UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

ASSESSMENT OF THE RATIONALITY OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENTS' CHOICES OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES IN KWABRE

DISTRICT OF GHANA

KWADWO OTENG AKYINA

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BY

KWADWO OTENG AKYINA

Thesis submitted to the Department of Educational Foundations of the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Guidance and Counselling.

JULY 2009

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: Akyina Kwadwo Oteng

Supervisors' Declaration

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

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

Name: Rev. Prof. J. K. Essuman

Co-supervisor's Signature………………………… Date:………...................

Name: Dr. Frederick Ocansey

ABSTRACT

The study sought to find out whether Kwabre District Senior High School students make rational choices of academic programmes in school. The population of the study was all students in the six Senior High Schools in Kwabre District. However, the Form 3 students were purposively sampled for the study. Stratified random sampling technique with proportional allocation was used to sample 331 Form 3 students from the various programmes in each school for the study. A self-made questionnaire was used to gather data from the 331 respondents. A total of 320 copies of the questionnaire were obtained from the respondents. Statistical Product for Service Solutions was used to analyze the data. Frequencies and percentages were analyzed to answer all the research questions.

It was found out that generally Senior High School students in Kwabre District make rational choices of their programmes of study. This is because most of them assessed their strengths and weaknesses and sought information on their programmes before choosing them. Again, most of them chose their programmes based on their abilities or interests and expressed satisfaction with their programmes of study. However, few of them sought counselling from qualified counsellors before choosing their programmes. It was recommended that school counsellors should reinforce students' rational programme choice behaviour by intensifying counselling in schools so that students will continue to make rational choices of programmes in school.

DEDICATION

The work is dedicated to my wife Dorcas Tiwaah and son David Kwame Akyina Oteng.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SHS   Senior High School

CRDU   Curriculum Research and Development Unit

CSSPS   Computerized School Selection and Placement System

JHS   Junior High School

BECE   Basic Education Certificate Examination

REBT   Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy

IQ   Intelligence Quotient

OIP   Occupational Interest Inventory

SAT   Standford Achievement Tests

MAT   Metropolitan Achievement Tests

CAT   California Achievement Test

SBIT   Stanford Binet Intelligence Test

WIS   Wechsler Intelligence Scale

SCII   Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory

MVII   Minnesota Vocational Interest Inventory

VII   Vocational Interest Inventory

KOIS   Kudor Occupational Interest Survey

TAT   Thermatic Apperception Test

CPI   California Psychological Inventory

IEPA   Institute of Educational Planning and Administration

GES   Ghana Education Service

CPP   Convention People's Party

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Education has been defined diversely by different authors. In fact Aggarwal (2004) cites forty six (46) different definitions of education in his book. However, they all seem to agree that education helps train up the individual to fit well into society. Nunn (cited in Aggarwal, 2004) defines education as "the complete development of the individual so that he can make an original contribution to human life to his best capacity" p. 9. Milton (cited in Appiah, 1994) defines education as "that which enables a man to perform justly, skillfully and with satisfaction the offices both private and public whether in peace or in war" p. 12. Appiah (1994, p. 14) noted that "education aims at cultivating the mind or the intellect, ensuring social reformation, ensuring love in society, bringing about self realization and ensuring good life".

Thus in the traditional educational set up, parents took their children through the values and norms of society and also taught them occupations which became their career. The children were taught farming, hunting, black smithing among others to enable them fit well into society.

With the inception of western education, the idea of training the young to acquire employable skills was not discarded. According to McWilliams and Kwamena-Poh (1975), "the Bremen Mission's efforts in technical education were also for many years unique in this country. Industrial establishments were opened at Christiansborg which gave courses for joiners, wheelwrights, carpenters, lock-smiths, shoemakers and book-binders" p. 31.

Successive governments over the years till now, have laid serious emphasis through educational reforms, on the need to have programmes in schools that will train the youth to occupy their positions in society. According to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2004) White Paper Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, the main purpose of the 2004 Education Reforms was to come out with human capital in the country better trained and better prepared to meet the challenges of the modern world. This the government recognizes in the report, can be done through serious emphasis on guidance and counselling so that pupils can make right choices of programmes in schools, make good plans and decisions and promote discipline in schools. This view is supported by Gibson and Mitchell (1990), when they said that "Guidance and counselling help pupils to assess their potentials and make proper career development in life" p. 61.

Shertzer and Stone (1976) defined Guidance as "a process of helping individuals to understand themselves and their world" p. 38. Counselling on the other hand, is defined by Makinde (1983) as "a service designed to help an individual analyze himself by relating his capabilities, achievements, interests and

mode of adjustment to what new decision he has made or he has to make" p. 44. George and Cristiani (1990) give us five major goals of guidance and counselling that are emphasized in most counselling theories and models. These are facilitating changes in one's behaviour, improving social and personal relationships and increasing social effectiveness and ability to cope. The rest are learning decision making processes and enhancing human potential and self-development.

Writing on the history of guidance and counselling in Ghana, Essuman (1999) alludes that "guidance and counselling before the 1960's was purely voluntary and non-formalized" p. 22. It was carried out in schools by teachers, chaplains, school prefects and housemasters and at home by parents, guardians and family elders. These people guided students by providing a place for them to socialize and recreate, advising them on moral issues and orienting them into programmes and activities in the school.

Formal guidance and counselling in schools started in 1960's and 1970's. It was pioneered by notable people like D. O. K. Dankwa, Nathaniel Kofi Pecku, J. Opoku, Prof. Cooke, Joseph Kpakpoe-Allotey, E. T. Akwettey, I. J. Okyere, J. K. Nimo and S. K. Atakpa. D. O. K. Dankwa, who is acclaimed as the father of guidance and counselling, N. K. Pecku and I. J Opoku, former lecturers of University of Cape Coast contributed by way of writing articles, attending and organizing workshops to educate people on the need for guidance and counselling in schools. Joseph Kpakpoe-Allotey and E. T. Akwettey, who were working at Curriculum Research Development Unit (CRDU) and I. K. Okyere, J. K. Nimo

and S. K. Atakpa, lecturers at University of Cape Coast, contributed by way of helping in the organization of vocational programmes at Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) for training of Guidance Co-ordinators. Kpakpoe-Allotey and Akwettey again contributed by experimenting the use of cumulative record cards in basic schools and teacher training colleges. The above mentioned personalities worked for the institution of formal guidance and counselling in schools in Ghana.

According to Essuman (1999), the first attempt to bring into being formalized guidance in schools in Ghana was in 1955 when the Ministry of Social Welfare and Education came together to establish Youth Employment Departments following the outcry of Ghanaians for education that would cater for their manpower needs. This led to the establishment of Youth Employment Department in the country where Middle school leavers less than 20 years were given vocational guidance. In 1960, serious work to establish guidance and counselling in schools took place when the Curriculum Research Development Unit (CRDU) came into being to cater for programmes like guidance and counselling among others.

In 1976, Essuman (1999) alludes that a major success was chalked when the government of Ghana came out with a policy through Ghana Education Service (GES) for the establishment of guidance and counselling in Senior High Schools in Ghana. The policy authorized the University of Cape Coast to train counsellors for the second cycle schools. By 1981, about 200 Guidance Co-ordinators had been trained by the University of Cape Coast. Guidance and

4

counselling came to be instituted in schools because of the call for education that would train school leavers for the manpower needs of the country.

According to Unachukwu (1989), there are three major focuses of guidance and counselling namely vocational guidance, personal-social guidance and educational guidance. Vaughan (cited in Unachukwu, 1989), sees vocational guidance as helping people to choose work in which they will be reasonably contented and successful within the limits of their abilities. Personal-social guidance on the other hand, concerns dealing with problems of people's interpersonal relationship with members of their peer group, teachers, parents and significant figures. It further encompasses problems of transition from one school to another.

Educational guidance involves amongst other things course planning and solution of numerous problems students come across during the course of their studies. According to Denga (1982), it aims at maximizing the intellectual potential of the students so that they may live up to all their abilities as persons as well as learners of the subject matter.

Peters and Farwell (cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991) are of the view that educational guidance is

> the assistance given to pupils individually and through group techniques to help them function more effectively in their school progress. Educational guidance assists pupils to know and to act in terms of their present and future education needs and opportunities. It includes assistance given to the pupil in adjusting to the school;

5

selecting curricular and extra curricular offerings of the school; and

planning, preparing and carrying through an appropriate educational

plan of development (p. 38).

The above implies that in schools, there are a lot of problems facing the child and these include the choice of subjects, how to study, anxiety on whether to pass or fail examinations, choice of schools to attend, how to combine subjects so as to pursue any area of study, disillusionment with chosen subjects, problem of coping with a course of study, lack of interest and lack of motivation.

The Senior High School (SHS) is the second phase of the high school system. In the Senior High School, students need proper channelling of their interests, aptitudes and abilities. They should be guided in order not to make wrong choices of subjects which may affect them adversely in life. The counsellor through educational guidance helps students to solve most of the educational problems they encounter. Educational guidance takes into consideration the total individual, his needs and aspirations. It makes sure that each student makes appropriate choice of courses and institutions on the basis of interest, ability and aim in life.

In Ghana, Junior High School (JHS) students make choices of programmes to pursue at the Senior High School level. This is the level where individuals decide on the career to pursue in life. Students choose from the Arts, Science, Agriculture, Visual Arts, Home Economics, Business and Technical programme options. Students need proper educational guidance in Senior High School so that they can make intelligent choices of their programmes of study.

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the country, Senior High School students make choices of programmes to pursue at that level of education. The programmes students pursue at Senior High Schools are Arts, Science, Agriculture, Visual Arts, Home Economics, Business and Technical. Each student at Senior High School level is supposed to choose and pursue one of the above mentioned programmes.

In the past and recent times, there have been concerns about how students make choices of programmes in school. This is because it is believed that, one of the factors contributing to the high rate of unemployment in the country is poor selection of programmes in schools.

Olayinka (1973) stated that,

the choices of programmes or careers are often made at an age when most of the students are too young and immature to be fully aware of the consequences of some of the choices they may make in terms of the continued education and the sort of life they will have open to them in future. Once choices of subjects are made, they are almost irreversible. To make matters worse, most students have limited or no reliable information to guide them in their choices of careers with the consequent result that many of them are locked into careers that appeared promising at the age of fifteen but become boring and unsatisfying by the age of twenty-five years (p. 41).

Ashong (2002) discovered that students entering Senior High School in Ho in the Volta region of Ghana, lacked information on programme offerings in

Senior High School and career opportunities after school. In fact 80 percent of the respondents of his study lacked information on programmes offered at Senior High School. They thus chose wrong programmes at Senior High School.

Adadevoh in the Ghanaian "Weekly Spectator" of April 6, 1991, stated that, the reason for high unemployment especially among the youth in the country is that, all throughout a person's formal education in Ghana, particularly in first and second cycle institutions, very little come to a student by way of career guidance. The student is more or less left to himself to decide on the subjects of his study. He takes up subject combinations which will not yield fruits in the future. Sometimes these choices are made contrary to his ability and also without his having access to knowing which career opportunities are open after school. Also, a student very often does not know that by studying this or that course he would end up with certain or no career opportunities in Ghana.

In another report, Nkrumah, in the Daily Graphic of October 28, 2008, called for effective career guidance and counselling for students in order to ensure that they do not end up in professions that do not match their strength and interest. According to him, many students developed their academic and professional careers without the necessary guidance and counselling and as a result end up in academic pursuits and professions they do not have ability and interest to do. To the writer, when that happens, students tend to be frustrated and as a result they do not give their best in the academic fields or professions they find themselves in. He concluded that it was important for all second and third cycle institutions to provide effective guidance and counselling to students to ensure that students

went about their studies with enthusiasm and an awareness of future career prospects.

In Ghana, no known current study has been done to ascertain how true the above assertions are. Therefore do Senior High School students make choices of programmes after finding out if they can do well or not? Do they make the choice after finding out the career opportunities in the area or they just rely on mere suggestions from others? Do they base their choices on any realistic thinking or do they choose the programmes for choosing sake? The problem that this study sought to address was how rational or irrational students choose programmes at Senior High Schools in Kwabre District.

Purpose of the Study

Senior High School education is one of the most important and crucial levels of education in the country. It is at this level that a choice is made as to the programme and hence the career to pursue in life. The purpose of the study was therefore to find out how rational or irrational students go about making choices of programmes at Senior High Schools in Kwabre District. Specifically, the study aimed at:

1) Finding out the extent to which Senior High School students in Kwabre District find out if they will perform well or not in a particular programme before choosing it.

2) Ascertaining the factors students consider most in their choices of programmes at Senior High Schools in Kwabre District.

9

3) Knowing the extent to which students utilize the services offered by counsellors in their choices of programmes at Senior High School.

4) Finding out if students are happy with the programmes they are pursuing or they will change them if opportunity is given to them to make a change.

Research Questions

In line with the purpose of the study, the following research questions were provided to guide the study:

1) To what extent do Senior High School students in Kwabre District find out if they would perform well or not in a programme before deciding to do it?

2) What factors influence Kwabre District Senior High School students in their choices of programmes?

3) To what extent do Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek information on their preferred programmes before choosing it?

4) What information do Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek on their preferred programmes?

5) To what extent do Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek counselling from qualified counsellors in their choices of programmes?

6) How satisfied are Senior High School students in Kwabre District with their chosen programmes?

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study have provided information on how Senior High School students in Kwabre District make choices of programmes at that level of education. School counsellors would know the extent to which Senior High School students avail themselves for counselling in their choices of programmes in Senior High School. Ghana Education Service (GES) would be alerted on the need to strengthen educational guidance in Junior and Senior High Schools by providing students with career information before they make choices of programmes. The study would also give information on students' sources of information when making subject/career choices in Senior High Schools. Last but not least, it would add to knowledge and existing literature on students' programme choices at Senior High School in Kwabre District and programme choices in schools in general.

Delimitation of the Study

A study of this nature could have been done for all Senior High Schools in Ghana, but due to limited resources and time, this was not possible. The study is therefore limited to cover only the Kwabre District in Ashanti region to ensure better coverage and effective work. Among the choices that students make at Senior High Schools, only choice of academic programmes was chosen for study. Again, the study looked at only the rational aspect of their choices of programmes in Senior High Schools. Findings from the study apply to Senior High Schools in Kwabre District. Other Districts with similar characteristics as Kwabre District

may, perhaps adapt the findings to help improve programme choices in their Senior High Schools.

Limitations

The study, like any other research, has its limitations. A comprehensive study using all Senior High Schools in Ghana could have been ideal if time limitation and financial constraints had not been an imposition. In that case, the findings would have applied to the whole country. Despite precautions that were taken to avoid errors in sampling, the study might have been affected by certain events that occurred during the data gathering process.

It is possible that some of the respondents did not take their time to read the questions carefully before completing the copies of the questionnaire. Some also might not have understood the questions or instructions well even though the researcher spent about 10 minutes explaining some of the items to respondents in each school. Some respondents might not be honest and might have given responses, which might not reflect the reality of the situation. Some respondents might have colluded in answering the questionnaire. In all cases, respondents were likely to give misleading responses which would not portray the situation on the ground making the conclusions of the study not really true in real setting.

Operational Definition of Terms

In the context of this study, certain terms or expressions have been used with special meanings. These need to be defined as used in the study for easy understanding of readers. They are as follows:

Rational choice: To make intelligent choice or make choices after careful assessment of one's strengths, weaknesses and interests in life.

Emotive: Making people have strong feelings.

Therapy: The treatment or examination of someone's mental problems by talking to him for a long time about his feelings.

Self-concept: The way one sees himself.

Congruence: Fitting together well; suitable

Western Education: Formal form of education involving the use trained of teachers and pupils/ students who receive formalized instruction from them.

Programme: An area of specialization in one's academic pursuit in school.

Organization of the Study

This is a work on students' choices of academic programmes in Senior High Schools. It sought to find out how rational students make choices of programmes in Senior High Schools.

The research report consists of five chapters. Chapter one, which is the introduction, gives the overview of the study and has been presented under subheadings namely; Background, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study and the Research Questions. Other areas treated are Significance of the

study, Delimitations of the study, Limitations, Operational Definition of Terms and the Organization of the Study.

Chapter two deals with the Review of the Related Literature as a means of obtaining enough information on the study. The section is divided into two namely theoretical review and empirical review. Under the theoretical review, literature is specifically reviewed in the following areas: History of Senior High School Education in Ghana, The Structure of Senior High School Education in Ghana, Programme offerings at Senior High Schools in Ghana, Choices of Programmes at Senior High Schools and Concepts of Rationality and Irrationality. The rest are Theories of Career Choice, Career Information and Psychological Tests in School Counselling. Aspects reviewed under the empirical review are Factors that Influence Students' Choice of Career. The section ends with summary of the review.

