shows that there needs to be a change in the way the academic community views support services—rather than viewing it as a source of contempt—in order to mainstream and encourage it. The unapproachability of staff members and their unfavourable opinions toward staff support services point to a breakdown in the interpersonal dynamics between students and service providers. Staff training in supportive communication, empathy, and active listening may be able to close this gap. It takes a multifaceted approach to address these issues, involving increased resources, staff training, stronger communication, and cultural change. A comprehensive strategy incorporating these components, propelled by actions from both the top and bottom up, has the potential to greatly enhance the efficacy of student support services.

Discussions

Types of Services Available

The findings from the current study revealed that Colleges of Education in the Central Region provided a number of student support services such as guidance and counselling, academic advising, residence, orientation and health services. Thus, orientation to support new students to get accustomed to the school, history, rules and policies, guidance and counselling service planned to support the individual student's solve his or her own problem, providing a professional relations among students and advisors, residence service to provide accommodation and other utilities to students every year as they pursue their academic studies and health service to provide medical health care, health education and prevention and control of disease among individual and groups of students. The range of services offered by the colleges highlights their dedication to meeting the demands of both academic and personal needs of its students. This fits in nicely with Chickering's idea, which emphasizes the value of college students developing their intellectual and social abilities.

These findings are in support of the findings of Francis (2012) that the general objectives of student support services are to assist students to attain maximum self-realisation, to assist students to become effective in their social environment and to complement the academic programme of the institution. Francis further highlighted that, specifically, student support services seek to provide orientation for students to facilitate adjustment to campus life, perform individual inventory and testing to aid towards self-knowledge and self-realisation, perform individual and group counselling, provide placement

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and follow-up services, provide adequate assistance to student on finance, health, food and housing, provide variety of co-curricular activities, approve and monitor activities of recognised student organisation, implement students code of conduct and recommend appropriate disciplinary action to school authorities.

Similarly, the findings also confirmed the findings of Ezeadi (2012) that student support services are lubricants for the teaching-learning machinery. He stated further that student services create conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning activities to take place in schools. According to him, guidance services aid students to adjust in the school, health services, boarding facilities, psychological needs and co-curricular activities mould the character of the students, library services, catering services, bursary services, all these play good roles in the lives of students.

Students Usage of Available Services

Guidance and counselling service

The study showed that guidance and counselling service is effectively utilised by students at the Colleges of Education in the Central Region. This service provides opportunity for students to develop good relationship skills and sense of responsibility, resolve students' emotional difficulties and get over their personal problems. The findings of the study corroborate with findings of Ocansey (2018) who explored the experiences of students regarding counselling services provided in universities in Ghana. Findings of the Ocansey's study revealed that counselling services were available in the universities in the form of assisting student obtain learning skills, getting over personal and relationship problems. The findings are also in line with findings

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of Aidoo (2011) that guidance and counselling services are provided in the Colleges of Education in Ghana and that these service centre around personal problems and resolving emotional imbalances.

Academic advising

The current findings revealed that the colleges have created spaces for advising students on credit loading per semester, intensive tutoring and academic success skill interventions in specific courses, accurate information to students concerning choice of courses and major in their areas of study, decision-making and career direction. The findings of the study tallies with findings of Boakye-Yiadom *et al*. (2019) that academic advising office or department provides student academic services related to course selection, finding a major, study skills, and referrals to tutoring and academic success skills. Boakye-Yiadom *et al*. further highlighted that academic success skills/tutoring the office providing intensive tutoring and academic success skill interventions. In the same vein, Akpan (2016) postulated that academic advising is one outstanding student service function in any higher education institution because it is an essential support that students need even on daily basis throughout their period of study.

Orientation service

The study further revealed that colleges prioritise orienting new students by helping them to know and understand college rules and regulations, get familiar with the college environment, introduced them to study skills and helping them to know the history, staff and other students at the college. The findings of the current study cast more light on the findings of Akpan (2016) that new students need guidance, direction and information that

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will help them to adjust quickly to the new school environment. Orientation at the institutional level is always organised by the students' affairs division in collaboration with the management of the institution. To Akpan, it is the means through which new students are assisted in meeting their needs for security, belongingness, information and the direction about their new school as well as aimed at familiarising newly admitted students with the staff, policies, rules and regulations and the physical layout of the school. If well organised, it becomes an avenue to minimise the problems of new students so that they can settle down for effective study. A well-organised orientation should provide for resource persons to speak on agreed topics.

