

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CAREER NEEDS OF POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF  
TAKORADI POLYTECHNIC

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TAKORADI POLYTECHNIC

BY

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for award of Master of Arts Degree in Guidance and Counselling

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## DECLARATION

### **Candidate`s Declaration**

*I hereby declare that this dissertation 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: Dorothy Zakpaa Bozie

### **Supervisor`s Declaration**

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

Supervisor`s Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Prof. Samuel Obeng Apori

## **ABSTRACT**

This study was carried out to identify the counselling needs of Polytechnic students using Takoradi Polytechnic in the Western region of Ghana as a case study. It aimed at finding out their prevalent counselling needs, sources of support available to students and whether they desire services provided by the counselling department of the institution, taking into considerations variables such as; age, gender, academic level, programme of study and marital status.

Descriptive research design was used for the study, cluster, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed in selecting two hundred students for the research. Questionnaires were distributed and one hundred and sixty were collected after two weeks. Frequencies, percentages, cronbach`s alpha, factor analysis and chi-square were use in analysing the data.

The results revealed that although students encountered a myriad of problems and also desired consultations with professional counsellors to solve their problems, majority of them did not patronize the services provided by the counselling centre, but rather relied on friends when in need.

The study recommends among others that counselling at Takoradi Polytechnic should be formalised and carried out alongside the curriculum as an audited course.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I give thanks to the authorities of Takoradi Polytechnic who through their sponsorship made it possible for me to pursue this programme I also want to thank my supervisor for his relentless efforts and encouragement which enabled me to complete this work. My gratitude is also extended to all my lecturers from the Guidance and Counselling Unit of the University of Cape Coast and individuals who in diverse ways assisted me to achieve my goal.

Finally I want to thank my family and friends for their support while pursuing this programme.

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## **DEDICATION**

In memory of my husband and family

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the Study**

Counselling is a process through which a person attains a higher state of personal competence. Its goal is to help people explore problems so that they can decide what to do about them—to help people help themselves. It's ultimate goal is self empowerment in the face of seemingly intractable and hopeless set of circumstances brought about by people, systems or events apparently or actually beyond the subject`s control (Hopson,1984).

The needs of tertiary education students vary from academic, physical, social to psychological. These needs are dynamic in nature; as they may shift with changes in age, experience, socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity and social trends (Papalia, Cameron & Feldman, 1996). An accurate and regular assessment of these changing needs is crucial to the development of effective student service programmes. Therefore, needs assessment is particularly important in the light of the increasing diversity of students, their changing personal and career needs, and the heightened accountability of demands that confront student's services (Cox & Thoreson, 1998).

The social learning theory of career decision making (SLTCDM) by Krumboltz, Mitchell and Jones (1976), was developed to address the WHY's behind decisions to enter jobs, change in directions during one's lifetimes or

expression of various preferences at different points in one's life, the theory stated;

Genetic endowment and special abilities, such as race, gender, physical appearance and characteristics which make individuals differ both in their ability to benefit from learning experiences and getting access to different learning experiences. Environmental conditions and events, such as social, cultural, political, economic and natural resources which are generally outside the control of any individual.

Learning experiences which are the unique history of learning which individuals experience, that result in their occupational choice and which specific character of sequences they do not often remember but rather the general experiences drawn from it and the individual task approach skills, like punctuality, politeness, perseverance and commitment (Makinde & Alao, 1984) which result from interactions between genetic factors, learning experiences and environmental influences.

Holland (1985) built a theory of vocational development on the belief that a choice of vocation is an expression of the individual's personality and that, members of a vocation have similar personalities and histories of personal development. He suggested that, much career-seeking behaviour is an outgrowth of efforts to match one's individual characteristics with those of specific occupational fields. By choosing a particular occupation, an individual projects on to one of the titles in his preferred lifestyle as a result of his view of himself compared to the world of work. These views change as a person passes through various stages of development.

The interaction between an individual's personality and the environment in which he works determines vocational satisfaction, stability and achievement. Based on the above postulation, Holland formulated a scheme of occupational classification comprising six occupational environments or environmental models populated by individuals of corresponding personality type which are; the realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional.

According to Holland, everyone is required to adjust to each of the environments and develop certain skills with reference to the work setting. The six types of adjustment represent the major lifestyle and patterns of relationships between the individual and his world of work.

According to Vroom's "Expectancy model" (1964), individuals try to make a decision in such a way that, they realize the most desirable outcomes and avoid undesirable results. They actually try to get the highest "Compensation". Vroom's model is called a "compensatory model".

A needs assessment is a systematic exploration of the way things are and the way they should be. These "things" are usually associated with organizational and/or individual performance. Over the years, the importance of periodically assessing the identifiable needs of students before undertaking, designing and delivering effective counselling services and programmes is well established (Bishop 1979; Gallagher & Kirk, 1979; Oetting, Hackney & Ivey, 1970).

There are several factors that are generally regarded and accepted as being influential in career choice of the individual, these are summarised into family background, the personality and the society or environment. Each of



these may be influenced by or overlap with the other(s), and are in dynamic inter relationship. According to Edwin and Stanley (1989), some individuals are more influenced by some other career choice factors other than those enumerated below such as; abilities, needs and interests, stereotype, prestige and values.

For one to enter into a certain occupation, it demands that the individual should possess some required or minimum abilities. These abilities may include intellectual ability, intelligence, the training the person needs to be admitted into a job position or succeed in a job, and the work he will be able to pursue (Edwin & Stanley, 1989).

Needs and vocational interests which are relevant to career choice have been found to be closely related. Also, personality identifications of students are related to their vocational interest. The individual may have a need to fulfil or need to make him feel quite satisfied or comfortable in his work environment. This need generates interest in the type of career he or she would want to pursue (Edwin & Stanley, 1989).