The third chapter of the study is the methodology. It looks at the research design used, the population, sample, sampling procedure, the instrument used for data collection, pilot-testing of the instrument, the data collection procedure and the data analysis plan.

The fourth chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the findings of the research, taking into consideration the research questions formulated to guide the study.

Chapter five is the last part of the study and it gives the summary of the study and draws conclusions to the key findings of the study. It outlines the

implication of the study's findings for counselling, recommendations from the study and finally spells out suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study focuses on the rationality of students' choices of programmes in Senior High Schools. This review is designed to acquaint the reader with existing literature on students' choices of programmes or career in schools. The review is divided into two aspects namely theoretical review and empirical review.

Under the theoretical review which sets out the theoretical base of the study, the history of Senior High Schools in Ghana, the structure of Senior High School education in Ghana, programme offerings at Senior High Schools in Ghana, choice of programmes in Senior High Schools in Ghana, theories of rationality and irrationality, theories of career choice and occupational information have been reviewed. The rest are career information and the use of psychological tests in counselling.

The second aspect of the review which is the empirical review looks at studies done on factors that influence students' choice of career in schools.

Theoretical Review

History of Senior High schools in Ghana

According to McWilliams and Kwamena-Poh (1975), "the first Senior High Schools established in the country are Mfanstipim and Adisadel" p. 61.

These schools were set up to prepare people for university education. They continue that, following the call from the 1920 committee of education that there was a need for Senior High School of somewhat wider and higher description; Achimota School was established in 1927 under its first principal, the Reverend A.G. Frazer. Achimota School was from the start independent of the government in such important matters as staffing and after 1930 when the Achimota Council was established to control its affairs, it became virtually an autonomous institution.

McWilliams and Kwamena-Poh (1975), further indicate that the next Senior High school to be established was Accra Academy by a private individual Mr. K. G. Konuah, after finding himself retrenched by Achimota. He presided over the school for 21 years. This was followed in the northern part of Ghana with the establishment of Tamale Senior School for boys and later another one for girls.

The formation of Ghana Education Trust Fund which dates back to 1948, McWilliams and Kwamena-Poh (1975) allude, led to increase in establishment of Senior High Schools in Ghana. They put across that, "after the fund was used to build Ghana National College in Cape Coast which was intended to be truly national institution, the fund helped in the building of more schools such that by 1961 when the trust ceased operation, there were 61 public Senior High Schools including 24 that were built by the trust" p. 95.

According to McWilliams and Kwamena-Poh (1975), when the Convention People Party (CPP) was overthrown in 1966, there were 105 public

Senior High Schools in the country with a total enrolment of 42111. In 1971-1972, these figures had increased to 139 and 56801 respectively. In forty of the 139 Senior High Schools, there were sixth-form classes in addition to the normal Forms 1-5, and in all there were 3578 sixth form students. Currently, according to Ghana Education Service (2009) Register of Programmes for Public Senior High Schools, there are a total of 493 public Senior High Schools and 71 registered private Senior High Schools in the country.

The Structure of Senior High School Education in Ghana

According to Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports' (2004) White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, the structure of education in Ghana would be as follows:

1) 2 year kindergarten education to occupy Ghanaian children from age 4-6

2) 6 year primary education to occupy Ghanaian children from age 6-12

3) 3 year Junior High School education to occupy Ghanaian children from age 12-15

4) 4 year Senior High School education to occupy Ghanaian children from age 15-19

5) Continuation to tertiary institution or 2 year apprenticeship training

The report further puts forward that, "a Junior High School education lasting a period of 3 years would be able to properly equip students to move into a

diversified system of Senior High School comprising options in vocational, technical, agricultural and general education" p. 19. Access to Senior High School according to the report will be through externally supervised examinations in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, social studies and Ghanaian languages.

On Senior High education, the report states that "Senior High School education should eventually be made available on a universal basis to Ghanaian youth and that Senior High School system, should be organized both as terminal education for entry to world of work, and as a preparatory stage for entry into tertiary education" p. 21.

Antwi (1992) outlines the following as objectives of Senior High School education:

To reinforce the objectives of primary education

1. To provide opportunities for developing in our students the qualities of leadership which will enable them to enter into gainful employment

2. To equip students with those occupational skills which will enable them to enter into gainful employment

3. To develop in them the longing for further improvement (p. 98, 99).

Programme Offerings at Senior High School

According to Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2004) White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, the system of Senior High School education should eventually embrace the under listed five programmes, but with a great deal of common content and flexibility for the adaptability of its development of individual aptitudes and the adaptability of its products to changing job opportunities and technological development:

1) General education with electives in either arts or science

2) Vocational education with electives in either home economics or visual arts

3) Technical education

4) Agricultural education and

5) Business education

The report further says that the following core subjects should be offered in the first 2 years of the 4 year Senior High School programme. They are: mathematics, computer studies, general science, social studies and English. As soon as enough teachers can be trained, French will be added to the list of compulsory subjects.

In each of the programmes, students are required to select 3 or 4 elective subjects in the second year to pursue alongside the above mentioned core subjects. The elective subjects for arts programme are Literature, Christian Religious Studies, Government, History, Economics, Geography, Twi and Elective Mathematics. Those for science programme are Physics, Chemistry,

Biology and Elective Mathematics. General Agriculture, Chemistry, Physics, Animal Husbandry and Elective Mathematics are the elective subjects for agriculture programme. In the business programme, students are to pursue Accounting, Typing, Introduction to Business Management, Economics and Business Mathematics and Costing as their elective subjects. The elective subjects for home economics programme are Foods and Nutrition, Clothing and Textiles, General Knowledge in Art, Economics and Chemistry. Finally, students who pursue visual arts programme do General Knowledge in Art, Textiles, Graphic Design, Picture Making, Economics and Chemistry as their elective subjects.

Choices of Programmes in Senior High School

According to Ghana Education Service (2004) Technical Working Committee Report on the Computerized School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS), prior to 1987, placement of students into Senior High Schools and programmes offered by the schools were through Common Entrance Examination (Aptitude Test) and the process was school-based where admission letters were issued to successful candidates. With the view of increasing access to Senior High School education, the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) was introduced. The Basic Education Certificate Examination results are used to select and place candidates into Senior High Schools and programmes run in the schools.

At the introduction of the Basic Education Certificate Examination, according to Ghana Education Service (2004) Technical Working Committee

Report on the Computerized School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS), selection of students to high schools and programmes in them were done manually. The manual system, according to the report, was beset with several problems resulting in slow and laborious system of students' selection. As a result of this, in 2004, the Computerized School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS) was introduced to replace the manual system (GES report on CSSPS, 2004)

According to the report, selection of students to programmes in Senior High Schools is done through the use of raw scores of six subjects in Basic Education Certificate Examination instead of grades in those subjects. For entry into programmes in Senior High Schools, scores in 4 subjects in Basic Education Certificate Examination namely English, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Social Studies plus candidate's scores in two other subjects are used in the selection. For the technical and vocational programmes or institutions, English, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Pre-technical/ Vocational skills plus candidate's scores in 2 other best subjects in Basic Education Certificate Examination are used. Previously, students were to select 4 schools and 4 programmes they wish to pursue at Senior High School. However, there has been a recent modification of the number of schools and programmes to be selected. In a report titled "Computer Selection Reviewed" which appeared in the Ghanaian Times (March 30, 2009), written by Lawrence Akpalu, prospective Senior High School students now have opportunity to select 6 schools and 6 programmes they

prefer to pursue at Senior High School. They are made to pursue only one of these 6 selected programmes at the Senior High School level.

Concepts of Rationality and Irrationality

According to Nozick (1993), the terms rationality and irrationality are often used in psychotherapy and the concepts are often known in Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) originated and developed by Ellis (1962). To Ellis (1962), "humans are both rational and irrational and by maximizing one's intellectual powers, one can free oneself of emotional disturbances" p. 44. He continues by saying that blame and anger are viewed as dysfunctional and irrational feeling. He argues that people behave in certain ways because they believe that they should or must act in these ways. People possess a high degree of suggestibility and negative emotionalism (anxiety, guilt and hostility). Emotional problems according to Ellis (1962) are as a result of illogical, irrational and muddled thinking and the maximization of one's intellectual powers will certainly free him from these emotional processes.

Achebe (cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991), asserts that "individuals make themselves victims of irrational thinking patterns and can virtually destroy themselves through irrational and muddled thinking" p. 161. According to her, the counsellor's task therefore is to correct thought patterns and rid people of irrational ideas with "hard-headed" techniques.

The major irrational ideas held and perpetuated by men and women that invariably lead to self-defeat and neurosis as set forth by Ellis (1975) and Ellis and Harper (1975) are listed below:

1. You must be loved by and receive approval from virtually every other person.

2. You must always be thoroughly competent and achieving to be worthwhile.

3. Certain people are inherently bad and evil and should be punished.

4. When things do not go the way we want, life is awful and a terrible disaster.

5. Unhappiness comes from events outside you, and you have no control over your unhappiness.

6. If some event is scary, you should dwell on it and be upset about it.

7. It is easy to avoid difficulties than to face them.

8. You should depend on people who are stronger than yourself.

9. A pattern that has occurred in your life will continue to occur.

10. You should be upset by other people's problems.

11. Things should turn out better than they do, and it is catastrophic if things do not turn out as you wish them to.

Ellis (1975) contends that these ideas are taught by parents, absorbed from social agencies and are the cause of most people's emotional disturbances. Ellis (cited in Morris & Kanitz, 1975) has formulated a theory of personality identified as the A-B-C-D-E theory. The theory is summarized below:

A. - Activating experience

B. – Belief or interpretation of experience

C. – Emotional consequences

D. – Disputing irrational beliefs

E. – Emotional effect

The task of the counsellor according to Ellis (1962), is

> to work with individuals who are unhappy and troubled and
> to show them that their difficulties result largely from
> distorted perceptions and illogical thinking. Again that there
> is relatively simple, though work-requiring method of re-
> ordering their perception and re-organizing their thinking so
> as to remove the basic cause of their difficulties (p. 36).

Ellis (1962) contends that "all effective counsellors teach or induce their clients to reperceive or rethink life events" p. 40. Clients, by doing so, modify their irrational thought, emotion and behaviour. The main goal of rational emotive therapists therefore is to demonstrate to clients that their self-verbalizations have been and currently are the source of their emotional disturbances.

Rational emotive practitioners uncover their clients past and present illogical thinking by:

1. bringing them forcibly to their attention or consciousness

2. showing them how they are causing and maintaining their disturbances and unhappiness

3. demonstrating exactly what the irrational links in their internalized sentences are

4. teaching them how to rethink, challenge, contradict and verbalize these so that their internalized thoughts become more logical and efficient and

5. disputing the main irrational ideas (Ellis, 1962).

Theories of Career Choice

A theory is a way of organizing and putting in a systematic manner what is known about a phenomenon (Shertzer & Stone, 1977). According to Achebe (as cited in Uba, 1983), theories act as a road map to be constantly referred to in the journey towards helping an individual find the direction he is going, how to get there and what signs to look for. Several theories have been postulated to account for people's choice of programme/ career. Among them are the following:

Career Development Theory by Ginzberg and Associates

According to Nwanuo (cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991), one of the earliest vocational choice theories appeared in 1951 as a result of team work to the study in the developmental events that lead to vocational choice. The team includes E. Ginzberg an economist, S. W. Ginsburg a psychiatrist, S. Axelrad a sociologist and J. L. Herman a psychologist. They had four variables that had relevance to career choice:

a) Reality factors which is, the person's responses to environmental preserves that lead to occupational decision.

b) The educational process defined in terms of quality and quantity of education available to the individual. This factor limits or widens the range of choices an individual can make at any given point in time.

c) The emotional factors which are thought to include the personality aspects.

Ginzberg and his associates pictured occupational choice process as covering three principal phases:

1. The fantasy period that is prior to adolescence and it is marked by arbitrary choice that lacks any rational or reality base

2. Tentative period which is marked by the realization by the child that he likes certain activities better than others and performs better in those activities he likes more. The tentative period is between 11-17 years and goes through four stages namely

   a) Interest stage where choices are made by preadolescent basically in relation to their interest.

   b) The capacity stage during which the individuals become more aware of introducing realistic elements into their consideration.

   c) Value stage which is characterized by adolescents' attempt to find a place for themselves in society.

   d) Transition stage in which the individual approaches the end of high school and must look forward to either work or additional education.

3. Realistic period which covers 17-21 years and comprises many stages. It includes

   a) Exploration stage where individuals try to acquire the experiences they need to resolve their occupational choices

   b) Crystallization which covers the time when individuals are able to assess the vast bodies of factors influencing the occupational choices they have had under consideration and are finally able to command

   c) Specification stage where alternatives are reviewed with respect to an area of specialization and the particular career objective.

Ginzberg and associates according to Nwanuo (as cited in Unachwukwu & Igborgbor, 1991), stressed four key elements of process, compromise and irreversibility in their original theory:

   i. They said that occupational choice is a decision-making process that extends from pre-puberty until the late teens or early 20's when the individual makes a definite occupational commitment

   ii. Many educational and other preparatory decisions along the way have the quality of irreversibility. Example, a student who is pursuing a pre-law curriculum cannot suddenly shift track and seek admission to medical school.

iii. The resolution of the choice process always ends in a compromise, since the individual seeks to find an optimal fit between his interests, capabilities and values, and the world of work.

iv. Occupational choice and eventual entry is a process consisting of a series of stages that the individual will go through that is fantasy, tentative and realistic stages.

The implication of Ginzberg and associates theory is that it does not ignore environmental constraints on occupational choice. It treats environment as a dynamic factor that plays different roles in vocational development. The theory also realizes that interest, capabilities and values play major successive dominance in determining choice before reality begins to play a major role. It also recognizes that realistic vocational choices emerge with age.

Donald Super's Career Development Theory

The basic idea of Super's theory is self concept. He believes that an individual will make occupational choices which are highly consistent with his picture of himself. He views vocational development as consisting of interaction between the individual behaviour, attitudes, ambitions, values and the social factors that surround him/her.

Super (1953) makes 12 propositions as contained in the scientific career and vocational development theory:

1) Vocational development is a continuous process and occupational choice is a synthesizing process which involves an individual personal need and resources on one side and the economic and social needs on the other.

2) Synthesizing process is a learning process and learning occurs through role playing and role taking. What is learnt is a function of interest, values, attitudes and behaviour patterns that are valued and rewarded by the individual's peer and adult models.

3) Vocational development implies interaction which is both intra-individual and stimulated by environment. It is a dynamic process.

4) Self concepts begin to form prior to adolescence, become clearer in adolescence and are translated into occupational terms in adolescence.

5) Reality factors (the reality of personal characteristics and reality of society) play an increasing important part in occupational choices with increasing age from early adolescence to adulthood.

6) Identification with parents or parents' substitutes as to the development of adequate roles, their consistent and harmonious inter-relationship and their interpretation in terms of vocational plans and eventualities helps in career choices.

7) The direction and rate of the vertical movement of an individual from one occupational level to another are related to his intelligence, parental socio-economic level, status needs, values, interests, skills in interpersonal relationship and the supply and demand conditions in the economy.

8) The occupational field which the individual enters is related to his interest, values and needs, the identifications he makes with parental or substitute role models, the community resources he uses, the level and quality of his educational structure, trends and attitudes of his community.

9) Although each occupation requires a characteristic pattern of abilities, interest and personality traits, the tolerances are wide enough to allow both some variety of individuals in each occupation and some diversity of occupations for each individual.

10) Work satisfactions depend upon the extent to which the individual can find adequate outlets in his job for his abilities, interests, values and personality traits.

11) The degree of satisfaction the individual attains from his work is related to the degree to which he has been able to implement his self concept in his work.

12) Work and occupation provide a focus for personality organization for most men and women, although for some persons, this focus is peripheral, incidental or even non-existent.