Residence service

The study revealed that resident service covers provision of safe, comfortable and well maintained and supportive on-campus accommodation; adequate residential facilities and utilities (bed, light, water, internet, etc.); residential environment in which all members promote respect and hold each other accountable and getting them involved in leadership and governance opportunities in residence life, organisations and other college activities. The findings are in consonance with the observation of Botha *et al*. (2013) that residences build unity, a commonness of purpose where first-year students look up to their seniors and find the support and encouragement that accrue from loyalty to the residence. Botha *et al*. further stressed that students find residences a crucial bridge to the complexities and uncertainties of a large research college. Similarly, UNESCO (2012) highlighted that the purpose of accommodating students in colleges include: to provide a safe, comfortable and well maintained and supportive on-campus accommodation for students;

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to integrate student accommodation goals with those of academic programme of the institution; to maintain a long-range facility, plan for on-campus students' accommodation that is in keeping with instructional goals; and to provide a residential environment in which all members promote respect and hold each other accountable for those actions.

Health service

The current study revealed that health service covers providing care for acute illnesses, treatment for colds, viruses, bacteria and minor injuries, health and wellness education and outreach programmes to sensitise students about outbreak of epidemic. The findings of this study support the findings of Akpan (2016) that health services are aimed at promoting and enhancing students' health and well-being that support their academic activities in school. Thus, effective management of health services promote students' health education, awareness and well-being programmes. Additionally, Akpan stressed that health services provide medical and/or mental health care, counselling, consultation and public health education for individual and groups of students. The provision of health services is very important because the health problems in our higher education institutions are much the same as those in the larger society.

Challenges in Accessing Available Services

The study further showed that student support services are hindered by challenges preventing it effectiveness. These challenges include fear of being ridiculed by peers/colleagues, personnel of student services not approachable, fear of being ridiculed by personnel at the students support services, lack of knowledge/awareness about student services, negative perception held by

peers/colleagues prevent me from accessing student support services and breach of confidentiality by personnel at student services centres.

Among the main problems and challenges facing student services are included: internationalisation in higher education, lack of network resource professionals, lack of funds and insufficient funding, and especially student's diverse needs and growth requirements due to increased mass recruitment into of higher education (UNESCO, 2009). Universities generally support the importance of student life outside classrooms. However, many of them do not fully address the constantly changing learning environment. In other words, students' expectations, operational pressures and access, demands for services and technology costs have the biggest impact so far (Haugen, 1999).

Furthermore, the findings of the current study resonate with findings of Magolda and Baxter Magolda (2011) that the current economic difficulties have made it almost impossible for many colleges to adequately support the professional development needs of student affairs professionals. Thus, most colleges are now embarking on fund-raising activities to support their budget, and for many of them, the slogan has been doing more with less resources. Hence, there is need for adequate funding of Colleges of Education in Central Region.

Chapter Summary

This section highlighted the results and discussion of the study situating it in the context of relevant literature reviewed. The study findings revealed that orientation, guidance and counselling, residence, health and academic advising services are available in most colleges and students accessed each based on their needs and urgency. The study further showed

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that fear of being ridiculed by peers/colleagues, personnel of student services not approachable, fear of being ridiculed by personnel at the students support services, lack of knowledge/awareness about student services among others hinders students access and usage.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter recaps the study. It provides briefs of the results obtained and draw conclusions from the discussion presented. Furthermore, recommendations follow to highlight the need to improve support service in Colleges of Education in Central Region. The chapter ends with suggestions for future research.

Overview

The study sought to explore the available services Colleges of Education in Central Region provide to students. This was addressed through the responses to following research questions:

1. What available student services are offered at the Colleges of Education in Central Region?

2. How are students using the available services at the Colleges of Education in Central Region?

3. What challenges are students facing in relation to the use of available student services at the Colleges of Education in Central Region?

The convergent parallel mixed design was deemed more appropriate for the study. The study used students, tutors and service personnel in all the Colleges of Education in the Central Region as the case to ascertain the availability of student support services. The study used two instruments (Student Support Service Questionnaire and Tutor/Personnel Interview Guide) to obtain data from 366 respondents (students=354, tutors/personnel=12).