Career decisions are sometimes affected by the prestige or status which people accord various occupations. Since the need to be respected can be held high and cannot be ruled out as human nature, people would want to get into such vocations that would give them that prestige and respect, (Edwin & Stanley, 1989).

According to Edwin and Stanley (1989), the individual, in his or her career choice may attach some high value to a particular type of vocation. Individuals, have what they cherish and the value they place on things that others do not. The reward and satisfaction they may derive are internalized in

their career choice and development and choice. Also, the values a person holds are as a result of upbringing, environment in which one is and the education received. These values may influence the individual's choice of career.

Anne Roe as cited in Taylor and Buku (2006) stresses on the importance of need satisfaction in career development and choice. The theory postulates that career choice is based on childhood orientation or experience at home to satisfy needs; and that people choose occupations that satisfy important psychological need.

Roe as cited in Taylor and Buku (2006) dwelt on Abraham Maslow's list of basic needs (arranged in a hierarchy of potency) to be the most useful approach from personality theory; and that it offered the most effective way of discussing the relevance of occupation in the satisfaction of human's basic needs.

These needs which are satisfied within the job situation are; the physiological needs, the safety needs, the need for belongingness and love, the need for importance, respect, self-esteem and independence, the need for information, the need for understanding, the need for beauty and the need for self-actualisation

Anne Roe's theory of occupational choice assumes a relationship between certain childhood environments, need development, personality and ultimately job choices. The theory is primarily a psychological theory in which Anne Roe attempts to account for psychological processes that lead to career choice. Roe wrote that each of us is born with certain psychological predispositions and a cluster of physiological and physical strengths and

weaknesses. These interact with certain environmental conditions, particularly, child-rearing practices as need hierarchy develops. Each of us seeks to meet these needs in a particular type of work environment (Brown & Brooks, 1990). The child-rearing practices go with the home emotional climate. The home climate is looked at from the following perspectives:

Emotional concentration on the child may either be that which is over-demanding or over-protecting.

Accepting parents could either be very loving (loving acceptance) or casually loving (casual acceptance).

Avoidance type of parents could either be rejecting or neglecting parents.

Over-demanding, over-protecting, and loving acceptance upbringing moves the individual towards person oriented jobs for their strong need for belongingness, love and affection.

On the other hand, rejecting casual love, Casual and acceptance child-upbringing experiences propel the individual to look for non-person-oriented job to satisfy the need for security and safety (Zunker, 1994).

It should be noted, however, that Roe (1956) contributed to occupational psychology on account of her theory focusing on occupational choice rather than on career development, hence her basic idea that occupational choice involves an attempt to meet needs.

### **Statement of the Problem**

All over the world, students irrespective of their level of education have counselling needs. In Ghana all the public tertiary institutions have established counselling centres which offer counselling services to meet

students` academic, personal, social and career needs. The number of counselling cases recorded at the Takoradi Polytechnic counselling centre were 27 and 46 in the years 2009 and 2010 respectively. The most predominant cases were academic followed by problems of social nature. Taking into consideration the total population of students whilst the research was being carried out it was expected that about at least 30% of students should have been patronizing the counselling centre to resolve the myriad of problems they encounter as young adult students.

Studies conducted by Okon (1984) showed that students in Nigerian Colleges and Universities faced problems relating to academic, finance, career information, love affairs, and family issues. In this research, the researcher anticipates that Polytechnic students in Ghana who are also adults have needs which could have some impact on their studies and need to be addressed through counselling services.

There is therefore the need to assess the counselling needs of Polytechnic students in Ghana to serve as a justifiable basis for establishing three year formalized counselling programme to be delivered alongside the curriculum of the country's Polytechnics.

### **Purpose of the Study**

From the above stated problem, this study sought to:

1. Identify the counselling needs of Polytechnic students in Ghana using Takoradi Polytechnic School of Business as a case study and to determine whether these needs are being adequately met.
2. The research also aimed at examining the sources of support available to students encountering problems.

3. Find out whether the counselling needs of Polytechnic students were influenced by variables such as gender, age, academic level, programme of study and marital status.

The research would place emphasis primarily on the counselling needs of Polytechnic students and other associated factors which might influence it. The present study is to enhance already existent knowledge about student`s problems on various issues relating to their studies and future career decision making and would also find out whether students in Ghanaian polytechnics have similar problems identified in the reviewed literature.

### **Research Questions**

To enable the researcher accomplish the study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the most prevalent counselling needs of Polytechnic students?
2. What are the most predominant sources of help or support available to Polytechnic students as far as their counselling needs are concerned?
3. What proportion of Polytechnic students needed counsellor services for the solution of their academic, social, psychological, employment, financial and health problems.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study will give information on the career needs of students and the most predominant sources of support for students in times of problems. This information could be used by counselling coordinators in their career development counselling programmes for students since the ultimate

goal of every student is to get a satisfying and well-paid job after school or be lucratively self-employed.

Again, the results should inform government policy makers on matters relating to the needs of polytechnic students and the introduction of formulized counselling programmes alongside their curriculum to assist students resolve their numerous problems.

Lastly, career counselling places students in the position to either opt for wage or salary jobs, self-employment or job generation. The end results I believe would enable most school leavers to get employed and help reduce graduate unemployment in Ghana.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

As a result of constraints in time and resources, the study was limited to Takoradi Polytechnic in the Western Region of Ghana. The school of Business and Management Studies was targeted for easier distribution and collection of questionnaires due to the satellite nature of the Polytechnic's campuses. Only students offering Higher National Diplomas programmes in Accounting, Marketing, Purchasing and Supply and Secretaryship and Management Studies were also targeted.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Findings were not generalized to cover all students of the polytechnics in Ghana. The researcher also intended to investigate further into the low patronage of the counselling services of Takoradi Polytechnic despite the high expression of students' desire to consult professional Counsellors when facing problems. This however could not be realised because of unavailability of adequate related literature.