According to Super (1953), human development may be summarized in the series of life stages characterized as growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline.

a) Growth stage (birth- 14 years): During this period, emphasis is on physical and psychological growth. The individual forms attitudes, behaviour mechanisms that will be important components of self concept throughout

life. Also, experience provides a background of knowledge of the environment including the world of work which will be used in tentative choices and trial selection. This stage has different phases of fantasy, interest and capacity.

b) Exploration stage (15-24 years): This begins with the individual awareness that an occupation will be an aspect of life. At the early stages of this period, choices are unrealistic and always related to play life of an individual. The child's understanding of self and the world of work is not sufficiently developed to make effective choices. The phases of exploration are the tentative phase and the realistic phase.

    i.   Tentative phase: Here, the individual has a limited choice of possibilities because of uncertainty about ability, availability of training and access to employment opportunity.

    ii.   In the realistic phase of exploration, the individual actually enters into work which narrows down the occupations the individual feels are attainable. This extends to middle twenties.

c) Establishment stage (25-45 years): This refers to the early encounters within the work experience. During this stage, the individual often tries to ascertain his vocational choices and decisions made during the exploratory period and its validity. The period is characterized by trial and error. The individual may accept job with assumption that he or she will change position or occupation if this one does not fit. As one gains experiences and proficiency, the individual becomes stabilized.

d) Maintenance stage (45-65 years): The individual attempts to continue the occupational situation since both the occupation and the individual's self concept have some aspect of agreement. This period involves continued process of adjustments.

e) Decline stage (65 years and above): The worker is now more concerned with retaining the position than with enhancement. This period terminates with the individuals withdrawal from world of work.

Super's theory stresses that the individual makes occupational choices which are highly consistent with his picture of himself. The individual makes decision depending on the awareness of self and work and their congruency.

Test on role of self-concept in career development have been supportive of Super's theory (Kidd, 1984). A large body of research also exists on the topic of career exploration, but the results have been equivocal (Blustein, 1990) and sometimes only tangentially related to Super's model. Jepson (cited in Brown & Lent, 1992) in a major review of developmental theory research, noted that "the study of vocational exploratory behaviour remains in its infancy despite nearly 20 years of theoretical discussion and research" p. 205.

One of Jepson's (cited in Brown & Lent, 1992) major conclusions was that the evidence did not support the relationships proposed by Super and others between exploratory activity and later career related outcomes. However, Osipow (1983) concluded that Super's theory is generally supported by the research literature. Super's propositions have not been subjected to intensive empirical scrutiny of late, but the research that has appeared, and the indirect evidence from

investigations of related concepts, remain generally supportive of some of Super's constructs such as career stages. Results are equivocal with regard to other aspects of the theory, especially the relationship between early exploratory activity and later outcomes (Brown & Lent, 1992).

The Need Theory by Anne Roe

According to Nwanuo (as cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991), "the need theory has its emphasis on the desire and wants of the individual which influence his occupational choice" p. 182. Anne Roe, the major proponent remarked in 1956 that "there is no single situation in our society which is so capable of giving some satisfaction at all levels". So she believes that "every individual inherits a tendency to expend his energies in a particular way combined with childhood experiences and this constitutes the general manner an individual develops to satisfy his needs throughout his life" (Nwanuo cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991 p. 182). Thus, need satisfaction is the theme of her theory.

Roe was influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs postulated in 1954. Roe (1957) viewed occupational choice as a process of self-categorization, and the individual as an integrated, organized whole whose classification should be based upon his goals and needs; whether conscious or unconscious. She states that "personality differences which exist among individuals evolve from the type of child rearing practice experienced". That the experiences influence the kind of interactions that such person ultimately establishes with other people. The jobs

they choose reflect their early experience. She showed that there are three primary child rearing practices which influence an individual's later career.

A family may manifest an atmosphere in which the child is excessively protected or where undue demands are made. The individual learns that his needs will be met contingent upon his behaving in the desired manner. Thus, as he grows older, this mode of satisfying early needs, conditions him to choose an occupation in which he needs and depends on other people's feedback and reward. If the individual on the other hand, was raised in an atmosphere where he was constantly rejected or neglected, either physically or emotionally, he grows up to look to persons or things as a way of finding gratification. He will enjoy limited contacts as a basis for gratifying his needs.

Finally where the individual is completely accepted into family and made to feel he belongs, where he is treated as one amongst equals in a democratic family and where his independence is encouraged, the individual can balance both his person and non-person interest with the need for isolation from others or for intense approval from them. Thus, the conditional acceptance of the child leads to his/ her later choice of people oriented jobs and avoidance of things oriented jobs. Thus to determine which needs of an individual will emerge as the strongest motivating factors in his career development, one has to examine the pattern of the early satisfaction or frustrations the individual experienced as well as the degree and kinds of needs which were satisfied.

Roe (1957) went further to translate these three orientations-emotional concentration on the child, avoidance of the child and the acceptance of the child,

into the eight structure group-and-level occupations. The groups are service, business, organization, technology, outdoor science, general culture and arts and entertainment. The levels include professional and managerial (I), professional and managerial (II), semi professional and small business, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled. The translations are:

a) People oriented individuals tend to choose jobs in service, business contract, organization, general culture, arts and entertainment;

b) The thing oriented person is found in sciences, in technology or outdoor jobs and comes from a rejecting/ neglecting family environment.

c) Those who experienced accepting relationship with parents are comfortable in either of these categories.

She, however, noted that not all individuals attain the same level in their group. The level of attainment varies from the professional and managerial to unskilled level. The level an individual attains within any group depends on his genetic endowments but especially his aptitude and environmental experiences.

According to Roe (as cited in Shertzer & Stone, 1976), the following implications are observed from the theory:

1) The life history of any man and many women, written in terms of or around the occupational history, can give the essence of the person more fully than can any other approach.

2) Situations relevant to this history begin with the birth of the individual into a particular family at a particular place and time and continue throughout his life.

3) There may be differences in the relative weight carried by different factors, but the processes of vocational decision and behaviour do not differ in essence from any other.

4) The extent to which vocational decisions and behaviour are under the voluntary control of the individual is variable, but it could be more than it sometimes seems to.

5) The occupational life affects all other aspects of the life span.

6) An appropriate and satisfying vocation can be a bulwark against neurotic ills or a refuge from them.

7) Since the goodness of life in a social group determines that of its individual members, the efforts of society to maintain stability and at the same time advance in desired ways can perhaps be more usefully directed toward developing satisfying vocational situations for its members than any other.

8) There is no specific occupational slot which is a one-and-only perfect one for any individual. Conversely, there is no single person who is the only one for a particular occupational slot. Within any occupation, there is a considerable range in a number of variables specifying the requirements.

Personality Career Choice Theory by Holland

According to Nwanuo (as cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991), "Holland's theory emphasizes that the personality and the environment of the individual determine his career choice" p. 185. This means that the individual

expresses his personality in the choice of his occupation. Holland (1985) assumes that each individual holds a stereotype of various vocations that have psychological and sociological relevance for him. The theory maintains that the extent to which an individual is happy in life depends on harmony between one's personal characteristics and work environment. Thus the choice of vocation is a reflection of individual's interest, needs, abilities, values and motivation. Consequently, Holland's theory cuts across the other vocational theories formulated.

Holland (1985) classified individuals into six personality types. They include the realistic or motaric type, the intellectual or investigative type, the social or supportive type, the conventional or conforming type, the enterprising or persuasive type and finally the artistic or aesthetic type:

1. The realistic person avoids occupations that demand subjectivity and intellectual abilities. He tries to avoid this either consciously or unconsciously. He takes activities that involve motor skills such as athletics and crafts.

2. The intellectual person deals with his environment by the use of intelligence. He prefers to work with ideas rather than with people. Typical settings include a research laboratory, work groups of mathematician or research engineers. He is introverted and avoids much of social situations. He is rarely or never a good leader.

3. The social person likes social interaction and therefore prefers educational and religious vocation such as church work, community service and dramatizing. Unlike the intellectual person, he is a good leader.

4. Conventional person approaches his problem in a stereotype, correct and unoriginal way. He is never creative. He puts high values on economic matters and identifies himself with business men. He reduces stress by conforming to majority rule. Such people prefer clerical and library occupations where structure and order are already available.

5. Enterprising person copes with his environment by choosing occupations which permit him to express his spirit of adventure. Thus he prefers sales, leadership positions and supervisory roles.

6. The artistic person prefers occupation which would allow him to express his creative ability. He is more interested in occupations like musical, artistic, literary and dramatic vocations and other activities that are creative in nature.

According to Holland (1985), an occupation is a way of life, an extension of personality and an attempt to implement one's broad personal behaviour style in the context of a job. One's occupational choice is an expressive act reflecting his motivations, his knowledge of the occupations in question, his insight and understanding of himself, his personality and abilities.

Holland (1985) hypothesized that personality type determines the primary direction of educational/ vocational choice has been a popular topic of inquiry. Studies involving either college students or employed workers have found that

personality types generally aspired to fields that match their primary interest. For example, in nursing (Hecht, 1980) and premedical (Henry & Bardo, 1987) student samples, a majority of students evidenced primary interest themes that correspond to theoretical expectations. Similarly, samples of non-college-degreed male (Greenlee, Damarin & Walsh, 1988) and female (Mazen, 1989) workers tended to occupy work environments that conformed to their predominant interests. However, Heesacker, Elliot and Howe (1988), in a sample of sewing machine operators, found that subjects' predominant code (social) did not match that expected by Holland's typology (conventional).

In a study by Tang (2009) to examine the applicability of Holland's theory of vocational interest and choices of Chinese college students, 165 Chinese college students completed a Chinese version of the Self-Directed Search and a questionnaire requesting demographic information, career choices, reasons for making a particular choice and suggested reasons needed for vocational guidance.

The multidimensional scaling results supported the realistic, intellectual, social, conventional, enterprising and artistic order of Holland's typology for male and female students. The majority of participants had a medium level of congruence between interests and choice as measured by the C-Index. Personal interests, social needs and job market were identified as the top reasons for making a career choice. Practical outcome-oriented career implementation skills were more desired than self-exploration for vocational guidance.

Sagiv (2002) investigated the relationship between vocational interests and basic values. In study one, hypothesis relating interest to values were derived and

tested among 97 clients in counselling. Conventional interests correlated positively with conformity, security and tradition values and negatively with self-direction, stimulation and universalism values. Enterprising interests correlated positively with power and achievement values and negatively with universalism values. Social interests correlated positively with benevolence values. Artistic and investigative interests correlated positively with self direction and universalism values and negatively with conformity and security values. Realistic interests, as expected, did not correlate with values.

In another study, the above findings were replicated among 545 counsellees and the results showed that the above findings better matched the hypothesized pattern of relations among individuals who had reached a quality of career decision during counselling.

Trait-and-Factor Theory

This is the first and the oldest theory to attempt to explain how one selects an occupation. Trait has been defined as a person's generalized and dependable way of behaving in a given situation. Traits develop in an individual as a result of the interaction of heredity and environmental influences. A personality trait can be described as some particular quality of behaviour such as cheerfulness or self reliance which characterizes the individual in a wide range of his activities and fairly consistent within a period of time. Factor on the other hand, is the circumstance helping to bring about a result of such behaviour.

41

Many people have looked at the trait and factor theory from several points of view. Some like Allport (1950) have looked at it from the personality point of view. Williamson considered it from the counselling technique while Parson (1909) the "father of Guidance" approached it from the vocational development angle. Parson (1909) based his theory on individual differences.

The theory states that there is three-step process which an individual follows in choosing a vocation. First, the individual will have an understanding of himself, his abilities, his attitudes and limitations. This is called analysis of person. The second is analysis of job. The individual will be aware of the requirements and condition of success in the job. The third is the true reasoning. This is the true relationship between the individual and the job. The individual chooses the job that matches him best. Thus the theory is known as "matching men and jobs" theory (Nwamuo cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991).

The theory emphasizes the need to identify the client's personal characteristics, as well as the requirements of a job in order to assess accurately if both will match to give him job satisfaction. Again, accurate and valid information about individuals and job characteristics are necessary and these are assessed through objective instructions such as the Bakare's (1972) Vocational Interest Inventory, Vocational Preference Inventory and Occupational Interest Profile (OIP) by Essuman (1988).

Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making

John Krumboltz and his colleague provided the initial effort to tailor Bandura's (1986) general model to the career domain. Their basic position was first formulated about 33 years ago (Krumboltz, Mitchell & Jones, 1976) and has since received several restatements (eg. Krumboltz, 1979), although without major modification or extension of the hypotheses. Krumboltz's (1979) theory is directed primarily at explaining how career relevant preferences and skills are acquired, and how training and career selections are effected and revised.

According to this theory, four categories of factors influence people's career decision paths:

a) Genetic endowment and special abilities such as intelligence,

b) Environmental conditions and events,

c) Learning experiences and

d) Task approach skills, which result from interactions among the first sets of factors.

The effects of these factors are manifest in several key outcomes: self-observation generalizations, world view generalizations, task approach skills (which represent both an influence on and an outcome of career development), and entry behaviours. Krumboltz et al. (1976) offered 19 theoretical propositions, organized into three sets, postulating factors that positively and negatively influence the development of career-relevant preferences, task approach skills and entry behaviours.

There have been several reviews of research on Krumboltz and associates hypotheses (eg. Krumboltz & Rude, 1981; Mitchell, 1979; Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990). Reviewers generally acknowledge that many of the social learning hypotheses have not been directly tested, and that their reviews include much research that is relevant to the theory but did not emanate from it (Brown & Lent, 1992). Mitchell and Krumboltz's (1990) review indicated support for the hypothesis linking positive reinforcement, modeling and encouragement to the development of vocational preferences. Regarding entry behaviours, Mitchell and Krumboltz (1990) cited several studies as demonstrating support for the hypothesis that occupational entry is related to expressed preferences, relevant exposure opportunities and the match between person's skills and educational/ occupational requirements.

Career Information

Hoppoch (1976) defines career information as all kinds of information regarding position, job, or occupation, provided only that the information is potentially useful to a person who is choosing an occupation.

Sources of Career Information

Andah (as cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991), states that there are several sources of career information. Among them are the following:

The immediate community is an excellent source of information about job possibilities. The community also serves as a laboratory for tryout work

experiences for the youths while they are in school or after formal schooling; and as a source of information for field trips and classroom study.

Government agencies at local, state and national levels also provide schools with helpful data about employment trends and job possibilities. Literature is provided by some of these agencies free upon request, or for only a small charge. Labour offices are also set up in some state capitals to give occupational information.

Publications which provide occupational information are also sources of information in published form. Some of these publications give job analysis which is the determination of essential factors in a specific kind of work and of qualifications of a worker necessary for its competent performance.

Some occupational information in the form of bulletin, exhibitions of pictures, graphs, tables, paintings in black and white or coloured, portraying information about jobs, opportunities, trends, qualifications and preparation could be made available in concise summarized form, permitting quick review of stimulating interest in a major occupational group.

"Career week", "Career day" or career exhibitions may be mounted successfully for occupational information by representatives of selected occupations. Career information through the audio-visual aids such as films, tapes, slides, television and radio are also available sources.

Career games, role playing, career fictions containing account portrayed through the experiences of one or more fictional characters of an occupation which may encompass duties, qualifications, preparations, conditions, nature of

work and advancement, serve as important career information media. Books, journals, telephone directories, computer based system-storage retrieval mechanized system, bibliographical account of the life of a successful man or woman in a given field of endeavour are yet other sources of occupational information. Periodicals often contain advertisements of educational and vocational literature (Uba, 1983).

Olayinka (as cited in Uba, 1983) reports that the school counsellor is in a unique position to assist students in acquiring adequate occupational information before they choose their careers.

Role of School Counsellor in Career Information Service

Shertzer (1981) has noted that throughout their school life, students are likely to need help from time to time, not only with their class work, but also with individual problems and important decisions. When students know the people and the resources that are available and the roles they play, Shertzer (1981) remarks, they can turn to the ones most likely to help them. Even when not in need of immediate assistance, knowing what these different roles are can help students get along comfortably with school administration.

According to Afudoh (as cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991) the onus of getting students informed about occupations and subjects relevant to effective job training in such occupations rests on the counsellor. Counsellors should, therefore, ensure that students do not only get to learn about the world of work but also get informed about what it takes to fit into various occupations. In

doing this, counsellors should help students learn about themselves so as to ascertain their interests, strengths and weaknesses. To Afudoh (as cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991), all occupational or personal information available to the counsellor should be utilized in helping individual students make effective decisions regarding occupational choice. Students need to be guided early enough in choosing school subjects so that they do not become handicapped later when it is time to leave school for the world of work.

Afudoh (as cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991), further remarks that, there may be the need for the counsellor to administer some psychological tests to obtain information on personality traits, occupational interests, aptitudes, academic abilities and more. Apart from the counsellors interpreting the data and making use of the information in helping the individual concerned, they preserve the information in the students' cumulative records for future reference.