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Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages means and standard deviations) and thematic analysis were used to analyse and present findings of the study.

Summary

Firstly, the study revealed that Colleges of Education in the Central Region provides a number of student support services such as guidance and counselling, academic advising, residence, orientation and health services. Thus, orientation to support new students to get accustomed to the school, history, rules and policies, guidance and counselling service planned to support the individual students solve their own problems, providing a professional relation among students and advisors. The study showed that residence services are provided concerning accommodation and other utilities to students every year as they pursue their academic studies and health service to provide medical health care, health education and prevention and control of disease among individual and groups of students.

Secondly, the study showed that students are utilising support services in various forms. As such, they use guidance and counselling, academic advising, residence, orientation and health service. It is evident that the Colleges of Education provided opportunity for students to develop students' effective learning skills, good relationship skills and sense of responsibility. More so, students' emotional difficulties were resolved and got over their personal problems as students accessed the facilities provided by the Colleges of Education. The colleges also endeavoured to create conducive environment for students in the areas of advising students on credit loading per semester, intensive tutoring, study skills, orienting new students by helping them to know and understand the history and staff of the colleges as well as rules and

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regulations that govern the colleges, and to get familiar with the college environment. Finally, students made use of the colleges' provisions of on-campus residential accommodation, and health care service meant for acute illnesses, treatment for colds, viruses, bacteria and minor injuries.

Thirdly, the study revealed that student services are hindered by challenges preventing its effectiveness. These challenges include fear of being ridiculed by peers/colleagues, personnel of student services not approachable, fear of being ridiculed by personnel at the students support services, lack of knowledge/awareness about student services, negative perception held by peers/colleagues and breach of confidentiality by personnel at student services centres prevented some students from access the facilities.

Conclusions

Transitioning to fully fledge tertiary education institution requires student support services to be given maximum attention to unfold the practices and resources for effective delivery. It is imperative to note that students become aware of orientation, guidance and counselling, health, residence, and academic advising services thereby designing strategic framework describes how students use, access and develop their identity before graduation. These services are essential for assisting new students in settling into college life, providing them with individualized support, and safeguarding their health and welfare. In relation to the usage of services of student, they have been shown to have a major positive impact on students' sense of responsibility and to help them develop excellent communication and interpersonal skills. These services also efficiently addressed kids' personal and emotional difficulties.

The study highlighted that much needs to be done concerning factors hindering the effective use of the services by students. These challenges are not limited to institutional factors but students as well. The study findings highlight how important student support services are to improving student satisfaction and academic performance. It is admirable that the Colleges of Education are making an effort to establish a welcoming and helpful learning atmosphere. To create a more hospitable and private atmosphere, service staff training, sensitization initiatives, and enhanced communication tactics are necessary, as indicated by the issues that have been highlighted.

Recommendations

1. Management of Colleges of Education should intensify efforts to raise awareness, accessibility, and benefits of student support services. Informational campaigns, frequent workshops, and orientation programmes can help achieve this. Providing easy access to information about these services—possibly via digital platforms—can also contribute to higher levels of student participation.

2. It is imperative that staff members working in student support services receive frequent training. Additionally, regular training and workshop could be organised to improve personnel's competency in handling students' problems. The key objectives of this training programme ought to be to foster compassionate communication abilities, uphold confidentiality, and foster a nonjudgmental atmosphere that empowers students to ask for assistance without worrying about being laughed at or having their private violated.

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3. Management of Colleges of Education should establish peer support systems to mitigate fear of ridicule. Students could feel more at ease talking to their knowledgeable classmates about their problems.

4. Management of Colleges of Education should employ professionals in these fields to curb the negative perception concerning access to support services by students.

5. Management of Colleges of Education should collaborate with other experts— such as psychologists, career advisors, and academic professionals. This partnership can enhance the quality and range of support services offered. This could include guest lectures, workshops, or consultation sessions.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could use a comparative design to examine the difference in support services each college offer. Furthermore, further research should explore other support services such as library service, financial aid service, and student organisations. Again, future research should be conducted to ascertain the knowledge, skills and practices of student support service personnel. It would also be advantageous to investigate how these services affect students' achievement in the long run and how to get beyond the obstacles that have been found.