The study was also limited to only six broad categories of student`s counselling needs which are: social, employment, academic, finance, health and psychology. Other areas such as the role of the family in the choice of programmes, inadequate accommodation and other facilities were not dealt with in this study.

### **Organisation of the Rest of the Report**

Chapter two reviews existing literature in relation to career needs of Polytechnic Students while chapter three focuses on the methodology of the study and deals with the research design, population and sample procedure, research instrument, data collection and data analysis procedure.

Chapter four consists of the presentation of the results, discussion and the implication of the findings. Chapter five presents the review of the study and the findings of the study; draws conclusions and makes recommendations and suggestions for future researcher.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter focuses on the review of literature related to the study. A theoretical review of Maslow's Need Theory and Anne Roe's Personality Theory will be followed by a review of literature on the career needs of various categories of students. The chapter closes with a brief summary.

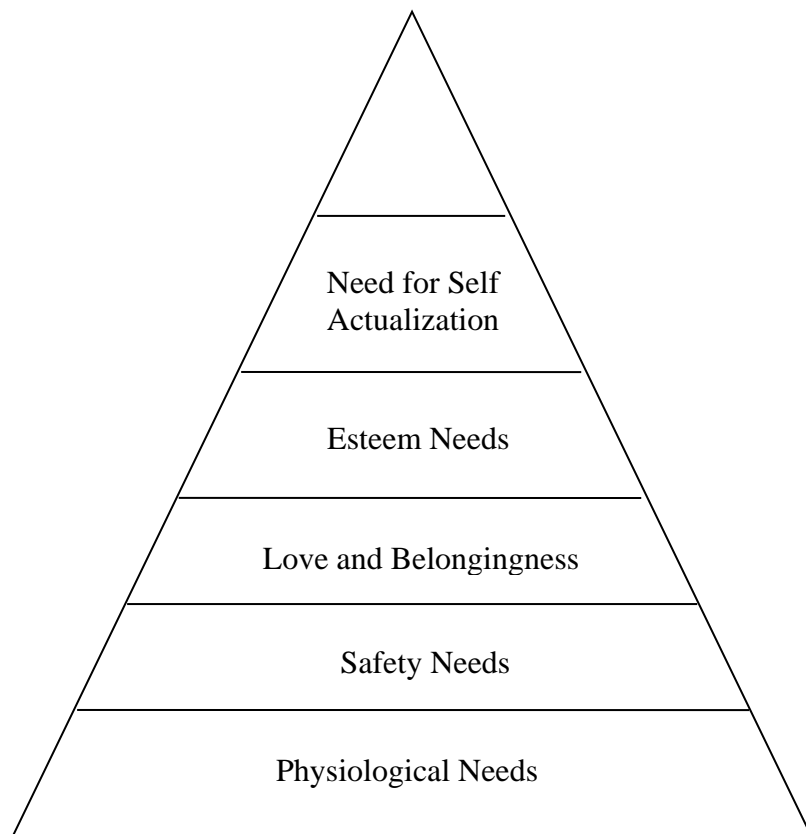
#### **Theoretical Review**

##### **Maslow's Needs Theory**

The need theory formulated by Maslow (1970) concentrates on human needs and their relationship to the development of a person's full potential (Napoli, 1992). To Maslow, every need arises from an imbalance or disequilibrium between what human nature deems necessary for the health of a person and what a person's environment provides (Oladele, 1998).

Maslow postulates that human needs are hierarchical. Thus he presents needs in a pyramid-like structure. This hierarchy of needs are based on two groupings—deficiency needs and growth needs (Huit, 2002). According to Maslow, an individual is ready to act upon the growth needs only if the deficiency needs are met. This hierarchy of needs is presented below.





Source: Dacey and Travers (1996)

**Figure 1.** Maslow`s hierarchy of needs

In Figure 1, the needs at the base of the pyramid are assumed to be more basic in comparison to the need above them. The physiological needs are explained by Maslow as unlearned needs, such as the need for food, air and rest. Those needs are related to physical survival and failure to meet them result in death (Wortman, Loftus & Marshall, 1992). Physiological needs such as hunger and sleep are dominant. They are the basis of motivation and until they are satisfied, everything else recedes. Therefore, until these physiological needs are adequately satisfied, the individual will not attend to any other need.

The next level of needs in the hierarchy is Safety Needs. The safety needs ensure our survival. For instance, the individual needs to protect himself

from crime so as to have some form of freedom and comfort to act upon his environment, to ensure growth and progress. They represent the importance of security, protection, stability freedom from fear and anxiety and the need for structure and limits (Dacey & Travers, 1996). Napoli (1992), reported that human beings seek physical safety and psychological security so that they may feel free to act within their environment without fear or threat of fear.

When the needs for safety have been satisfied, the need for love and belongingness or attachment emerges. This refers to the need for family and friends. According to Chauhan (1996) the needs at this level emphasize the basic psychological nature of human beings to identify with the group and association. These include making intimate relationships with other members of the society, being an accepted member of an organized group and needing a familiar environment as family. Chauhan, reported that the modern developing society with all its advantages is doing a great harm of disintegrating family and social life of many people. For example in big cities, people living in the same building may not even know the next door neighbour. This makes them feel alone or isolated; they seem not to have social life though there are people around them. He states further that people really have need to escape feelings of loneliness, alienation, give and receive love, affection, and the sense of belonging.

Pietrofesa, Hoffman and Splete (1984) reported that the need to love and be loved includes all forms of affection from friendship to parental love. They believe everyone needs to feel loved throughout life and that it is necessary to love someone and to feel loved. They further postulated that when individuals are unable to fulfil their need for love, they suffer from

anxiety, self-blame, depression, anger and possible withdrawal from society. Pietrofesa, Hoffman and Splete (1984) also postulated that death may result if a person experiences a complete deficit of love early in life. In later life, a complete deficit of love can stimulate sufficient depression to cause suicide or psychosis.