According to Olayinka (as cited in Uba, 1983), the counsellor assists the individual to make a realistic approach to the choice of a career when the person is made to consider the following information:

1. The minimum educational requirement for entry into the career,

2. The period of training required if any,

3. The general conditions of service which may include

    a) The type of reward in the form of salary

    b) Fringe benefits such as free accommodation, leave allowance, facilities for study leave, opportunity for accelerated promotion

c) Other conditions of work such as working on Sunday, working shifts, extensive travelling and night duties.

d) Pension scheme, the retiring age, gratuity and other benefits.

Psychological Tests in School Counselling

According to Okpara (cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991), the school counsellor in order to help clients make decisions of educational, vocational, social, personal or emotional nature, often resort to the use of psychological tests. He further alludes that "psychological tests are useful for assessing educational achievements and selection and placement of students in classes, programmes and occupations" p. 372. Oladele (1987) defines psychological test as a standardized test which elicits a sample of the subject's behaviour, which can be objectively scored and compared with standards of performance.

Types of Psychological Tests

Oladele (1987) identifies six (6) types of psychological tests used in counselling namely achievements tests, intelligence tests, aptitude tests and interest inventories. The rest are personality inventories and attitude inventories.

1) **Achievements tests:** According to Makinde (1987), achievement test measures the extent to which a student or client has benefited from instruction, from acquired information or from mastery of a skill that is planned and graduated. It is employed to measure academic attainments in

schools after a graduated training and teaching. Examples of achievement tests are Standford Achievement Tests (SAT), Metropolitan Achievement Tests (MAT) and the California Achievement Test (CAT).

2) **Intelligence tests:** Ipaye (1980) asserts that intelligence tests assess intelligence quotient (IQ) level of intellectual functioning; and screening of students into different academic or vocational groups. Individuals through the tests' scores can be guided to make realistic educational and vocational choices according to their ability. Examples of intelligence tests are the revised Stanford Binet Intelligence Test (SBIT) and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for children and for adults (WIS).

3) **Aptitude tests:** According to Tyler (1963), aptitude tests are chiefly used as a predictor of how well individuals will perform in some areas. Aptitude test results tell us what type of schooling or trade any given individual is fitted for. If an individual can perform a task without much effort, it can be concluded that the individual has the aptitude for that task. Examples of aptitude tests are Minnesota Mechanical Assembly Test and General Aptitude Test Batteries.

4) **Interest inventories:** Ipaye (1980) summarized interest inventories as tests designed to ascertain areas of interests and learning. They contain statements on various occupations and tasks which may be presented

singly, in pairs or in triads. The subjects respond to each of the statements in accordance with their preference and aversion for the occupation or task. Some standardized interest inventories used for different sets of people and designed for vocational and educational guidance are Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (SCII), Minnesota Vocational Interest Inventory (MVII), Bakare (1972) Vocational Interest Inventory (VII) and Kudor Occupational Interest Survey (KOIS).

5) **Personality inventories:** These are tests designed to ascertain personality traits and also gives information on other personality characteristics. They are used for personal counselling. Such aspects of personality as emotions, friendliness, introversion-extroversion, honesty and adjustment are measured by personality inventories. Examples of personality inventories are Thermatic Apperception Test (TAT) and California Psychological Inventory (CPI).

6) **Attitude inventory:** An attitude according to Summers (1970) is a predisposition to respond to an object rather than the actual behaviour toward such an object. Attitude therefore, is concerned with ones readiness to exhibit behaviour and not the behaviour itself. Attitude inventories are designed to assess individuals' attitude. There are three major types of attitude scales or inventories. They are the Likert Scale, the Thurstone Scale and the Osgood's Semantic Differential Scale.

Empirical Review

Factors that Influence Students' Choice of Career

A number of studies have been done to identify factors that influence students' choice of career. The variables identified as playing key role in students' career choice are discussed below:

1. **Socio-economic background:** Hannah and Kahn (1989) in a study of the relationship between socio-economic background and women's choice of traditionally male occupations, found out that, using fathers' occupation as a proxy, women whose fathers are highly educated are more inclined towards traditionally male occupations. There is also evidence that sex stereotypes of certain occupations (Fassinger, 1990; Lips, 1992) account for male-female differences in occupational preferences.

   Walter (1962) in a study comparing father's occupation with son's career choices using 8000 first year students in Senior High School, observed that family influences, including child rearing practices and socio-economic level affect career interest. His findings suggest that certain groups of occupations (physical sciences, social sciences, medicine) are 'inherited'. Though it is not specifically known why an association exists between a father's occupation and son's career choice, the relationship is present and influences the career choice of some students.

Regarding the relationships among socio-economic background, occupational choice and choice of teaching career, Floud (1967), notes that teaching is taken by individuals from families in the lower occupational strata who intend to enter the academic profession. He added that the movement may take several years, teaching being the first step on the way to the liberal and scientific top professions. He concludes that teaching is viewed as a second choice of individuals with specific interest and ambitions when for one reason or the other, their aim proves to be unreliable.

Dahlstrom (1967) looking at the role socialization plays in students' career choice, said that factors related to the socialization of women and men and the concomitant sex-role expectations are important determinants of women's real and/or perceived employment opportunities. She further alluded to the fact that where sharp line is demarcated between the roles of women and men, socialization serves to channel women and men towards sex-specific occupations.

2. **Age:** Hustlander (cited in Grewal, 1980) made an analysis and said the occupational choice becomes stable with age. He further remarked that several studies had shown that the stability of occupational interest increases with maturity. Essuman (1986) identified significant differences in career aspirations of Junior High School final year students and Senior High School Form two students in Nigeria. His findings confirmed earlier

findings by Hustlander (cited by Grewel, 1980) that career maturity increases with age. Further studies by Salifu (2000) and Asaolu (2001) also confirmed in their studies that career maturity increases with age.

3. **Job security:** It is found by scholars that job security serves as a basic guiding principle, encouraging people to enter into career of teaching. This is observed by Harvighurst and Neugarten (1962) in their studies. They noted that security is well at hand in the teaching profession for many people than in many occupations. This finding agrees with that of Tudhope (cited in Salifu, 2000) who found out in his study that, the most common factor directing people's attention to enter the teaching career is its economic stability. Salifu (2000) made the same findings.

4. **Intellectual ability:** According to Bruce and Shelly (1976), many diverse factors influence career development of students. Intellectual ability, they note, remains a significant factor in educational and occupational ability, although, a wide range of intelligence represented in nearly every occupation and distribution of intelligence scores in one occupation overlaps that in the other to some extent. Bruce and Shelly (1976) claim that at best, if an individual enters an occupation in which the majority of workers have a higher degree of intelligence than he possesses, he will find himself at a competitive disadvantage. Bruce and Shelly (1976) added that, conversely, if individuals enter an occupation in which majority of

workers has intelligence rating definitely lower than theirs, they may find that neither the work nor their associates are satisfying.

This suggests that intelligence is needed in every occupation. An individual can be found in an occupation which would invariably let him compete with his co-workers in intelligence. He may not become satisfied at a work place where his co-workers have low intelligence compared with his. Bruce and Shelly (1976) also note that schooling exerts a powerful influence upon career choice.

5. **Role models**: In a study of the relationship between students' perception of role model influences and their choice of career, Hackett, Expositos and O'Halloran (1989) found the influence of role models of occupations to be predictive of choice of occupations in general and women's choice of traditionally male occupations in particular. There are also studies on effect of social support in the form of parents' encouragement and pressure on students' occupational choice. Fitzpatrick and Silverman (1989) found that engineering and science majors, for example perceived strong social support for their career choices than did other majors. Eccles (1987) arrived at a similar finding.

6. **Interest:** According to Olayinka (1993), some people are interested in careers that involve frequent interactions with people and they depict their interest in dealing with people by being humorous, friendly, helpful,

understanding and sympathetic towards other persons. He further alludes that "career masters and mistresses know that there is no career which is not difficult, but if a person chooses a career in which he has a vested interest, the boredom, drudgery and other difficulties associated with the career are often reduced" p. 230.

Morgan, Isaac and Sansone (2001) in a study of the role of interest in understanding the career choices of male and female college students found in study one that, the desire for interesting work was cited by most students in the sample (89% white, 6% Asian, 5% other). Compared to men, women reported interpersonal work goals more and high pay and status work goals less frequently.

In study two, students (79% white, 12% Latino, 5% Asian, 4% other, predominantly middle class) perceived physical/mathematical science careers as less likely to afford interpersonal goals and more likely to afford high pay and status goals compared to other careers. Interpersonal goal affordances predicted greater interestingness for all careers, whereas high pay and status goal predicted greater interestingness only for physical/mathematical sciences. Interestingness positively predicted likelihood of career choice.

Cook and Hartman (1986) in an investigation of female students' interest in a sales career as compared to their male counterpart saw that many women have careers in advertising, retailing, merchandising and marketing research, but few women have entered non retail selling. The

question of whether women want a career in non retail selling is addressed. Male and female students in business administration were surveyed to determine their attitudes toward sales careers. Although both men and women view sales career similarly (and rather negatively), women viewed sales careers in general, and wholesale and manufacturer sales position in particular, much more negatively than did men.

7. **Social status and prestige**: According to Olayinka (cited in Uba, 1983), social status and prestige attached to the career such as the type of esteem for the workers, demand for the career and other prospects for social influence and advancement are factors that influence people's choice of career. Ozdemir and Hacifazlioglu (2008) studied a sample of 2459 final year students in 182 high schools in 17 different provinces around Turkey. The study aimed at finding out students' expectations of their prospective universities, and the question of whether or not family background or social status affected their career decisions. Results showed that parents and environment had a great influence on students' occupational preferences. It was also found that students' expectations of universities varied greatly according to their social status and family income.

Salifu (2000) in a study of 332 students of University of Cape Coast to find out factors that influence them to choose Bachelor of Education programme option at the university found out that:

1) More trained teachers than any group of candidates tend to chose education courses.

2) A positive relationship between old age and choice of education career exists.

3) Education students' decision in the choice of their programmes of study is not influenced by prospects of higher salary.

4) Job security is the most important consideration in the choice of an Education programme.

5) The choice of an Education programme is not associated with the desire to enter into teaching.

6) There is no relationship between poor grades and pursuance of Education programme. That is, Education students' grades are of comparative quality with those in other departments.

7) Education programmes are not chosen as a last resort.

In another study done by Asaolu (2001) on factors influencing the choice of Home Economics as a career, the researcher studied 98 Levels 100-500 Home Economics Students of University of Cape Coast and found out that:

1) The programme is still dominated by females.

2) The mature students from Teacher Training Colleges and Polytechnics were more decisive about their career than the Senior High School groups who felt that they were forced into Home Economics career.

3) The programme is still perceived as programme for low academic achievers.

4) A number of students realized at the university that they had made a right choice of career but quite a number of them would want to change the programme if they had the opportunity.

Bowen and Esters (2004) in a study to identify factors influencing enrollment in urban agricultural programme, former students in the programme indicated parents and/or guardians as the individuals who influenced their decision most to enroll in an urban agricultural education programme. However, the former students indicated their mother or female guardian as having more influence than the father or male guardian. The former students also indicated that events and experiences focused around several themes influenced their decision to enroll in an urban agricultural programme. However, recruitment activities, interest in animals, agricultural career aspirations and parents accounted for more than 50% of the events and experiences. Thus for the participants in this study, it was concluded that there were several factors influencing their decision to enroll in an urban agricultural education programme.

Obu (1997) studied 50 women engineering students, 21 men counterparts and 12 lecturers made up of 10 men and 2 women all from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The study aimed at finding out factors that influenced the choice of engineering careers among Ghanaian women. It was found out that the participation rate of women in engineering in Ghana was very low for effective participation in national development. The concentration of both

engineering students and practising women engineers was more in civil engineering than in other engineering disciplines. Some of the women engineers had parents who were themselves engineers.

Natural curiosity, which comprised interest in science and mathematics and desire to do engineering jobs such as building among others, had the most influence on the career choices of the women engineers. Almost all the women engineers expressed satisfaction with their chosen careers. Respondents had no access to guidance and counselling in both Senior High School and the Universities. The major constraint confronting women engineers in training was difficulty in understanding mathematics concepts. Both men and women engineering students perceived the engineering careers as suitable for both men and women provided that they develop a positive attitude towards it.

Rice (cited in Asaolu, 2001) in a study identified parents, peers, school personnel, intelligence, aptitude, interest, job rewards and satisfaction, prestige and sex-role concepts as some of the factors that influence the adolescent in his or her choice of career.

Durning and Hauer (2008) carried out a study of 1177 four year medical students at 11 United States medical schools to ascertain factors associated with medical students' career choices regarding internal medicine. It was identified that of the 1177 respondents, 274 (23.2%) planned career in internal medicine, including 24 (2.0%) in general medicine. Only 228 (19.4%) responded that their core internal medicine clerkship made a career in general internal medicine seem

more attractive whereas 574 (48.8%) responded that, it made a career in subspecialty internal medicine more attractive.

Three factors influenced career choice regarding internal medicine: educational experiences in internal medicine, the nature of patient care in internal medicine and lifestyle. Students were more likely to pursue careers in internal medicine if they were male, were attending a private school, were favourably impressed with their educational experience in internal medicine, reported favourable feelings about caring for internal medicine patients or reported a favourable impression of internalists' lifestyle.

Wilson, Marlino and Kickul (2004) examined 1971 teens reporting high levels of interest in becoming entrepreneurs of the diverse attitudes and motivation of teens towards entrepreneurship across gender and ethnic diversity. Results indicated significant variations across both gender and self-reported race/ethnicity. Overall, interest in entrepreneurship as a career was lower among girls than boys.

When analyzed by race/ethnicity, it was found that both African-American and Hispanic girls were more likely to be interested in entrepreneurship than white/Caucasian girls. In addition, girls interested in entrepreneurship were more likely to be motivated in their career choices by social and relational factors, whereas boys interested in entrepreneurship were more motivated by autonomy. Financial gain was a strong motivator for boys in general, and for girls of colour. When self-perception of leadership skills were examined, it was found that in

general, girls rated themselves higher than did boys, with exception of perceived ability to manage money.

In a research by Silbereisen, Vondracek and Berg (1997) on differential timing of initial vocational choice: The influence of early childhood family relocation and parental support behaviours in two culture, adolescents from former East and West Germany were compared with reference to the timing of their initial vocational choices. Using survival analysis techniques on a data set made up of concurrent and recollected self-reports, it was shown that adolescents from the East reported making such choices about one year earlier, on average. While higher levels of parental support behaviour during childhood were associated with earlier vocational choices in samples, the timing and potential disruptiveness of family relocations corresponded to earlier vocational choices among adolescents in East only.

Additional analysis showed that adolescents who made initial vocational choices earlier also revealed a more grown-up lifestyle and a more advanced level of identity exploration and commitment. The results illustrate the importance of contextual factors (an open, individualistically oriented system in the West versus the institutionally controlled, relatively closed system in the East) in the timing of vocational development in adolescence.

Arlow and Raymond (2002) in a study to determine if gender differences exist in the selection and training of male and female gastroenterology fellows, found out that female gastroenterology fellows were more likely to choose programme according to parental leave policies, female faculty and "family

61

reasons than the male trainees. Female trainees were more likely to remain childless or have fewer children at the end of training despite their marital status unlike their male colleagues. Female trainees altered their family planning because of training programme restrictions. They perceived gender discrimination and sexual harassment during gastroenterology training.

Trainees of both sexes had mentorship during training; female trainees were more likely to have an opposite sex mentor despite an almost 50% prevalence of female full-time and clinical faculty. Female trainees were apt to be less trained in advanced endoscopy. Trainees of both sexes were influenced by the changing health care environment in career choice, neither gender felt adequately prepared for the business aspects of gastroenterology.

Henry (2007) in a study of 16 participants during an in-depth interview to determine the factors influencing the selection of speech pathology as a career, found out that, participants were highly likely to identify factors from the individual and social systems, but not the environmental-social system, of the Social Theory Framework as influential in the decision to enter speech pathology. Previous exposure to speech through therapy intervention or through knowing a speech pathologist emerged as highly influential, which provides an example of interaction between factors from the individual and social systems with the framework.

The above analyses of factors that influence students' choices of programmes and careers in life show that various factors make students choose a

particular career in life. This study will find out how Senior High School students in Kwabre District choose programmes based on rational factors.

Summary of the Review

The chapter focused on issues of Senior High School education and the choices of programmes in Senior High Schools. The chapter was divided into two sections namely theoretical review and empirical review sections. The first sub-topic treated under the theoretical review was history of Senior High School education in Ghana. The second sub-topic was structure of Senior High School education in Ghana. Here, government's White Paper on the Report of 2004 Educational Reforms Review Committee was reviewed. The next sub-topic was programme offerings in Senior High School. Under this sub-topic, the various programmes available for students to choose from in Senior High Schools were discussed. The fourth sub-topic was choice of programmes in Senior High Schools. Here the workings of Computerized School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS) were discussed.