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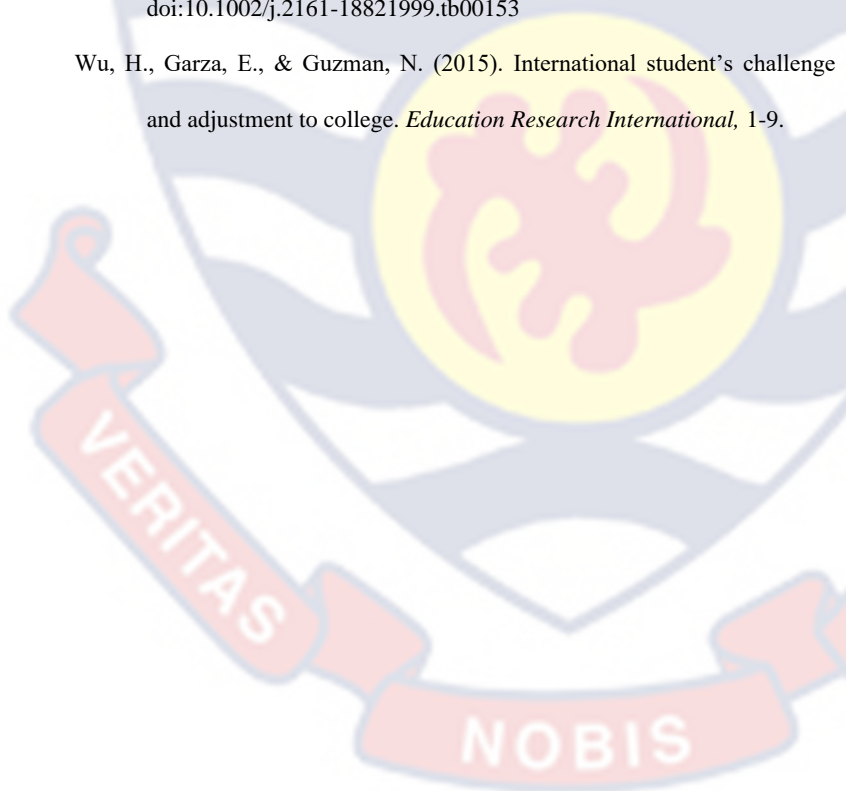
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Institute for Educational Planning and Administration at University of Cape Coast, Ghana. UNESCO Category II Centre of Excellence.

Our Ref.: IEPA-UNESCO /I.2/VOL.1/0053   8th February, 2022.

The Principal
Komenda College of Education
Komenda.

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The bearer of this letter **Miss. Vida Acquaah (ED/EAP/15/0009)** is an M.Phil. student studying at the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) at the University of Cape Coast.

She requires some information from you/your outfit for the purpose of writing her thesis titled: **"Student Services at the Colleges of Education in the Central Region"** as a requirement for her M.Phil. Programme.

Kindly give the necessary assistance that Miss. Acquaah requires to enable her gather the information she needs.

While anticipating your co-operation, we thank you for any help that you may be able to give her.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Francis Ansah
HEAD, ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES
DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL, (ACADEMIC PROGS. & PROFESSIONAL DEV'T)

cc: Head, Academic Programmes, IEPA

Telephone: + 233 (0) 332 130 571
          + 233 (0) 207 728 812
Fax: + 233 (0) 332 130 588
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GPS: CC-145-8669

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APPENDIX B

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire seeks to gather information regarding your experiences in your college in accessing student services. This exercise is purely for academic purposes, and for that matter any information you provide will be treated confidentially. Under no circumstance will information provided be used to victimise you. Please note that participation in this study is by volition and not compulsory. You can, therefore, withdraw at any time you feel so. Please be honest and provide accurate information as possible to the best of your knowledge.

Please respond by a tick (√) or writing where necessary.

PART ONE

Background Information

1. Gender

    Male   [   ]

    Female   [   ]

2. Age

    17 – 21 years [   ]

    22 – 26 years [   ]

    27 – 31 years [   ]

    32 – 36 years [   ]

    37 – 41 years [   ]

PART TWO

SECTION A – AVAILABLE STUDENT SERVICES

The following are support services provided to students. The student support services are services provided to you to help meet your academic and non-academic needs in the college. Please indicate by check [√] the services that are available in your college.