Dacey and Travers (1996) found that healthy people want to avoid feelings of loneliness and isolation and that people who feel alone, or lack any sense of belongingness usually have poor relationships with others. This, they explained can affect their achievement later in life. Oladele (1998) stated that the lower level needs like, psychological needs are typically met through the responsibility of the family. Safety as well as love and belongingness needs are largely met through the security, care and concern offered at home.

Self-esteem needs form the next level on the needs ladder. These are sometimes referred to as ego needs (Chauhan, Dacey & Travers, 1996), and are divided into two categories which are, Self-esteem, self-respect, self-regard and self-evaluation. Relating to respect from others; reputation, status, social success and fame.

According to Chauhan (1996) the need for self-evaluation occurs in persons who are comfortably situated and are quite secured in the satisfaction of lower needs. He asserts that feelings of achievement of competence and of meeting high standard of excellence in performances are not the concerns of the struggling beginner but the “extra touches” of a comfortable artisan. Chauhan therefore postulated that esteem is externally based before it becomes internally based. This is due to the fact one usually seeks the respect and assurance of others of being a worthy person before he attains a level of pride

in his involvement in his activities. Chauhan had noted that failure to gratify the need for self-respect or reputation from others can produce personality disturbances in the individual, as he may develop feelings of inferiority of being different from others and being a misfit in the society. Maslow reported that sufficient gratification of the esteem needs lessen the dominant force in a person's life and enables him to move in the direction of self-actualization. Norwood (2002), argued that at this level of need, people require a stable family based on high level of self-respect and self-confidence. Gerrow (1992) suggested that once we have found that others value us for who we are we focus on our need to be recognized for our accomplishment. He continued that these needs are social in nature which implies that our behaviours are motivated by our awareness of others and our concern for their approval. If these are not met, the individual feels inferior, weak, helpless and worthless. Thus, self-esteem brings feelings of competence, confidence and a sense of achievement and individuality.

### **Maslow's Concept of Self-Actualization**

The highest level on Maslow's hierarchy is the need for self-actualization. According to Chauhan (1996) self-actualization means to fulfil one's individual nature in all aspects. People can be motivated to fulfil the need only when the fundamental physiological and psychological (love, belongingness and esteem needs) have been fully met.

Maslow described self-actualization as an on going process. Self-actualizing people are with one single exception of being involved in a cause outside their own skin (Norwood, 2002). A self-actualized person as defined by Maslow, finds fulfilment in doing the best that he or she is capable of, not

in competition with others, but in an effort to become “the best I can be”(Wortman & Loftus, 1992). Self-actualized people are devoted; work at ‘something very precious’ to them such as some calling or vocation Huit (2002), and Wortman and Loftus (1992) explained that self-actualization does not just include excelling at one’s life work, but also devoting oneself to higher social goals that bring about justice or stopping cruelty and exploitation.

According to Maslow, the self-actualized person experiences freedom from cultural and self-imposed restraints, he does not adopt any extreme movement, nor does he unquestionably identify himself with the culture. He does not seek fame, glory or the love and approval of everyone; instead he finds peace and contentment in the inner satisfaction that comes with being the best he can be (Wortman & Loftus, 1992). Another characteristic of the self-actualized person is that he is more likely than other people to have what Maslow called “peak experiences.” Peak experiences are profound moments in a person’s life in which there is a feeling of great ecstasy and awe with the conviction that something extremely important and valuable had happened (Maslow, as cited by Wortman & Loftus, 1992). The individual seems to have some important and lasting effect on the individual who thereafter is likely to see him-self and others in a more spontaneous and healthier way.

Maslow as cited in Norwood (2000) differentiates the growth need of self-actualization into sub-levels which are;

Cognitive – to know, understand and explore.

Aesthetic – to appreciate symmetry, order and beauty.

Self – actualization – to find self-fulfilment and realization of one’s potentials.

Transcendence – to help others find self-fulfilment and realize their potentials.

According to Norwood, Maslow's basic position was that, as one becomes more self-actualized and transcendent he becomes wiser and automatically knows what to do in a wide variety of situations. Maslow proposed a number of characteristics common with self-actualized persons, some of which were the ability to demonstrate an efficient perception of reality and acceptance accept themselves and others, show high degree of spontaneity and simplicity, are problem-centred rather than self-centred be autonomous and independent of their environment, identify with mankind, appreciate 'basic goals of life' with continued freshness and pleasure, develop deep interpersonal relations with others, keep means and ends distinguishable, and are non-conformists.

Huit (2002) proposed that Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be used to describe the kinds of information that people seek at different levels. Individuals at the lowest or physiological needs level seek coping information in order to meet their very basic needs. In this way, a person who meets his needs in a very short time span is simply left out unattended. At the safety level, individuals need helping information as they seek assistance to see how they can be safe and secure.

To meet their belongingness needs, individuals seek enlightening information. According to Norwood (2002) this is quite often found in books and other materials on relationship development. Individuals at the esteem level seek empowering information as they look for information on how they can develop an ego. Finally, individuals in the growth needs of cognitive,

aesthetic and self-actualization seek edifying information on how others can be edified.

### **Anne Roe`s Personality Theory**

Roe`s theory as cited in Taylor and Buku (2006), is usually referred to as a need theory approach to career choice. The relations within the family and their subsequent effects on career direction have been the main focus of her work. The analysis of differences in personality, aptitude, intelligence and background as related to career choice was the main thrust of her work. To Roe, rejection, acceptance, domination and democratic attitudes of parents towards their children is the foundation for certain personality characteristics and these characteristics which are important for some types of occupations.

Anne Roe proposed a scheme of occupational classification into two categories which were Person-oriented,(that is, people) and Non-Person-oriented (things).

Person-oriented occupations were made up of:

**Service:** This is concerned with services to other people e.g. school workers, supervisors, policemen, taxi drivers and social workers.