The fifth sub-topic was on concepts of rationality and irrationality where Albert Ellis theory of Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT) was reviewed. The sixth sub-topic examined theories of career choice. Here, Ginzberg et al. (1951), Super (1953), Roe (1957), Holland (1985), Parson (1909) and Krumboltz, Mitchell and Jones (1976) were reviewed. The last but one sub-topic under the theoretical review was career information. Under this, sources of career information and counsellors' role in career information were discussed. The

theoretical review section ended with a review of the use of psychological tests in counselling.

Under the empirical review, studies on factors that influence students' choice of career were reviewed. Specifically, studies by Walter (1962), Floud (1957), Dahlstrom (1967) Essuman (1986), Hackett et al. (1989) among others were discussed. Studies on career choice in Ghana by Salifu (2000), Asaolu (2001) and Obu (1997) and in other countries by Bowen and Esters (2004), Henry (2007), Durning and Hauer (2008), Silbereisen, Vondracek and Berg (1997), Arlow and Raymond (2002), Wilson, Marlino and Kickul (2004) were also looked at. Factors that influence career choice discussed here were socio-economic status, age, job security, intellectual ability, role models, interest, social status and prestige.

The literature review which had given insight into the work of scholars in this area was aimed at guiding the researcher in his work. The diversity of the factors that influence students' choices of careers which were discussed in the literature review, underscore the significance of the proposed study. The study would find out if students make their choices of programmes based on any of these factors for a conclusion to be made on the rationality of their choices.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methods used to obtain data on the rationality of students' choices of academic programmes at Senior High Schools in Kwabre District. Aspects in the chapter include a description of the research design, the population, the sample, sampling procedure, the data gathering instrument, pilot-testing of instrument, test for reliability, data collection procedure and the method of data analysis.

Research Design

Research design is a blue print which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed. It provides the procedures for the conduct of any investigation. Gay (1992) remarks that, research design indicates the basic structure of a study, the nature of the hypotheses and the variables involved in the study. The research design chosen for the study was descriptive survey. "A descriptive survey involves asking the same set of questions (often prepared in a form of a written questionnaire or ability test) of a large number of individuals either by mail, by telephone or in person" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000, p. 11). Responses are tabulated and reported, usually in the form

of frequencies and percentages of those who answer in a particular way to each question.

Descriptive survey involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. A descriptive survey research according to Akimboye (1983), is where an investigator starts inductively from observation and carefully studies attributes of a particular event in the real world, and attempts to describe the situation.

In a descriptive survey, detailed data are collected on a phenomenon to describe and justify existing conditions and practices or to make plans for improving them. Gay (1992) says that descriptive survey design describes and provides understanding of phenomenon usually with simple descriptive statistics. Further, Gay (1992) stresses that the descriptive survey method is useful for investigating a variety of educational problems including assessment of attributes, opinions, demographic information, conditions and procedures and that descriptive data are usually collected through questionnaire, interview and observation.

According to Cohen and Manion (1981), descriptive surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determine the relationship that exists between specific events.

The descriptive survey design is therefore found appropriate for the study since the researcher will also collect data through questionnaire to answer

research questions concerning the rationality of Senior High School students' choices of academic programmes and report on them.

The difficulties involved in survey research include;

1. ensuring that the questions to be answered are clear and not misleading.

2. getting respondents to answer questions thoughtfully and honestly and

3. getting a sufficient number of copies of the questionnaire completed and returned so that meaningful analysis can be made.

The researcher planned to reduce these difficulties to a minimum, if any by making the questions simple, understandable and advising or pleading with respondents to try to be objective as possible, since false responses would mean the researcher operating on wrong premises, which will not make the work authentic. The researcher also gave the respondents two days to respond to the questionnaire so that they would not rush through to complete it. The researcher again went round all the schools and collected the completed copies of the questionnaire himself, to ensure that a sufficient number of them were returned.

Despite these difficulties, the big advantage of survey is that it has the potential to provide researchers with a lot of information obtained from quite a large sample of individuals. The researcher therefore as was expected, received a lot of information from the respondents who were selected.

Population

According to Koul (2002), population refers to any collection of specified group of human or non- human entities. The Kwabre District was used for the

study. The district is in Ashanti region. It shares boundaries with Kumasi Metropolis, Ejisu- Juaben municipality, Sekyere South District and Afigya Kwabre District. Its capital is Mamponteng which lies on the Kumasi- Mampong road. As Kwabre District Guidance and Counselling Co-ordinator, there were concerns from teachers, parents and head teachers for proper consideration of when and how students make choices of programmes in Senior High Schools. In the light of these concerns shared by these stakeholders of education, the researcher wanted to conduct the study at Kwabre District to find out how rational or irrational students make choices of programmes at Senior High Schools in the district.

The target population of the study consisted of all Senior High School students in Kwabre District, that is, from Form 1- Form 3. There were six (6) Senior High Schools in the district with a total population of 8052 students as at 2008/ 2009 academic year.

The Senior High Schools were Gyaman Pensan Senior High School at Aboaso, Adventist Girls' Senior High School at Ntonso, Kofi Agyei Senior High School located in Bampenase and Adanwomase Senior High School at Adanwomase. The rest were Antoa Senior High School at Antoa and Simms Senior High School at Fawoade. Five of them namely Gyaman Pensan Senior High School, Kofi Agyei Senior High School, Adanwomase Senior High School, Antoa Senior High School and Simms Senior High School were co-educational institutions with only Adventist Girls' Senior High School being a female institution. The names of Senior High Schools in Kwabre District and the total

number of students in each school as at 2008/ 2009 academic year are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Names of Senior High Schools in Kwabre District and their Total Population

Name of Senior High School	Number of students
Gyaman Pensan	570
Adventist Girls	716
Kofi Agyei	1736
Adanwomase	1335
Antoa	1700
Simms	1995
Total	8052

Source: Kwabre District Education Directorate, 2008/ 2009

The accessible population of the study is all Form 3 Senior High School students in Kwabre District. The form 3 students were purposively selected for study. According to Shaughnessy, Zechmeister and Zechmeister (2000), in purposive sampling, the investigator selects the elements to be included in the sample on the basis of their special characteristics. The individuals selected are commonly those who have an expertise or experiences related to the purpose of the study. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) also indicate that purposive sampling is used when those to be selected have the requisite information. The use purposive

sampling is explained by Kothari (1994) that, as a form of non-probability sampling, it is characterized by the use of judgment and deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by including typical areas or groups in the sample.

In view of the above assertions, the researcher purposively selected the Form 3 students for study because in a research to find out how rational students make choices of programmes in Senior High Schools and the satisfaction they have for their chosen programmes, students who have gone through their chosen programmes for a considerable number of years can best do the assessment. Form 3 students having gone through their chosen programmes for almost three years stand in a good position to tell how rational or irrational their choices were and how satisfied they are with their chosen programmes. The number of Form 3 students in each school and their distribution among the programmes on offer in the schools are shown in Table 2:

Table 2

Total Number of Form 3 Students in each School and their Distribution among the Programmes Offered by each School in the District

Name of school	Number of Form 3 Students	Arts	Science	Business	Home Economics	Visual Arts	Agric	Technical
Gyaman Pensan	75	0	0	0	25	40	0	10

Adventist Girls	206	86	0	38	59	23	0	0
Kofi Agyei	501	245	0	0	102	0	93	61
Adanwomase	377	184	20	79	48	46	0	0
Antoa	501	I50	0	0	142	0	102	107
Simms	574	168	0	196	81	75	54	0
Total	2234	833	20	343	457	184	249	178

Source: Kwabre District Education Directorate, 2008/ 2009

Sample

A sample according to Fink (2001), is a portion or subset of a larger group. It is a representative of a larger population if important characteristics (example, age, gender, status) are distributed similarly in both groups. The importance of sampling lies in the accuracy with which they represent or mirror the accessible population. The sample for the study was selected from the accessible population, that is, the Form 3 students at Senior High Schools in Kwabre District. There was (in 2008) a total of 2234 Form 3 Senior High School students in the district.

According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for a population of 2400, the suggested minimum number that should be used as sample could be 331 that is about 14% of the accessible population. This was the sample size used for the study. The reason for selecting the 331 respondents as sample was that the researcher was constrained by time and resources and would have found it very

difficult to cover all the 2234 Senior High School Form 3 students in the district. The sample size was shared proportionally among the various schools using the formula "total number of Form 3 students in a given school divided by the total number of Form 3 students in the district multiplied by the sample size of 331 students". The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Total Number of Students Sampled from each School

Name of School	Number sampled from school
Gyaman Pensan	11
Adventist Girls	31
Kofi Agyei	74
Adanwomase	56
Antoa	74
Simms	85
Total	331

Sampling Procedure

The sampling technique used to select the respondents for the study was stratified random sampling with proportional allocation. According to Shaughnessy, Zechmeister and Zechmeister (2000), in stratified random sampling, the population is divided into subpopulations called strata and random samples are drawn from each of these strata. The representativeness of the sample

is increased by the use of this method since respondents are drawn from each stratum. This technique was adopted for the study because the population was divided into programme areas of students (strata) and sample was drawn from each programme area (stratum) to ensure representativeness.

The researcher first calculated the number of students to be selected from each programme in each school to make up the sample size. This was done using the formula "total number of students in a particular programme in each school divided by the total number of form three students in the school multiplied by the total number expected to be sampled from the school".

Simple random sampling using the lottery method was used to select the respondents for the study under each programme. The class lists of Form 3 students were obtained for the selection of the number of respondents in each school. The lists were obtained on programme by programme basis. The selection of the respondents of the study was done by first, numbering the names on the class list. The numbers were then written on pieces of papers and were folded and put in a bin. The bin was well shaken. Then the names were picked one after the other till the total number of respondents required was obtained. This was done for every school and for every programme pursued in the school. Students whose names corresponded to the numbers selected were given the questionnaire to respond to them. The actual breakdown of the number of students sampled from each school on programme by programme basis is shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4

Distribution of Sample Size among the Programme Offerings in each School

School	Arts	Science	Business	Home Economics	Visual Arts	Agriculture	Technical
Gyaman Pensan	0	0	0	4	6	0	1
Adventist Girls	13	0	6	9	3	0	0
Kofi Agyei	36	0	0	15	0	14	9
Adanwomase	27	3	12	7	7	0	0
Antoa	22	0	0	21	0	15	16
Simms	25	0	29	12	11	8	0
Total	123	3	47	68	27	37	26

Research Instrument

The instrument used that was to collect data from the respondents was a questionnaire. Since the sample was only students, a questionnaire was prepared for the students. The questionnaire was made up of open-ended and closed-ended items to allow for both objective and subjective data to be collected. It was made up of 20 items. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher himself using information on common processes involved in the choice of programmes in schools (See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire).

Kerlinger (1973) observed that the questionnaire is widely used for collecting data in educational research because it is very effective for securing factual information about the practices and conditions, and for enquiring into the opinions and attitudes of the subjects. The advantages of questionnaire are that they are less expensive than other methods like observation and interview. Questions on a questionnaire are a stable, consistent and uniform measure without variation. Again, questionnaire can be completed at the respondent's convenience and offer greater assurance of anonymity.

The disadvantages of questionnaire are that there are high possibilities of some respondents not returning the questionnaire. Again, it is only limited to literate population and does not provide opportunity to collect additional information through observation and probing. These disadvantages were addressed by explaining the items in the questionnaire to the respondents. They were also given enough time to fill the questionnaire and so a lot of them returned the questionnaire.

Pilot-Testing of Instrument

The instrument was pilot-tested at Bonwire Senior High School in Ejisu-Juaben Municipality. This school was selected because Bonwire shares boundary with Kwabre District. The educational level of people in Kwabre District and Ejisu-Juaben Municipality where Bonwire is located is almost the same with most adult population being illiterates. Most of the young and adult population in

Kwabre District and Bonwire are kente weavers. The school environments are almost the same.

The pilot-testing was done to test the validity and reliability of the instrument, which was to be used for the data collection. The pilot-testing involves testing the questionnaire on a small number of people who have the same characteristics as the population before using it for the actual study. This provides an opportunity to assess the appropriateness and practicality of the data collection instruments. It also enables the researcher to check if the items are easily understood and there are no problems to do with length, sequencing of questions and sensitive items among others. Thus the pilot-testing helps to improve questions, formats and the scales.

Forty (40) Form 3 students of Bonwire Senior High School were selected to form the sample for the pilot-testing of the instrument. They were either pursuing Arts, Technical, Visual Arts or Home Economics programmes in the school. Ten (10) students were selected from each programme to form the sample for the pilot-testing of the instrument.

The validity of the instrument was tested by content and face validities. The researcher tried to ascertain the content validity of the instrument by submitting it to the supervisors of the thesis for perusal and comments. The face validity was done with colleague graduate students.

Testing for Reliability

The reliability of the instrument was computed using the Cronbach Coefficient alpha. The alpha value was 0.733. In terms of reliability, the most important figure is the Alpha Value. This is the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Robinson, Shaver & Wrightsman (as cited in Whitley, 1996) suggest that a minimum internal consistency coefficient of 0.70 is good. Since the alpha value of the instrument was above 0.70, the instrument was considered as reliable with the sample.

Data Collection Procedure

After the approval of the research instrument, a letter of introduction was obtained from the researcher's department, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Cape Coast (See Appendix B for a copy of the letter). This was obtained to enable authorities of schools where the study was carried out know the identity of the researcher and the purpose of the data collection. The required number of 331 copies of the questionnaire was made.

The researcher then went to each Senior High School and contacted the School's Guidance and Counselling Co-ordinator and explained the plan to conduct the study in the School. The researcher together with the school's Guidance and Counselling Co-ordinator went to see the headmistress or headmaster of the school to ask permission to conduct the research in the school. A photocopy of the letter of introduction was given to the headmaster or headmistress. When approval was given, the researcher requested for the class

lists of all Form 3 classes to help him sample the members to be used for the study.

After this had been done, the researcher with the assistance of the schools' Guidance and Counselling Co-ordinators, met the students sampled for the study and explained the rationale of the study to them. They were assured of confidentiality of whatever information they would provide. The respondents were then taken through the questionnaire briefly explaining each item to them. An agreement was reached with the respondents that the questionnaire would be collected in two days time. On the agreed dates, the researcher together with the schools' Guidance and Counselling Co-ordinators went round and collected all the completed copies of the questionnaire. He was able to collect almost all the copies except those of a few students who were absent or were not ready. These, he went and collected later.

The number collected was 320 out of 331 which gave a return rate of 97%. The 320 students were made up of 118 Arts students, 3 Science students, 43 Business students, 66 Home Economics students, 27 Visual Arts students, 37 Agriculture students and 26 Technical students from all the schools used for study. The breakdown of the number of questionnaire received on programme by programme basis in each school is shown in Appendix C. The researcher went through each copy of the questionnaire to ensure that each had been completed. Any respondent who skipped or forgot to answer any question or item was entreated to complete it before the copy was collected. The researcher used about three weeks to collect the entire data.

He went round to thank all the headmasters, headmistresses and Guidance and Counselling Co-ordinators of the schools where the studies were conducted and urged the co-ordinators to communicate the same message to the respondents.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were carefully checked. Individual items of each of the copies of the questionnaire were checked as regards the responses given. This was to verify whether each respondent had answered all the questions or omitted some of them.

Analysis of data began with the coding of items in the questionnaire. The data were organized and subjected to statistical analysis using the Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) computer software. All data were subjected to frequency counts to check and correct coding errors where necessary.

Frequency distribution and percentages were calculated to answer research questions 1, 2,3,4,5 and 6.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents biographical data about respondents and discusses the results and analysis of data gathered from respondents. The discussion and analysis focus on the extent to which Senior High School students' assess themselves before choosing programmes in school, factors that influence them most and least in their choices of programmes, the extent to which they seek information on their programmes before they choose them and the extent to which they seek counselling from qualified counsellors before they choose their programmes.

The chapter ends with the analyses of the extent to which students are satisfied with the programmes they are pursuing in Senior High School. Tables and figures are provided to illustrate the findings whenever applicable.