S/N	Services	Available	Not available
1	Orientation service that assists students to get familiar with a new school, history, rules, policies and its vast opportunities.		
2	Guidance and counselling service designed to strengthen the individual student's ability to solve his or her own problem.		
3	Academic advising service designed to provide professional relationships between advisors and students and intended to guide, direct and assist students to solve their academic problems as well as develop their potentialities.		
4	Residence service designed to provide accommodation and other utilities to students every year as they pursue their academic studies.		
5	Health service designed to provide medical health care, health education and prevention and control of disease among individual and groups of students.		

Please list out any other services available to you at your college

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SECTION B – USAGE OF STUDENT SERVICES

The following are support services provided to students. Please indicate by check [√] how often you use the services found in your college. Key: A=Always; ST=Sometimes; S=Seldom; N=Never

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICE

S/N	Description of Guidance and counselling services use.	A	ST	S	N
6	Assist in developing students' effective learning skills.				
7	Support for students to get over their personal problems.				
8	Assist in solving students' emotional difficulties				
9	Assist in developing good relationship skills and sense of responsibility.				

Indicate any other guidance and counselling service you use;

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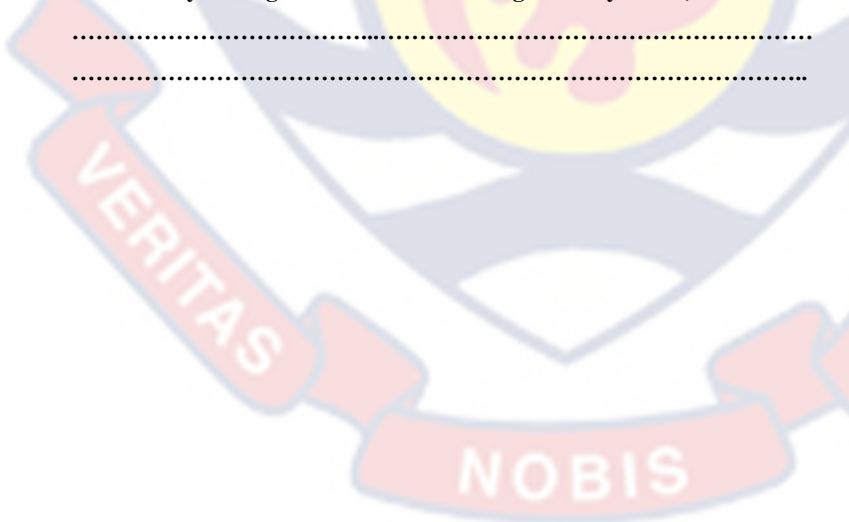
ACADEMIC ADVISING SERVICE USAGE

S/N	Description of Academic Advising services use	A	ST	S	N
10	Provision of accurate information to students concerning choice of courses and major in their areas of study in each semester.				
11	Support students with decision-making and career direction.				
12	Advise students on credit load per semester.				
13	Provision of intensive tutoring and academic success skill interventions in specific courses.				

Indicate any other academic advice service you use;

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S/N	Description of orientation	A	ST	S	N
14	Assistance given to new students to get familiar with the college.				
15	Orientation given to help new students know and understand college rules and regulations.				
16	Assistance for new students to know the history, staff and other students at the college.				
17	Orientation service enables new students to be introduced to study skills.				

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ORIENTATION SERVICE USAGE

Indicate any other orientation you have taken part in

..…………………………………...……………………………………………

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RESIDENCE SERVICE USAGE

S/N	Description of residential service provided	A	ST	S	N
18	Provision of safe, comfortable and well maintained and supportive on campus accommodation for students.				
19	Provision of residential environment in which all members promote respect and hold each other accountable for those actions.				
20	Opportunities available for students to get involved in leadership and governance opportunities in residence life, organisations and activities.				
21	Provision of adequate residential facilities and utilities (bed, light, water, internet, etc.).				