**Business contact:** This deals with person to person contact primarily in sales. It usually focuses on persuasion to a cause of action rather than helping the individual. These include promoters, public relation counsellors, sales men, interviewers and peddlers.

**Managerial:** It involves management in business, industry and government. The quality of person-to-person relations is largely formalized e.g. running business enterprise.

**General culture:** This is to do with the preservation and transmission of society's cultural heritage e.g. teaching, ministry and journalism.

**Arts and Entertainment:** This deals with the specific skills and abilities in performing creative arts and entertainment e.g. musicians, sports, comedians and decorators.

Examples of non-person oriented occupations included

**Technology:** This has to do with occupations like production, maintenance and transportation where interpersonal relations are of relatively little importance and the focus is on things. Example, engineering crafts, machine trade.

**Outdoors:** This deals especially with the cultivation and gathering of agricultural product and natural resources with farm warden as an example.

**Science:** This involves the formation of scientific theories and their application to life under specified circumstances. They include psychology, anthropology, medical occupations with University professors, pharmacists and laboratory technicians as examples.

Roe further considered the level of responsibility in each occupational level based on the degree of responsibility, capacity, skills as well as the level of dependency and independency. These levels were

**Professional and Managerial I:** For occupation at this level, there was no higher authority than the social class group. Top managerial and administrative people are found here e.g. creators, innovators and presidents. They make policies for the group and such policies affect everybody in the group.



**Professional and Managerial II:** For occupation at this level, genuine autonomy may be present but with a narrower or less significant responsibility than in level one. Qualifications are post-graduate and its associates. They are normally involved in making important decisions for themselves and others.

**Semi-professionals and Small Businesses:** Individuals have low level of responsibility for others. Education at this level is like of a high school or technical school or the equivalent.

**Skilled:** Occupation at this level requires apprenticeship or other training or experience e.g. carpenters and blacksmiths.

**Semi-skilled:** The training and experience required at this level is markedly less than that of level four. Much less autonomy and initiative is permitted in these occupations.

**Unskilled:** At this level group differentiation depends primarily on the occupational setting. No special training or education is needed to follow simple instructions and directions to engage in simple repetitive actions for example cleaners and messengers (Brown & Brooks, 1990).

Roe disagreed with some of Maslow's position of needs and suggested that the need for self-actualization should have followed the need for importance, respect, self-esteem and independence. She explained that in society, no single situation is potentially so capable of giving some satisfaction at all levels of basic needs as the occupation. The observation was particular for physiological and safety needs. To work with a congenial group was an important aspect of satisfying occupation, and to be accepted by one's peers was a means to promote self-esteem. She contended that, in her culture

(American), social and economic status depended more on the occupation one had than any other thing (Roe, 1956).

Roe's theory, which was primarily a psychological theory, attempted to account for psychological processes that lead to career choice. She hypothesized that each of us was born with certain psychological predispositions and a cluster of physiological and physical strength and weaknesses. These interact with certain environmental conditions, such as child-rearing practices for a need hierarchy development. Each of us sought to meet those needs in a particular type of work environment (Brown & Brooks, 1990).

Anne Roe after several studies refuted her claim that different parent-child interactions resulted in different vocational choices by taking a position that the early orientation of an individual was related to later major decision taken particularly in occupational choice (Powell, 1957; Green & Parker, 1965). Anne Roe's Theory of Personality and Need Approach was not supported by other researchers like Osipow (1983), Brown (1990) and Isaacson (1985). Her eight category classification of occupation and her advocacy for people oriented and non-people oriented category served as a foundation for the later development of other theories by Holland (1957), Prediger (1974), and Super and Crites (1962) as cited by Zunker (1994). The researcher did agree that one's satisfaction, efficiency and effectiveness on the job depended on his or her upbringing in the family.

## **Empirical Review**

### **Tertiary Students' Career Needs**

College presents a wide range of challenges to students and almost any concern or issue in a student's life will have an impact on his or her academic performance. Okon (1984) reported that each academic session creates numerous pressures and problems to students and the problems sometimes affect their personal lives, social relationships and academic progress. Gibson and Mitchell (1990) found that students in higher education have concerns relating to personal-social, educational and career issues. Darkwa and Ekow (2002) reported that higher (tertiary) education in Africa was confronted with several challenges that create a complex combination of limited access, increasing cost, decreasing quality, limited choice of subjects and academic programmes and inflexibility in course selection and inadequate educational resources.

Campus Blues (2002) identified a number of common reasons why college students experience academic problems. The paper identified lack of motivation due to students not having a clear vision regarding their reasons for being in a college. It explained that students go to college at the insistence of their parents, or others while they themselves were not really aware of what they wanted to do with their lives. Students also chose courses, programmes or major in specialised areas to please others when the chosen courses and areas of specialization have little or no relationship to the students' true interest.

Many students were therefore just not sure of what they really want to do in their future career. Kerr and Colangelo (1988) reported that although academically, talented students have in common high performance on a

standardized instrument, they may still be significantly different in effective social and career development needs. According to them, a research on highly talented students indicates that these students have more adjustment and emotional problems than moderately talented students and they seem to have done less with their lives than expected. Their study further showed that students experiencing problems with multi-potentiality often show an undifferentiated profile on vocational interest tests, indicating confusion and even apathy in the face of an overwhelming number of possibilities.

According to Kerr and Colangelo (1988) early emergence or prematurely narrow career goals may be a problem among the most highly talented students. This makes it seem that moderately and highly talented students have different academic, social and personal needs.

### **Concerns of the Counselling Profession**

Mitchell and Krumboltz (1987) reported that the inability of many young adults to make career decisions had long been of concern to members of the counselling profession. They noted that career indecision had been shown to be associated with both state and trait anxiety and with various maladaptive beliefs that inhibit constructive career activities. O'Hare (1987) also highlighted on the inability of college and university students to make career decision as one of the most frequent problems reported to college and university counsellors.