Biographical Data about the respondents

In addition to the information given about the respondents in chapter 3 of this study, respondents further indicated their ages and where they live on the

questionnaire. Figure 1 below shows the age distribution of respondents of the study.
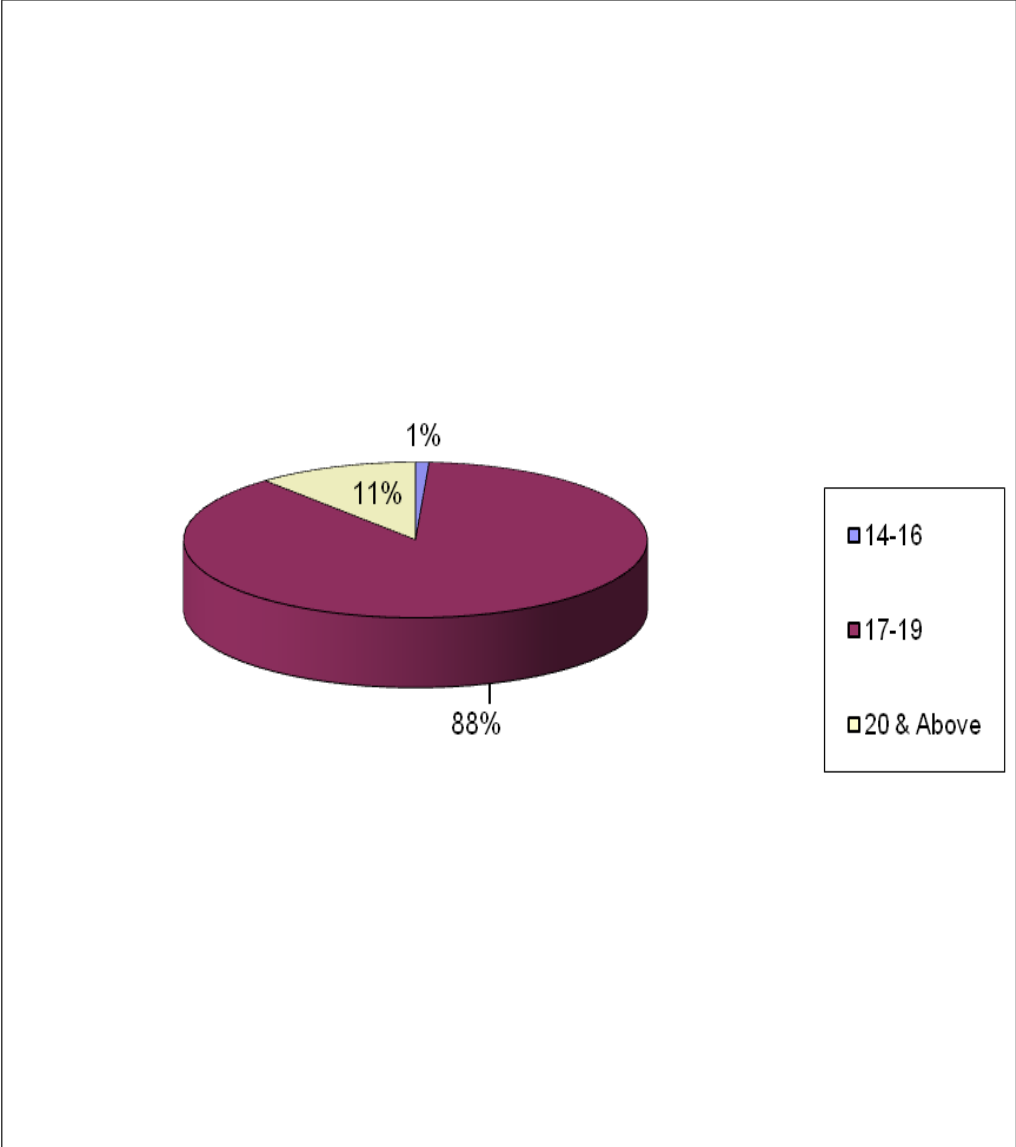
Figure 1: Age Distribution of Respondents.

Figure 1 indicates that, the modal age group is 17-19. Two hundred and eighty one respondents representing 88% fall within this category. This shows that most of the respondents were in their late adolescence. Only three respondents representing 1% were 14-16 years. The number who were 20 years and above were 36, representing 11% of the total respondents used for the study.

Table 5 presents the information on where the respondents of the study live.

Table 5

Where Respondents Live

Areas	Freq.	%
Within Kwabre District	90	28
Within Kumasi Metropolis	160	50
Outside Kumasi Metropolis and Kwabre District	70	22
Total	320	100

It is evident from Table 5 that majority of the respondents live in Kumasi Metropolis and Kwabre District. The frequencies were 160 (50%) and 90 (28%) respectively. The rest that is, 70 (22%) resided outside Kumasi Metropolis and Kwabre District.

Analysis of Major Research Questions

Extent to which Students Assess Themselves before Making Programme Choices

The Research Question: To what extent do Senior High School students in Kwabre District find out if they would perform well or not in a programme before deciding to do it? was posed to find out the extent to which students assess themselves before making their programme choices. This question sought to find out if students make careful thought of the programmes they choose to pursue at Senior High School.

To answer this Research Question, respondents were asked if they found out if they would perform well or not in their programmes before choosing them. A response of either "Yes" or "No" was expected from the respondents. The respondents were further asked to indicate how they assessed themselves. They were given three options with the possibility of supplying their own options if the ones provided did not apply to them. The three options provided were "I assessed myself through counsellor's administration of test instrument on me" or "by looking at my performances in terminal examinations" or "by considering my interests in life". These questions are seen in items numbers six and seven on the questionnaire.

The results of the analysis of the extent to which students' find out if they would do well or not in a programme before choosing it have been presented in frequencies and percentages. The table below (Table 6) shows students' responses

to the extent to which they assessed themselves to know whether they would perform well or not in their programmes before choosing them.

Table 6

Extent to which Students Assess Themselves before Choosing their Programmes in School

Response	Freq.	%
Yes	239	75
No	81	25
Total	320	100

The data in Table 6 shows that 239 respondents representing 75% of the respondents found out whether they would perform well or not in the programmes they were pursuing before they chose them. Figure 2 below indicates the number of respondents in the various programmes who make up the 239 respondents who indicated that they assessed themselves before choosing their programmes.
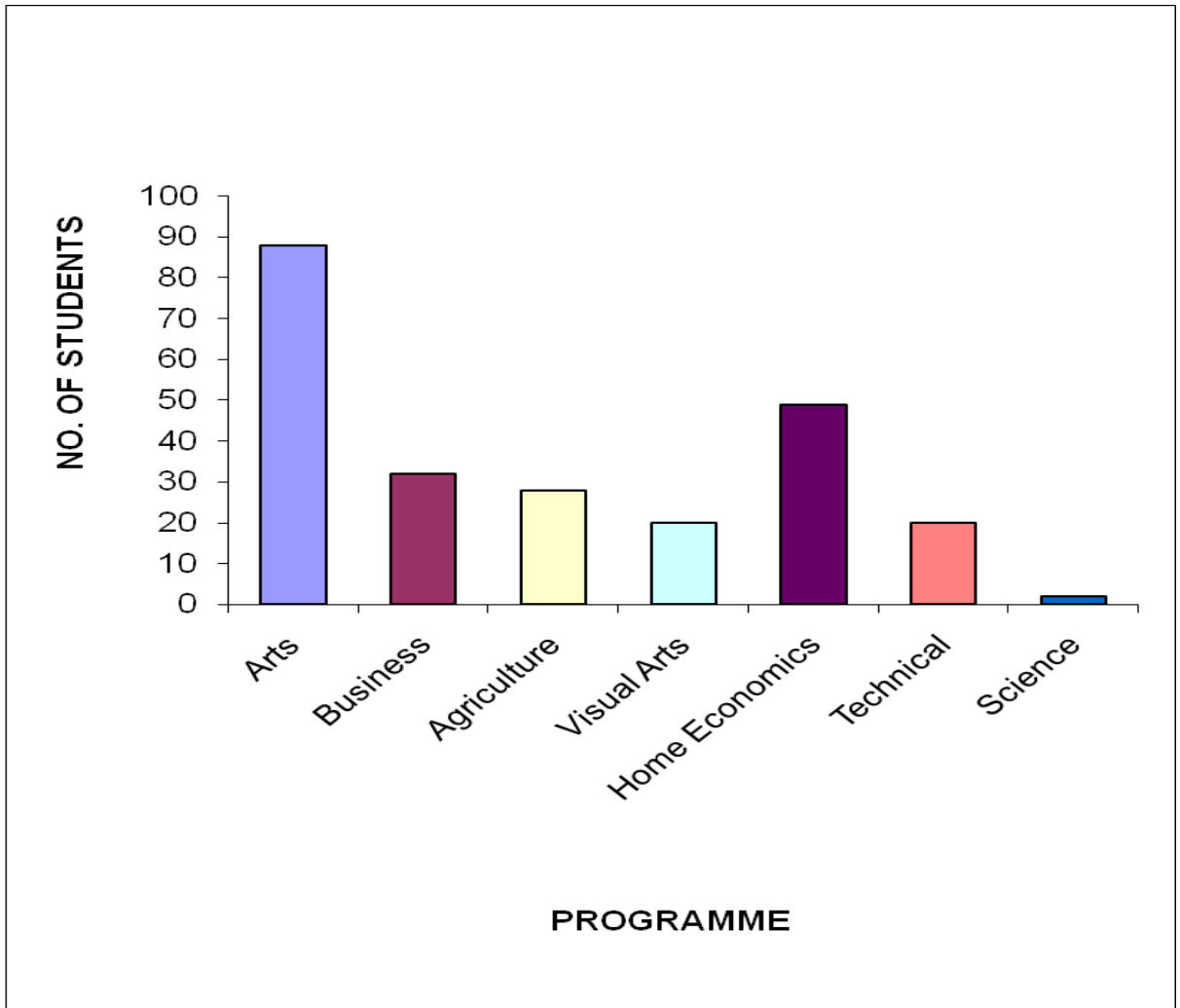
Figure 2: Respondents in each Programme who Assessed Themselves before Choosing their Programmes.

Figure 2 indicates that 88 Arts students, 32 Business students and 28 Agriculture students assessed themselves before choosing their programmes. The rest were 20 of Visual Arts students, 49 of Home economics students, 20 of Technical students and two of Science students used for the study.

On the other hand, 81 (25%) of the respondents indicated that they did not find out whether they would perform well or not in their programmes before choosing them. The number of respondents on programme by programme basis

85

who did not assess themselves before choosing their programmes is shown in figure 3 below.
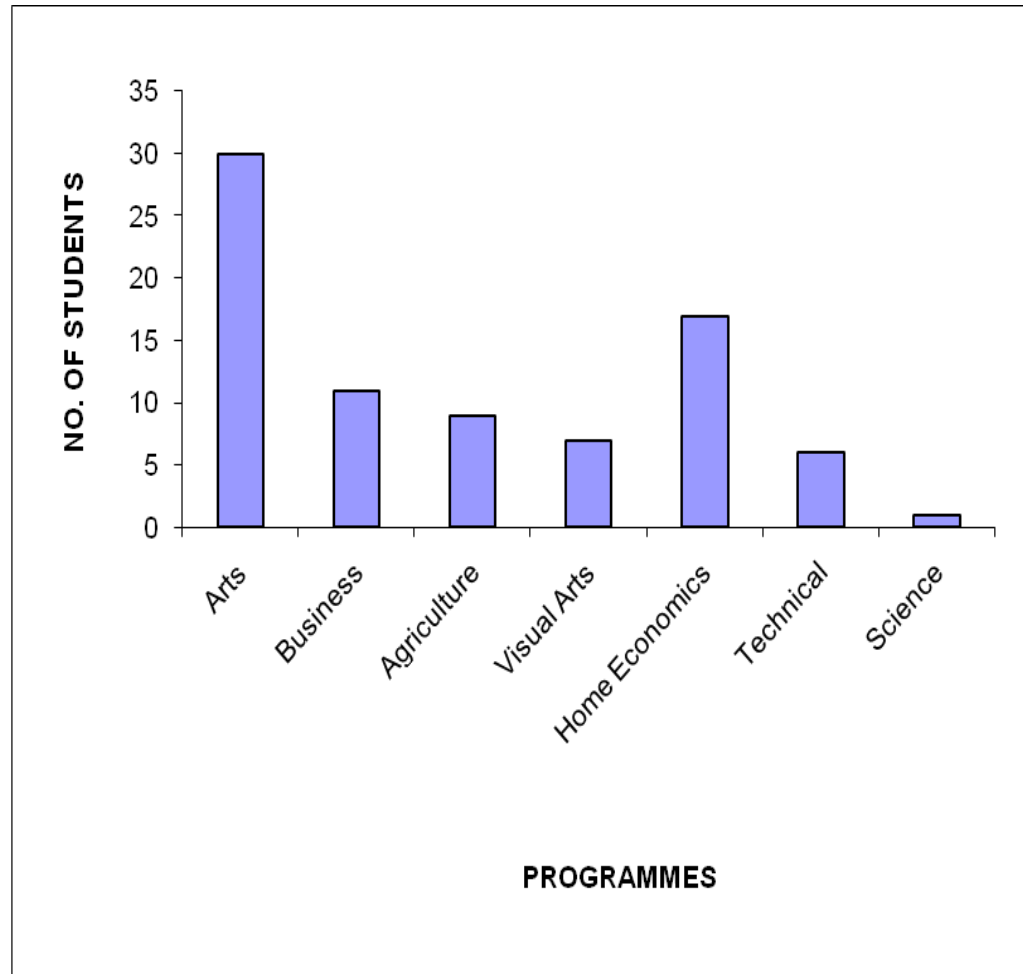
Figure 3: Respondents in each Programme who did not Assess Themselves before Choosing their Programmes.

Figure 3 shows that 30 Arts Students, 11 Business students and nine Agriculture students did not assess their strengths and weaknesses in their programmes of choice. The rest were seven of Visual Arts students, 17 of Home Economics students, six Technical students and one Science student who took part in the study.

Respondents who indicated that they found out if they would perform well or not in their chosen programmes (239 respondents), were asked in item number seven on the questionnaire to indicate how they assessed themselves before choosing their programmes. The results of how they assessed themselves are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7

How Students Assessed Themselves before Choosing their Programmes

Factor Assessed	Freq.	%
By filling occupational interest inventory	0	0
By considering my performances in terminal examinations	110	46
By considering my interests in life	129	54
Total	239	100

In Table 7 above, it is observed that none of the 239 respondents who assessed themselves before choosing their programmes assessed themselves by way of filling occupational interest inventory. However, 110 of the respondents representing 46% of them assessed themselves by considering their performances

in terminal examinations they did in school. A higher number of 129 (54%) of the sample who assessed themselves did so by considering their interests in life.

The analysis shows that majority of Senior High School students in Kwabre District assesses themselves to know if they would perform well or not in their programmes before they choose them. As is shown in Table 6, 239 (75%) of the total respondents assessed themselves before choosing their programmes. Only 81 (25%) of the respondents did not find out if they would do well or not in their programmes before choosing them. The finding however, disagrees with Adadevoh (1991) that most students choose programmes by not considering their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the programmes.

The analysis show that most students assess their ability or otherwise to do the programmes on offer by considering their interests in life. This is shown by 129 (54%) of the 239 respondents saying that they assessed their ability to do the programme by looking at their interest in life. This agrees to Olayinka's (1993) finding that interest is one of the most influencing factors in students' occupational choices.

Assessment of ones performances in terminal examinations also played important role in students' assessment of themselves. One hundred and ten (46%) of the 239 respondents indicated this as the way they assessed themselves. The foregoing indicates that the way one sees himself (his interest and abilities) play a great role in his programme choice in school and his subsequent career in life (Super, 1953). This finding agrees to Bruce and Shelly (1976) assertion that majority of people enter into occupations where they have higher intellectual

88

ability than where they have lower intellectual ability. It can be seen from the analysis that no one indicated that he assessed himself through the administration of psychological tests on him/her showing that their use in this country is not common.

The answer to research question one is that, most students in Senior High Schools in Kwabre District find out if they would perform well or not in their programmes before they choose them. They find out mainly by considering their interests in life and secondly, by considering their performances in terminal examinations.

Factors that Influence Students in their Choices of Programmes in Senior High School

The second Research Question posed in the study was: What factors influence Kwabre District Senior High School students in their choices of programmes? The rationale of this question was to find out if rational factors are what influence Senior High School students in Kwabre District in their choices of academic programmes.

To answer this research question, all the respondents were asked to indicate with a tick in the options provided or supply in the space provided the factor that influenced them most in their choices of programmes they were pursuing. The results of the analysis of students' responses are shown in Table 8 below.