Indicate any other residential services you have access to and use;

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HEALTH SERVICE

S/N	Description of health services use.	A	ST	S	N
22	Provide care for acute illnesses.				
23	Provide health and wellness education to campus community and students with continued and chronic illnesses				
24	Provide basic care in the form of treatment for colds, viruses, bacteria and minor injuries.				
25	Carries out outreach programmes to sensitise students about outbreak of epidemic and measures for prevention and the treatment available.				

Indicate any other health service you access;

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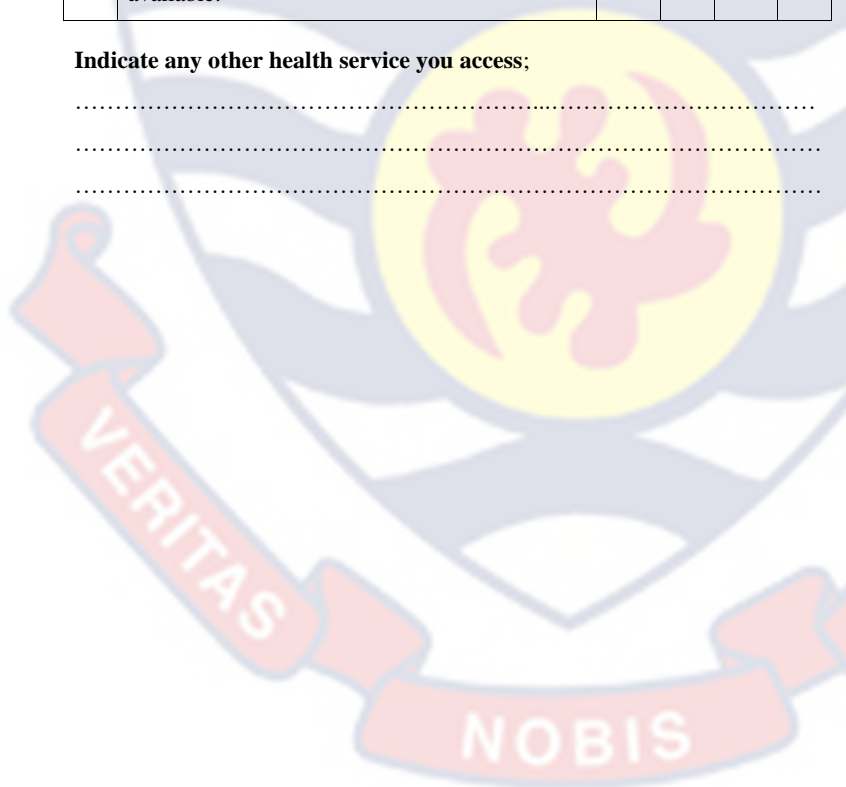
SECTION C – CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING STUDENT SERVICES

Please rate the following statements on challenges you face in accessing student services. Key: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree

S/N	Description	SD	D	A	SA
26	Inadequate knowledge/awareness about student services.				
27	Personnel of student services not approachable.				
28	Breach of confidentiality by personnel at student services centres.				
29	I do not feel comfortable accessing student support services.				
30	Negative perception held by peers/colleagues prevent me from accessing student support services.				
31	Fear of being ridiculed by peers/colleagues.				
32	Fear of being ridiculed by personnel at the students support services centres.				

Please indicate any other challenges you face

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APPENDIX C

TUTOR/PERSONNEL INTERVIEW GUIDE

This interview seeks to gather information regarding your experiences in your college in terms of student support services. This exercise is purely for academic purposes, and for that matter any information you provide will be kept secretly and treated confidentially. Under no circumstance will information provided be used to victimise you. Please note that participation in this study is by volition and not compulsory. You can, therefore, withdraw at any time you feel so. Please be honest and provide accurate information as possible to the best of your knowledge.

1. For how long have you been teaching in the college?

2. What position(s) do you hold in the college?

3. What support services does your college offer to students?

4. How often do students use the support services mentioned? (*Probe on students' usage of the following: guidance and counselling, academic advising, orientation, health and residence services*)

5. What challenges do students face in accessing the support services mentioned? *(Probe: awareness or knowledge, personnel and students' attitude, issues of confidentiality, etc.)*

6. What challenges does your college face in providing support services for students? *(Probe: awareness or knowledge, resources and centre facilities, etc.)*

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