Kerka (1995) found that the career needs of adults aged 18 – 25 were particularly not being met. He reported that many young adults had little or no career guidance, or counselling when they were “in school” and they often

seek it now, making job or career changes spurred by their personal stage of development or by the 'post-modern' workplace.

Fredrickson (1986) explained that too often gifted and talented young people are expected to succeed on their own, or because of their multi-potentiality, they are expected to adapt to whatever happens to them. He explained that limited resources were devoted to those who really need them. He argued that, there was probably no better place to invest time and energy with a greater rate of return than on gifted and talented individuals.

Walther and Ritchie (2002) suggested that adult learners have unique counselling needs which need to be considered by colleges and universities. They indicated that the five differences between adults and youth which need to be considered by counsellors are;

Education is often a secondary consideration for adults who have many other competing responsibilities and they want this to be recognized so as to be treated as adults.

Adults have valuable experiences which add to the educational process and they want the opportunity to bring these experiences to their learning.

Adult learners want to be able to immediately apply what they have learned.

The adult student is likely to be enrolled due to life transitions.

Adults are self-directed and generally more motivated to achieve because they have specific objectives in mind.

Walther and Ritchie further stated that many older adults fear they will be slower than their younger classmates and may fail in the classroom and this

leads to anxiety. They further state that adults may be grappling with life cycle transitions in addition to the initial fears upon entering college.

It is often assumed that the first day of school can be a scary prospect for anyone, but adult students confront special concerns and justified fears since adults are more likely to have multiple responsibilities, requiring them to juggle commitments to school, family and employment. Campus Blues (2002) asserted that, a large number of adult students are struggling with the many demands of college life while also dealing unassisted with major emotional issues such as loss, depression, anxiety and many other undiagnosed and untreated problems that so often lead to academic difficulties or failures.

Shields (1993) reported that, adults are concerned about reaching and maintaining satisfactory performance in a career; managing a home; developing adult leisure activities and relating to their spouses, where frequently enters into the occupational selection process. Teng and Rhodes (1983), as cited in Morris and Levison (1995) stated that vocational maturity consisted of two components which were: adequate understanding of the world of work and adequate-decision-making skills.

According to Lopez and Andrews (1987) arriving at a career decision was a difficult and anxious task for all students. It has been estimated that 25% of all students entering into college and universities do so without having decided on a career (Lopez & Andrews). They stated that some students will continue to experience career decision making difficulty throughout their college years and beyond. Some students according to them were regarded as situational undecided because of either informational or character deficits. The Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC Digest, November2002)

also indicated that students of all ages need career exploration assistance, however, the way students go about investigating various opportunities may differ for traditional age students versus adults. The study also suggested that career change is one of the most common reasons adults enter college.

The adult student therefore needs to be helped to understand a variety of influences in his life that led to his present work and study role: to re-evaluate his work role in light of his being more mature, realistic appreciation of his potential against the opportunities now available to him in a demanding, complex society. Arp, Holmerg and Littrel (1986) revealed that adult students need assistance in searching for jobs. They further explained that “the techniques used by career planning staff to prepare the 22-year old to locate the first job may not be appropriate for a woman who hopes to enter the labour market after a prolonged absence, or a man who desires a career change after receiving a degree at age 35”.

Arp et al. (1986) explained that as adult students begin to set goals for their future, they consider a marked change in their career path and need to know how to sort their priorities. Walther and Ritchie (2002) reported that, adult students were faced with taking decisions or prioritising their needs like time allocation for family care in exchange for career opportunities, materialistic needs or learning to obtain higher academic levels.

Walther and Ritchie (2002) stated that family issues can present a greater barrier to achievement for women who often shoulder more responsibilities at home and that impede their educational achievement. He further suggested that there was the need for these students to be made aware of possible reactions of their spouses both at entry, and later as spouses

become jealous of either the growth they observe or if they sense alienation. Mohney and Anderson (as cited in ERIC Digest, November 2002), indicated that role demands such as family responsibilities and career or job demands were a major obstacle for women returning to higher education and this often impedes their successful adaptation of the additional role of student. Schroer and Dorn (1986) reported that gifted women also faced the problem of having fewer adult role models of their own sex with whom to identify than to men.

Read, Elliot, Escobar and Slaney (1988) suggested that the multiple roles of a wife, mother and an employee may lead to discomfort in women or even feelings of guilt about adopting the additional role of students.(ERIC Digest, November 2002), indicated that adult women typically return to community colleges during transitional or vulnerable stages in their lives, must maintain additional responsibilities related to other role demands and this could be very stressful for adult women students.

Tharenou (1997) found that female managers had comparatively less work experience than male managers. The human capital paradigm suggested that women were less educated generally than men and had less experience and skilled. These deficits influence women's chances for success in their careers. Schwartz (1989) stated that "men continue to perceive women as the rearers of their children and so find it understandable or indeed appropriate that women should renounce their careers and raise families". In an attempt to explain the gender differences in management, the human capital perspective suggested that rewards are based on past investment in education, job training and experience. Women were generally treated differently which could be due to impersonal, economic, societal, cultural barriers among others (Better &



Moore1992). Igbaria and Chidambaram (1997) found that men perceive greater opportunities for advancement and promotion than do women and that explained why women generally occupy commensurably lower positions.

Igbaria and Chidambaram (1997) further explained that women experience more career interruptions like child-rearing responsibilities, which forced them to forego or postpone human capital enhancing activities and consequently stay longer on their current job. (ERIC Digest (November 2002) reported that the need to contribute to the family income or to gain financial independence, bereavement, loss of job, divorce and career limitations due to lack of education, were some of the reasons which made adult women to return to higher educational institutions to acquire more knowledge and skills. The point is in line with those earlier suggested by Blair, McPake and Munn (1997).