89

Table 8

Factors that Influence Students in their Choices of Programmes

Factors	Freq.	%
Popularity of the programme	10	3
Interest in the programme	130	41
High academic performance in the area	69	21
Suggestions from teachers	5	2
Suggestions from parents	4	1
Pressure from parents	1	0
Importance of jobs in the area	95	30
Importance of the programme	5	2
Not based on any criterion	1	0
Suggestions from friends	0	0
Total	320	100

The results of the analysis in Table 8 indicate that, interest in the programme was the factor that influenced most Senior High School students in

Kwabre District in their choices of programmes. A total number of 130 (41%) respondents chose the programme they were doing based on their interest in the programme. This is followed by importance of jobs in the area which influenced 95 (30%) of the students in their choices of programmes.

The next factor in line is the student's high academic performance in the area which accounted for 69 (21%) of students' choices of their programmes. Popularity of the programme influenced 10 (3%) of the students in their choices of programmes while suggestions from teachers, importance of the programme and suggestions from parents influenced five (2%), five (2%) and four (1%) students respectively in their choices of programmes. The least influencing factors of students' choices of programmes were suggestions from friends zero (0%), not based on any criterion one (0%) and pressure from parents one (0%).

Table 8 shows that most students are influenced by their interest in the programme in making their choices of programmes in Senior High School. This is shown by the 130 (41%) of the respondents who indicated that their interest in the programme was what influenced them most to choose the programmes they were pursuing. This finding agrees with Olayinka (1993), Rice (cited in Salifu, 2000), Morgan, Isaac and Sansone (2001) and Obu (1997) that interest plays key part in people's selection of careers in life.

The second most influencing factor of students' choices of programmes is the importance of jobs in the area. Here, 95 (30%) of the respondents indicated that as the factor that made them choose the programmes they were pursuing. This

finding agrees with Olayinka (as cited in Uba, 1983) that the prestige attached to a career is an influencing factor that makes people choose a particular career.

The third most influencing factor is one's high academic performances in the area. Here, 69 (21%) of the respondents indicated this as the factor that made them choose the programmes they were doing. This finding agrees with that of Bruce and Shelly (1976) and Rice (as cited in Salifu, 2000) that intellectual abilities influence students' choice of career.

The answer to Research Question two therefore is that, interest is the factor that influences students most in their choices of programmes in Senior High Schools in Kwabre District. This is followed by importance of jobs under the programme and the student's high academic performance in the area. Choices not based on any criterion, pressure from parents and pressure from friends are the least influencing factors of Kwabre Senior High School students' choices of programmes in school.

Extent to which Students' Seek Information on their Programmes

The next Research Question posed was: To what extent do Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek information on their preferred programmes before choosing them? This question sought to find out if students seek information on their preferred programmes before choosing them or they just choose them without any prior information as to where the programme will lead them to. As alluded to by Adadevoh (1991), "many students choose programmes without knowing the career opportunities that are opened after school" p. 9. It is

upon this that this question was posed to find out if students seek information on the programmes they pursue at Senior High School.

To answer this research question, respondents were asked to answer item 8 on the questionnaire. The item states that: "Did you gather information on the programme you are pursuing before deciding to do it"? The responses given are shown in Table 9 below:

Table 9

Students' Indication of whether or not they Sought Information on their Programmes before Choosing them

Response	Freq.	%
Yes	253	79
No	67	21
Total	320	100

From Table 9 above, more than half of the total respondents sought information on their programmes before choosing them. A total number of 253 (79%) respondents sought information on their programmes before choosing them. On the other hand, 67 (21%) of the total respondents did not seek information on their programmes before choosing them.

The 253 (79%) respondents who indicated that they sought information on their programmes before choosing them indicated the following as their sources of information on the programme they were pursuing. This is shown in Table 10 below.

93

Table 10

Sources of Students' Programme Information

Sources of information	Freq.	%	
Counsellor	37	15	
Parents	39	15	
Friends	25	10	
Books	69	27	
Headmasters	29	12	
Teachers	54	21	
Total	253	100	

Table 10 above indicates that 69 (27%) of the students got their career and educational information from books or publications. The second highest source of students' programme information was from teachers. Fifty four (21%) of the respondents got their career and educational information from this source. Parents came third in line with 39 (15%) of respondents receiving their educational and career information from their parents. Thirty-seven (15%), 29 (12%) and 25 (10%) of the respondents had information on their programmes from counsellors, headmasters and friends respectively.

The above analysis indicates that majority of students seek information on their programmes before choosing them. This is shown by a high figure of 253 (79%) of respondents who indicated that they sought information on their programmes. Only 67 (21%) of the respondents did not seek information on their

programmes before choosing them. Contrary to Adadevoh's (1991) assertion that many students choose programmes unaware of the career options available for them after school, this study shows that a lot of them choose their programmes with some background information. Students' awareness of career information on their programmes can be attributed to career talks on radios, televisions and career guidance organized in schools and students own conscious effort to seek information on their programmes.

It can be seen from Table10 that, books or publications is a key source of students' career and educational information in Kwabre District. Andah's (cited in Unachwuku & Igborgbor, 1991) assertion that publications, bulletins and exhibitions of pictures constitute one of the key sources of students' career information is confirmed here. Other sources Andah (cited by Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991) indicated such as career games, career weeks, government agencies and immediate communities were found not to be significant sources of students' career and educational information. Teachers are students' second source of career and education information. Fifty four (21%) respondents indicated that their teachers gave them information on their programmes. Stitt-Gohdes (1997) found that students of all ages spend much more of their time with the classroom teacher than the guidance counsellor so receive a lot of career information from teachers. This study confirms that fact.

It can also be seen that parents also play a great role in students' career and educational information. This is so because 39 (15%) of the respondents indicated that that was where they had their information. This shows a key role

played by parents in the education of their children indicating to them the sort of careers they can go through after school and areas they can further study before going to the world of work. Ironically, counsellors who by their training stand in better stead to give students career and educational information, did not contribute much by way of offering career and educational information to students. Only 37 (15%) of the respondents got their information from counsellors. Contrary to Olayinka's (cited in Uba 1983) assertion that school counsellors are in unique position to assist students in acquiring occupational information before they choose their careers, in this study school counsellors did not do much among Senior High School students in Kwabre District.

Other sources, such as Headmasters and friends were also recognized as sources of students' career/ educational information. This shows that heads of institutions and students' peers could also be educated to offer guidance to students in their choices of programmes.

The answer to Research Question three is that, most Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek information on their programmes before choosing them. They seek information from books, teachers, parents and counsellors among others.

Information Students' Seek on their Programmes

The fourth Research Question was: What information do Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek on their preferred programmes? The rationale of this question was to find out the types of information that are sought

for by students who seek information on their programmes before choosing them. Answer to the question was sought through item number nine on the questionnaire.

Here, respondents who indicated that they sought information on their programmes before choosing them were asked to indicate the sort of information they sought on their programmes. The responses they gave are shown in Table 11 below:

Table 11

Information Students' Seek on their Programmes

Types of Information	Freq.	%
Attributes required in careers in the area	35	14
Admission requirements of programmes in the area	14	5
Areas of further studies in the programme	43	17
Careers available under the programme	161	64
Total	253	100

The responses of respondents indicated in Table 11 above show that of the 253 respondents who sought information on their programmes before choosing

them, "careers available under the programme" was the most sought for information. This is indicated in Table 11 by 161 (64%) of the respondents who indicated that that was the information they most sought for on their programmes. This is followed by "areas of further studies in the programme" where 43 (17%) of respondents indicated. Again, 35 (14%) of the respondents sought information on "attributes required in the careers in the area" while only 14 (5%) sought information on "admission requirements to programmes in the area".

Careers available under students' preferred programme areas, from the analysis are the most important information to Kwabre Senior High School students. This is indicated by the high number of respondents 161 (64%) who indicated that that was the information they sought for on their chosen programmes. Strengthening this aspect in students' information system will therefore be in order. Afudoh (cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991), asserted that the onus of getting students informed about careers rests on the school counsellor. Counsellors should therefore gather information on careers in all programme areas for students before they make their choices of programmes in Senior High Schools.

Again, it can be seen that another information of interest to students is areas of further studies. As seen in Table 11, 43 (17%) of the respondents sought that information before choosing their programmes. Unachukwu's (1989) postulation that educational information should cover schools/higher institutions available and entry requirements into those institutions are confirmed here since students need that information for choices of programmes. This means that

counsellors should intensify educational guidance in schools to enable students to be knowledgeable of areas of further studies before they choose their programmes. Thirty-five (14%) of the respondents indicated that they sought information on attributes required in careers in the programmes of their choice. This means that career information should be broad based to affect the outward and inward personality requirements of different careers. Counsellors should be abreast with this information to give to clients in the career information they offer. Lastly, information on admission requirements of further programmes under the programmes students pursue in Senior High School is also of importance to students. Counsellors should therefore emphasize this in their educational guidance to students.

The answer to research question 4 therefore is that, students in Senior High Schools in Kwabre District seek information most on careers under their programmes of choice followed by areas of further studies in their programmes before they choose their programmes.

Counsellors' Impact on Students' programme Choices

The fifth Research Question was: To what extent do Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek counselling from qualified counsellors in their choices of programmes? The rationale of this question was to find out the extent to which students utilize the services offered by guidance and counselling co-ordinators or counsellors particularly career and educational guidance in schools

and other counselling centres. Items number 11 – 14 on the questionnaire were used to gather information from respondents to answer this research question.

In answering this question, all the 320 respondents were asked to indicate if they sought counselling from a qualified counsellor before they chose the programme they were pursuing at Senior High School. The responses they gave are indicated in Table 12 below:

Table 12

Extent to which Students Seek Counselling before Choosing their Programmes

Responses	Freq.	%
Yes	37	12
No	283	88
Total	320	100

It is seen in Table 12 above that only 37 respondents representing 12% of the total respondents for the study sought counselling from qualified counsellors before choosing their programmes of study. However, 283 (88%) did not seek counselling at all before choosing their programmes. The 37 respondents who sought counselling were asked in the questionnaire to indicate the type of counsellor who counselled them before they chose their programmes. Twenty eight (76%) of them indicated that they sought counselling from their School counsellors while five (13%) sought counselling from their District Guidance and

100

Counselling Co-ordinator. Only 4 (11%) respondents sought counselling from their Church Counsellor.

Respondents who sought counselling before choosing their programmes were asked to indicate if they had psychological tests administered on them by the counsellor as a way of ascertaining their personality or interest before counselling them. None of them indicated that a psychological instrument was administered on him.

It can be seen from the foregoing that counsellors play little role in students' choices of programmes in Kwabre District. As indicated by Gibson and Mitchell (1990), one of counsellors' roles in school is to ensure students' career development through guidance and information activities. It can be seen from the analysis that few students availed themselves for counselling before they chose their programmes in Senior High School. More than half of the respondents did not seek counselling from counsellors before they chose their programmes. As a result most students might not know very well the career options available for them after schooling since parents and teachers at times might not be well versed with information in this area. This agrees to Nkrumah's (2008) assertion that most people choose their programmes without counselling.

Though generally counsellors did not play a great role in the choices of programmes by students in Kwabre District, school counsellors did well by counselling 28 (76%) of the total number of students who sought counselling before choosing their programmes. This shows that of all the counsellors in the country, school counsellors stand close to students and so can better reach them

101

and give them the necessary information needed to make their programme choices.

The lack of counselling of students in the district before making their programme choices might also be due to lack of logistics for counsellors to organize career conferences to make known career opportunities available under each programme pursued at Senior High School. Heads of institutions and the government should therefore take upon themselves to resource counselors to effectively deliver in the schools. It can again be seen that no counsellor administered an instrument or psychological test on a student he/she counselled. This shows that the use of psychological tests is not popular in this country as pertains in Nigeria where Okpala (cited in Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991) asserts that "several types of psychological tests are used in schools for counselling purposes" p. 366.

The answer to Research Question 5 therefore is that, most Kwabre District students do not seek counselling from qualified counsellors before they choose their programmes in Senior High Schools in. More than half of the total population for the study did not seek counselling from a qualified counsellor before choosing their programmes in Senior High Schools.

Students' Level of Satisfaction with their Programmes

The sixth Research Question was: How satisfied are Senior High School students in Kwabre District with their chosen programmes? This question was asked to find out if respondents are happy with the programmes they are pursuing

at Senior High School or will prefer a change from them to other programmes if an opportunity was given to them to do so.

To answer this Research Question, respondents were asked in item number 15 on the questionnaire to indicate their level of satisfaction with the programmes they are pursuing on a 4-point scale from "I am very happy with the programme" to "I am not happy at all with the programme". The responses received from the respondents used for the study are indicated in Table 13 below:

Table 13

Students' Level of Satisfaction with their Chosen Programmes

Programmes	Very Happy		Happy		Not Happy		Not Happy At All	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Arts	90	76	26	21	3	3	0	0
Business	30	70	20	23	3	7	0	0
Agriculture	34	92	2	5	1	3	0	0
Visual Arts	15	56	6	22	5	18	1	4
Home Economics	38	58	16	24	10	15	2	3
Technical	16	62	4	15	5	19	1	4
Science	0	0	2	67	1	33	0	0
Total	223	70.0	65	20	28	9	4	1

From Table 13, it can be seen that majority of the students are very happy with the programmes they are pursuing in Senior High School. Two hundred and twenty three (70%) of the total respondents indicated this. This was made up of 90 (76%) of respondents pursuing Arts programme, 30 (70%) pursuing Business, 34 (92%) of the Agriculture students and 15 (56%) Visual Arts students. The rest were 38 (58%) of the Home Economics students and 16 (62%) of the Technical students. It included no Science student.

A further 65 (20%) of the total respondents of the study said they were happy with their programmes. This was made up of 25 (21%) of the Arts students, 10 (23%) of the Business students, two (5%) of the Agriculture students six (22%) of the Visual Arts students. Sixteen (24%), four (15) and 2 (67%) of the students in Home Economics, Technical and Science respectively also indicated that they were happy with their programmes.

Only 28 (9%) of the total respondents made up of three (3%) of the Arts students, three (7%) of the Business students one (3%) of the Agriculture students, five (18%) of the Visual Arts students, 10 (15%) of the Home Economics students, five (19%) and one (33%) said that they were not happy with their programmes. Just four (1%) of the total respondents made up of one (4%) of the Visual Arts students, two (3%) of the Home Economics students and one (4%) said that they were not happy at all with their programmes.

Respondents were further asked to give reasons for their level of satisfaction. The reasons given by them are shown in Table 14 below:

Table 14

Reasons for Students' Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction with their Chosen Programmes

Reasons	Freq.	%
I am not interested in the programme	14	4
I am performing well in the programme	153	48
I am very interested in the programme	135	42
The requirements of the programme are above my ability	9	3
I am not able to afford materials under the programme	3	1
I am not performing well	6	2
Total	320	100

From Table 14 above, it can be seen that respondents who indicated in Table 13 above that they were happy and very happy with their programmes

indicated two main reasons for their choice of those options. These reasons were that "they were performing well in their programmes" and "they were very interested in their programmes". These are indicated in Table 14 by figures of 153 (48%) and 135 (42%) respectively. For those who indicated that they were not happy with their programmes and not happy at all with their programmes, the following reasons were given by them: "not interested in their programmes" 14 (4%), "the requirements of their programmes are above their abilities" 9 (3%), "not able to afford the materials required to do their programmes" 3 (1%) and "not performing well in their chosen programmes" 6 (2%).

Figure 4 below shows the programmes preferred by those who indicated that they are not happy or not happy at all.
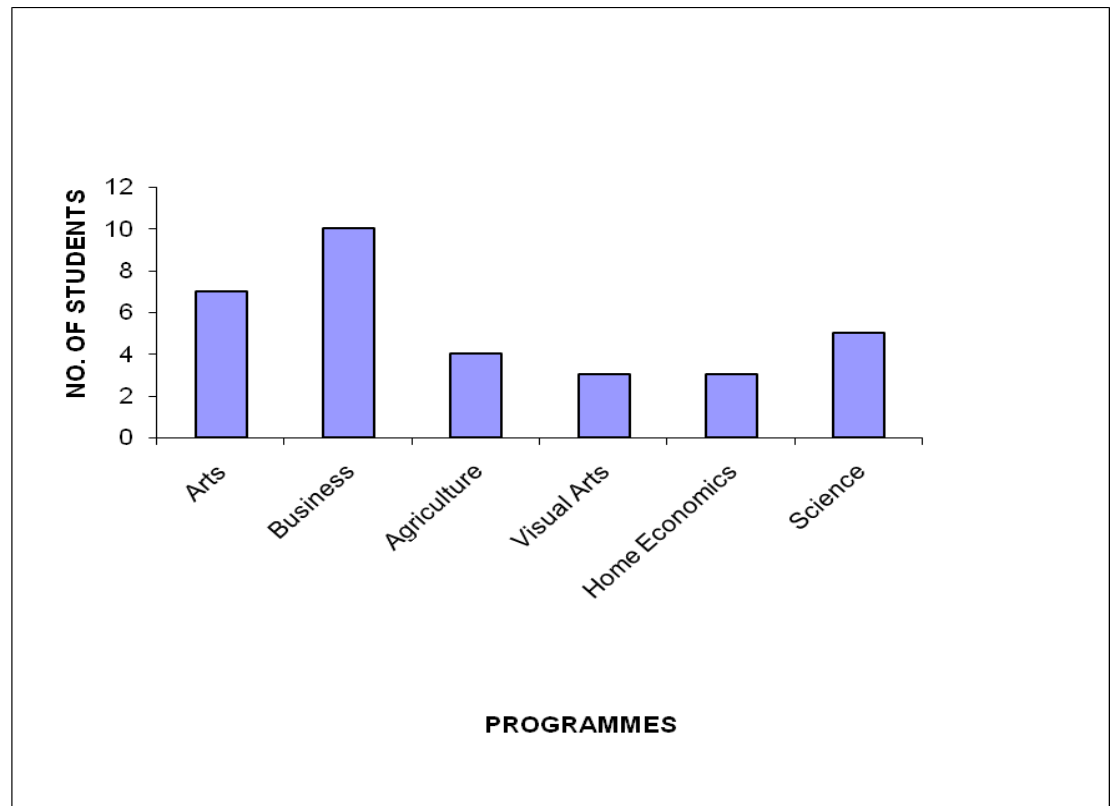
Figure 4: Programmes Preferred by Respondents who would like to Change their Programmes

106

Figure 4 above shows that 7 (22%) of the respondents prefer Arts programme. Ten (31%) of them prefer Business programme while 4 (13%) indicated that they prefer Agriculture programme. The rest are 3 (9%), 3 (9%) and 5 (16%) for Visual Arts, Home Economics and Science programmes respectively.

From the analysis above, it can be seen that most students are content with the programmes they are offering in Senior High School. This is because majority of them say that they are happy or very happy with their programmes as compared to the number who say they are not happy and not happy at all with their programmes. This indicates that many of the students chose their programmes based on their interests and abilities so are functioning well under the programmes.

The answer to Research Question 6 therefore is that, most Senior High School students in Kwabre District are satisfied with their programmes in Senior High Schools. In fact more than half of the total respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the programmes they were doing and would not like to change them.

Summary

This chapter has looked at the rationality of Senior High School students' choices of academic programmes in Kwabre District of Ashanti Region.

In summarizing the analysis, the following findings have been observed:

Most of the Senior High School students in Kwabre District find out if they would do well or not in a programme before choosing it. Students were mostly influenced by their interest in making choices of programmes in Senior High School. Choices of programmes not based on any criterion or based on mere suggestions of friends ranked least among the factors that influenced Senior High School students in Kwabre District in their choices of programmes.

Many students to a large extent gathered information on their programmes before choosing them. They sought information mostly on careers under the programme and areas of further studies. Students' key sources of career information were books or publications and teachers.

Generally, students expressed satisfaction with the programmes they were pursuing at Senior High School. They indicated that they were very happy and would not like to change the programmes they were doing.

Counsellors did not play significant role in guiding and counselling students in their choices of programmes. Many of the students chose their programmes without seeking counselling from a qualified counsellor.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with the summary of the research findings, conclusions, implications for counselling and recommendations. In addition the chapter offers suggestions for further research.

An Overview of the Study

The researcher was interested in finding out if Senior High School students in Kwabre District make rational choices of academic programmes in school. The study therefore found out the extent to which students assessed themselves before choosing programmes in Senior High Schools, the factors that influenced them in their choices of programmes and the extent to which they sought counselling and gathered information on their programmes before they chose them. It also looked at how happy students were with the programmes they were pursuing.

The target population was all Senior High School students in Kwabre District. The total number of them was 8052. However, the Form three students were purposively sampled for the study. A sample size of 331 was sampled from the Form three students. This was done through the use of stratified technique with proportional allocation. Simple random sampling technique using the lottery

method was used to select respondents from each stratum. Questionnaire was the main instrument used in the study. The questionnaire was made up of both open-ended and closed-ended items. It was made up of 23 items. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the 331 respondents out of which 320 copies were obtained. The descriptive survey design was used because the study sought to find out the characteristics of a group that is, how rational Senior High School students in Kwabre District make choices of academic programmes.

Summary of Major Findings

The major findings of the study are:

Research Question One: To what extent do Senior High School students in Kwabre District find out if they would perform well or not in a programme before deciding to do it? Most Senior High School students in Kwabre District find out if they would do well or not in a programme before choosing it.

Research Question Two: What factors influence Kwabre District Senior High School students in their choices of programme? The factors that influence Kwabre District Senior High School students most in their choices of programmes are their interest in the programmes and the importance of jobs under the programmes. The factors that influence them least in their choices of programmes are making choices not based on any criterion, making choices based on suggestions from friends and making choices based on pressure from parents.

Research Question Three: To what extent do Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek information on their preferred programmes before

choosing them? A greater number of Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek information on their preferred programmes before choosing them. More than half of the respondents sought information on their programmes before choosing them.

Research Question Four: What information do Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek on their preferred programmes? The information that Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek most on their preferred programmes is careers under the programme followed by areas of further studies. Their sources of information were books, teachers, parents, counsellors, headmasters and friends.

Research Question Five: To what extent do Senior High School students in Kwabre District seek counselling from qualified counsellors in their choices of programmes? It was found out that only few of the respondents sought counselling from qualified counsellors before choosing their programmes. Thus to a large extent Senior High School students in Kwabre District do not seek counselling from qualified counsellors before choosing their programmes in school.

Research Question Six: How satisfied are Senior High School students in Kwabre District with their chosen programme? It was found out that majority of students in Senior High Schools in Kwabre District are satisfied with the programmes they are pursuing and would not change them if opportunity was given them to do so.

Conclusion

A number of revelations that came out of the study would add up to knowledge on the subject of students' choices of programmes in Senior High Schools. It was noted that majority of students find out if they would do well or not in their programmes before they choose them. They do so by considering their interests in life and by considering their performances in terminal examinations. However, no student assessed himself by having a psychological test administered on him. This shows that the use of psychological tests is not common in the country.

It was also found out that, a lot of students gather information on their preferred programmes before choosing them. The information they gather most is careers available in the area. A sizable number of students indicated that they gathered information on their programmes from books. This shows that books or publications play important role in career education of students and so career directories should be made available to students to enable them choose realistic careers. Parents and teachers were also found to play key roles in career education of students. This is important because teachers and parents are always with students and so can effectively educate students on career options available for them. The students' assessment of themselves coupled with their gathering of information on their programmes of choice makes their choices rational.

It was also revealed in the study that students are mostly influenced by their interest in their programme choices. They did not just choose programmes or rely on mere suggestions of friends and pressure from parents. This shows that

112

students to a large extent make rational choices of programmes in Senior High School since choices are not merely made but based on their interest.

One important thing worth noting in the findings is lack of counselling in schools. It was realized that more than half of the total respondents did not seek counselling before choosing their programmes. With counsellors well trained to give career information to students, it is important that counsellors play their role of career guidance well in schools or else students would not make very effective choices of programmes in school.

Again, the revelation that most of the students were either happy or very happy with their programmes is indication of the fact many of them made rational choices of programmes. Just a few students were either not happy or not happy at all with their programmes. This is important because if many had indicated that they were not happy with their programmes, then it would have meant that many students were going to find themselves in wrong careers in future.

The general conclusion of the findings is that, since majority of students made choices of their programmes by first finding out if they would do well or not in their programmes, by gathering information on their programmes, made choices based on their interests and were very happy or happy in their programmes, it can be said that the choices of programmes by Kwabre District Senior High School students is largely rational.

Implications for Counselling

The findings from the study have the following implications for counselling:

First, the study indicates that interest is the factor that influences students' most in their choices of programmes in Senior High School. This implies that, counsellors should assess students to enable them arrive at their real interests in life. Counsellors can do this by administering career interest inventories on students.

Secondly, it was found in the study that students seek information on their programmes before choosing them. This implies that counsellors must strengthen information service programmes in schools to enable students acquire the right information on their programmes before choosing them.

Thirdly, the finding that the information students seek most on their preferred programmes are "careers under the programme" and "areas of further studies", implies that these two areas should be given serious emphasis in information service programmes in schools.

Fourthly, the realization of the fact that only a few students seek counselling from qualified counsellor when making choices of programmes in Senior High School implies that, counsellors should publicize and intensify their work in schools. They need to explain to students the importance of counselling and the role of counsellors in the school set up. These will enable the students to utilize the services of guidance and counselling co-ordinators in schools.

Finally, the finding that students to a large extent make rational choice of programmes in Senior High School at Kwabre District implies that counsellors should reinforce that behaviour of the students. This means that, counsellors need to encourage students to base their choices of programmes on their interest and academic abilities.

Recommendations

The findings from the study and the conclusions provide basis for a number of recommendations for considerations. It has been observed that most students do not seek counselling before they choose their programmes in Senior High School. Based upon this, it is recommended that:

1. Guidance and counselling co-ordinators in schools should intensify career guidance in schools. This will help students to continue to make rational choices of programmes in school.

2. School counsellors should reinforce students behaviour of choosing their programmes based on their interests and abilities.

3. Guidance and counselling co-ordinators should publicize their programmes to enable students be aware of the services they provide in schools.

Concerning the identification of the fact that students seek career information on their programmes of choice, it is recommended that:

1. Schools should stock their libraries with career directories to enable students be aware of careers in their preferred areas of study.

2. Career days should be organized in schools to educate children on available careers in various fields of study.

Suggestions for Further Research

As a result of financial and time constraints, the study was limited in scope as far as the area and sample coverage were concerned. It is therefore suggested that the study be replicated and carried out on a large scale in the region or country to find out the rationality or irrationality of Senior High School students choice of programmes in school.

The researcher suggests that in future, student researchers should work on the rationality between male and female students' choices of programmes in Senior High Schools. Again, they should research into the rationality of academic programme choices between students in urban and rural Senior High Schools.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Dear respondent; I am a researcher from University of Cape Coast researching into students' choice of programmes in Senior High Schools. I would be grateful if you respond genuinely to the items below. I assure you of the confidentiality of your responses.

Indicate your response to each item with a tick √ in the box [   ] provided or supply your own answer if your answer is not in the options provided.

1. Age

   14-16   [   ]

   17-19   [   ]

   20 and above   [   ]

2. Where do you live?

   Within Kwabre District   [   ]

   Within Kumasi Metropolis   [   ]

   Outside Kwabre District and Kumasi Metropolis   [   ]

3. Occupation of parents

   Both employed in the formal sector   [   ]

   One in the formal sector, one in the informal sector   [   ]

   One in the formal sector, one unemployed   [   ]

   Both in the informal sector   [   ]

Both are unemployed   [   ]

One in the informal sector, one is unemployed   [   ]

4. What programme are you pursuing at Senior High School?

Arts   [   ]

Business   [   ]

Agriculture   [   ]

Visual Arts   [   ]

Home Economics   [   ]

Technical   [   ]

Science   [   ]

5. What factor influenced you most in your choice of the above mentioned

programme?

I chose the programme because of the Popularity of it   [   ]

I chose the programme because of my interest in it   [   ]

I chose it because I perform very well in subjects in that area   [   ]

I chose the programme because of suggestions from friends   [   ]

I chose the programme because of suggestions from teachers   [   ]

I chose the programme because of suggestions from parents   [   ]

I chose the programme because of its importance   [   ]

I chose the programme because of pressure from parents   [   ]

I chose the programme not based on any criterion   [   ]

I chose the programme because of the importance of jobs in that area [   ]

Others (Indicate)…………………………………………..

6. Before deciding to do the programme you are doing, did you find out
    whether you will be able to do it or not?

    YES   [   ]

    NO   [   ]

7. If you found out whether you can do the programme or not, how did you
    assess yourself?

    By filling occupational interest inventory   [   ]

    By considering my performance in terminal examinations [   ]

    By considering my interests in life   [   ]

    Others (Indicate)…………………………………………

8. Did you gather information on the programme you are pursuing before
    deciding to do it?

    YES   [   ]

    NO   [   ]

9. What information did you gather on the programme you are studying
    before deciding to do it?

    Attributes required in careers in the area   [   ]

    Admission requirements of programmes in the area   [   ]

    Areas of further studies in the programme   [   ]

    Careers available under the programme   [   ]

    Others (indicate)…………………………………………………

10. If your answer to Q8 was YES, where did you get information on the

programme you are doing?

A counselor   [   ]

My parents   [   ]

My friends   [   ]

From books   [   ]

My headmaster   [   ]

My teacher   [   ]

Others (Indicate)………………………………………………….

11. Did you seek counselling from a qualified counsellor before you decided

to do the programme?

YES   [   ]

NO   [   ]

12. If your answer to Question 11 was YES, who was this counsellor?

School Counsellor   [   ]

District Schools' Counsellor   [   ]

Church Counsellor   [   ]

Others (Indicate)…………………………………………………

13. Did the counsellor let you fill any form (test or instrument)?

YES   [   ]

NO   [   ]

14. If your answer to Question 13 was YES, which of the following forms
(tests/ inventories) did he let you fill?

Occupation Interest Inventory   [   ]

Personality Inventory   [   ]

Achievement Test   [   ]

Mental Ability Test   [   ]

Aptitude Test   [   ]

Others (Indicate)………………………………..

15. How do you feel about the programme you are doing after pursuing it for
the past two and half years?

I feel very happy   [   ]

I feel happy   [   ]

I am not happy   [   ]

I am not happy at all   [   ]

16. Which of the following explanations would you give for your choice in
Question15 above?

I am not interested in the programme   [   ]

I am performing very well in the subjects under the programme   [   ]

I am very interested in the programme   [   ]

The requirements of the programme are above my abilities   [   ]

I am not able to afford the materials required to do the programme [   ]

I am not performing well in the programme   [   ]

Others (Indicate)……………………………………………

17. If you are given the opportunity now to change your programme, will you

    do so?

    YES   [   ]

    NO   [   ]

18. If your answer to Question 17 above is YES, which programme will you

    change to?

    Arts   [   ]

    Business   [   ]

    Agriculture   [   ]

    Visual Arts   [   ]

    Home Economics   [   ]

    Technical   [   ]

    Science   [   ]

19. Why do you prefer the new programme you chose in Question 18 above?

    It is the programme I like most   [   ]

    It is the programme I have the capability to do   [   ]

    It is the programme I can afford the materials required to do it [   ]

    Others (Indicate)………………………………..

20. If your answer to Question 17 was NO, why did you choose that option?

    Changing the programme will waste my time   [   ]

    I have accepted the programme no matter what   [   ]

    I have developed interest for the programme   [   ]

    I am talented in that area   [   ]

    Others (Indicate)……………………………..

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THESIS WORK

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We introduce to you Mr./Mrs./Miss. KWADWO OPENG AKYINA a student
from University of Cape Coast, Department of Educational Foundations. He/She is
pursuing a Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) degree in GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING
As part of his/her requirements, he/she is expected to work on a thesis entitled:

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RATIONALITY OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' CHOICES OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES IN KWABRE DISTRICT OF GHANA.

He/She has opted to make a study at your institution/establishment for the thesis. We
would be most grateful if you could afford him the opportunity to make the study.

Any information provided will be treated as strictly confidential.

Thank you.

(DR. Y.K.A. ETSEY)
HEAD

APPENDIX C

NUMBER OF COPIES OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE RECEIVED FROM

RESPONDENTS

Names & programmes of Senior High Schools	Number received
Kofi Agyei	
Arts	34
Home Economics	15
Agriculture	14
Technical	9
Gyaman Pensan	
Home Economics	4
Visual Arts	6
Technical	1
Adventist Girls'	
Arts	12
Business	4
Home Economics	8
Visual Arts	3
Adanwomase	
Arts	25
Science	3
Business	10

Home Economics	6
Visual Arts	7
Antoa	
Arts	22
Home Economics	21
Agric	15
Technical	16
Simms	
Arts	25
Business	29
Home Economics	12
Visual Arts	11
Agriculture	8
Total	320