Pines and Zaidman (2003) defined social support as information that leads people to believe that they are cared for and loved, esteemed and valued and are members of a network with mutual obligation. This is said to include emotional, instrumental, and informational support. They postulated that people need different kinds of support and tend to receive from different people satisfaction of different needs.

### **Previous Studies on Career Needs of Tertiary Students**

Two studies conducted separately by Wonk and Kwok (1997) in Hong Kong; and Okon (1980) in Nigeria revealed that students in tertiary institutions have problems relating to academic, marriage and family, sex, health, psychological, career and interpersonal relationship.

The study by Wonk and Kwok (1997) revealed that many of the difficulties faced by mature students were related to the issue of time constraints while others appeared to be related to study skills. Again a much higher percentage of married respondents with children experienced, difficulties particularly in relation to time constraints than single people and those married without children.

On the sources of social support of mature students, their study found out that most of the students relied on informal networks for support. Spouses were found to be support generalists who provided support ranging from information, instrumental, emotional and social companionship to their partners. Wonk and Kwok therefore explained that any marital conflict would have a more profound negative impact on these students, because according to them once support cannot be obtained from their spouses, support from other sources may not be readily available. Again, according to the study, Lovers render mainly emotional and social companionship support. It was also found out that mature students rely mostly on friends for information but very little for instrumental support.

Adult students typically enter higher education for work-related goals and family responsibilities. Johnson, Schwartz and Bower (2000) found that adult women students are often motivated to return to school after the “loss of a job, divorce, death of a spouse, and career limitations due to lack of education” (p. 291). Oftentimes the impetus for adult women to return to school is a personal, life-changing event. Changes such as children leaving the home or divorce have been documented as influencing adult women`s desire to re-enter higher education (Mohney & Anderson, 1988).

The increase in divorce rates in recent years as well as the high number of single-parent households headed by women, has led many adult women to view the community college as a good way to further their education and achieve greater economic security and a better standard of living for themselves and their children (Herideen, 1998).

### **Sources of Support for Career Counselling Needs**

Kerka (1995) revealed that about 40% of adult students would turn to family or friends first and 37% counsellors for career counselling. Of the 1,046 adult students studied only 36% had made a conscious career choice or plan; and for 47%, the primary sources of career information were from television, magazines and newspapers.

Two case studies carried out by Pancer et al. (2000), revealed that college students especially those between ages 18-23 often seek assistance to perform tasks such as leaving home, gaining autonomy, selecting and preparing for work that will provide a living, dating and life-partner selection. These studies also showed that lack of financial and emotional support from parents for the upcoming changes in these young adult students posed many problems to them. For instance, a student who attempted suicide explained that she lacked parental support due to the substance abuse of one parent and depression of the other. She therefore feared leaving the supportive community she had created for herself at her university and also feared the transition of being a single career woman, so she wanted to end it all.

A survey on the experience of women conducted by Berry (1995) at Manchester University revealed that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the support they received from other students in relation to their studies

and with the availability and quality of their social life. On the issue of health, she reported that the majority of their respondents were content or very content with their health with about 15% expressing concern.

On financial issues Berry (1995) found that less than 10% of her respondents were content with their financial resources and that several women in the study were considering dropping out of university because of the cost involved. According to the author, shortage of money means that students cut corners, go short of food, clothes and other essentials. She concluded that lack of adequate financial resources account for the most severe difficulties among students.

Allen and Stottenberg (1995) found out in their study of male and female first-year medical students that they had developed a greater sensitivity to the needs of others and themselves, leading to a greater capacity to provide support and greater dependence on social support for psychological well-being. The younger students, according to Panceret al. (2000) really needed support of the counselling centre staff on issues concerning their safety, academic and social support.

Gianakos (1996) conducted a study and reported that retraining new positions, earning a degree in order to secure a job and change in life circumstances were major reasons adults attend college. Studies conducted by Slotnik, Pelton, Fuller and Tabour (1993) on adult students revealed that adult students have a sense of purpose and perspective. They know what they want and were willing to work for their need. They also showed that adult students often experience a need for change and feel alienated and also challenged, as they attempt to balance competing priorities. Other findings were that, the

main reasons adults attend college were career related. Many adults attend college to prepare for a career change, and use schooling to gain new skills and knowledge that they plan to use in their occupations.

Investigating the differences between younger students and older students, Slotnik et al. (1993) found out that one of the biggest differences has to do with responsibilities. The report indicated that while younger students seemed to be able to focus on their primary role as students, older students try to balance their multiple roles and responsibilities.

In two separate studies conducted by Brehm (1992) it was found that among college students, there was more talk than action on response to the fear of AIDS. For instance, it was shown that more than 40% of sexually active respondents said they had modified their sexual behaviour because of their concerns about AIDS, the report on actual sexual behaviour failed to confirm these claims. He suggested that the sexual behaviours of college students raise a crucial issue as high-risk sex still occurs among well-educated, reasonably affluent young men and women in the society. He found out that sex was not the easiest behaviour to regulate, particularly for young men and women with vigorous sexual appetite.

### **Summary of Related Literature**

This review has revealed that students in tertiary institutions have diverse needs ranging from personal, career, academic, social, moral, interpersonal relationship, information, marriage family, health and sex. The needs of students differ in terms of age academic level, gender and marital status.

It was also found out that most adult students return to higher education at the time they may be grappling with life transitions. Adult women students often face a lot of challenges which present a greater barrier to their achievement in colleges or universities. Adult students however, were generally more motivated and self-directed as they have specific objectives in mind. Younger students on the other hand, experience considerable difficulties in adjusting to college and some of them turn to drugs and alcohol in an attempt to cope with their adjustment problems. Younger students also lack good study skills and time management. They also do not know how to manage their finances.

The literature further revealed that students of all ages need career exploration assistance but the ways students go about investigating various opportunities differ from traditional age students as against adults. New studies have shown that an estimated 25% of all students entering into colleges and universities do so without having decided on a career and that some students will continue to experience career decision difficulties throughout their college years and beyond.

On gender issues the literature revealed that men perceive greater opportunities for advancement and promotion than women do. Due to this, women generally occupied commensurably lower positions. Again, women experience more career interruptions and child-rearing responsibilities and were therefore forced to forego or postpone human-capital enhancing activities and consequently stay longer in their current job.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter deals with the research design, population sample, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis devices.

#### **Research Design**

The descriptive research or survey design was used for the study. According to Gay (1992) this involves the collection of data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of study. According to Osuala (1993) descriptive research gives a picture of a situation or a population and it is basic for all types of research in assessing the situation as a prerequisite to inferences and generalizations. Descriptive research is concerned with the present status of a phenomenon and it deals with what exists, such as determining the nature of prevailing conditions, and practices. The researcher considered the descriptive research or survey as the most appropriate because the study was basically descriptive and data was gathered from carefully selected sample.

Again, as indicated by Hackett and Betz (1981) descriptive survey can be used to gather data on client needs and attitudes, to aid programme decisions in areas such as and the provision of counselling services. It also enablesthe researcher to collect data from large number of people. This type of design however is associated with certain weaknesses. For instance: sampling

error which may occur due to chance selection of different individuals (Tuckman, 1972). Hackett et al. (1981) also points out that the descriptive survey could have low response rates. It is for this reason that the design was opted for in spite of the weaknesses associated with it because the researcher deem it the most appropriate for the purpose of the study.

### **Population**

The target population of the study comprised only Higher National Diploma (HND) Students of Takoradi Polytechnic in Takoradi, Ghana. According to the 2011, 11<sup>th</sup> Congregation Brochure of Takoradi Polytechnic, the total student population of the Polytechnic was 9,000 with 4,600 pursuing HND programmes in the School of Business and Management Studies.

Since the researcher wanted to have a fair representation of the population studied, only HND students at the School of Business was targeted because they offered tertiary programme in Accounting, Marketing, Purchasing and Supply, Secretaryship and Management and Management Studies.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The total population of students offering courses in HND in the School of Business was 4,600. The researcher used a sample size of 200 for the study, out of which 160 questionnaires were returned for analysis. This was determined using a chart by Morgan and Krecie (1970), which suggests the required sample size for different population sizes for research activities. Simple random sampling technique was used to select students for the study, it offered each member of the population an equal chance of being selected (Cohen & Marion, 1995). Cluster sampling enabled the researcher to select



students offering different programmes from the School of Business and Management Studies, while Stratified sampling was used because it improves representativeness and enabled the researcher to study the differences that existed between various subgroups of a population (Ary, Jacobs & Winston, 1990). The stratification in the study was based on gender, age, marital status, programme of study and HND level.

### **Instrument**

The main instrument for the study was the questionnaire which covered the respondents in the shortest time. A questionnaire according to Babble (1998) cited in Badu-Nyarko (2009) is a series of questions or instruments specifically designed to elicit information that will be useful for analysis. The instrument was chosen because the researcher assumed it would permit a wide coverage of the population in an easier and effective way. This was in line with the view of Badu – Nyarko (2009) that questionnaire requires less skill to administer. Kerlinger (1964) also share the view that a great deal of information needed for social research can be gotten from respondents by direct question. The questionnaire was made up of close-ended questions. The close-ended question asked respondents to choose from alternatives given. The questionnaire was placed under the following: personal data of respondent, prevalence counselling needs of polytechnic students, sources of support and sources of support for students.

### **Reliability**

Factor analysis sought to reduce several related variables into a few factors that explained the pattern of relationship or correlation between these variables. Thus, it was necessary to find out if these variables that formed a

factor were correlated enough to measure the same thing. Before further analysis was carried out on the data, the variables were tested for reliability using the Cronbach`s Alpha analysis.

A Cronbach`s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.7 is generally considered an appropriate lower limit for a social or exploratory research (Hair, et al, 2006). A Cronbach`s  $\alpha$ -value of 0.817 obtained from data of this research indicated that the items (questions) on the questionnaire forming the factors could be relied on for further analysis. (Appendix B; Table 1)

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher who had acquired a letter of introduction from the Counselling Unit of the University of Cape Coast to Polytechnic to enable her do her Counselling practicals at the Polytechnic`s counselling centre, sent a copy of the letter to the Dean of the School of Business to enable her collect data for the research. A convenient date was agreed on by the researcher and two enumerators, who were contracted and trained for two days to assist in the administration of the questionnaires. On the appointed date the researcher went to the School of Business and Management Studies and explained her mission to students from the targeted population after seeking for permission from their Heads of Departments. She also explained the rationale for the study and the need for them to respond frankly to the questions. With the help of the research enumerators the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the students and a reasonable time was given to the participants to answer and the questionnaires were retrieved. The completed copies of the questionnaires were analysed. This procedure was adopted to ensure that a maximum number of questionnaires were retrieved.

## **Data Analysis**

The data was a result of a five-point Likert scale of 1 being Very True to 5 being Not-at-all True which measured the opinions or perceptions of students on the various variables. Descriptive statistics (specifically frequencies and percentages) among was used to analyse the data collected. According to Polit and Hungler (1995), descriptive statistics are used to describe characteristics to provide descriptive information about the distribution of key research variables in a study and to document certain features of the research methods such as response rate or attrition rate. Descriptive statistics are also used directly to answer research questions in a purely descriptive study. Simple frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the distribution of responses relating to students' desire for counsellor assistance. Under Research Question One the reliability of the data was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and then analysed using factor analysis (using the principal component extraction method) to identify the counselling needs of the students. Also, comparisons of the various counselling needs based on the demographic attributes of the students were made here using the Chi-square test of independence. Furthermore, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used, under Research Question One, to test whether the correlations between the counselling needs were appropriate for the study.

Finally, the Chi-square test of independence was used to test for the dependency of students' preferences for professional counselling (Research Question 3) and the frequency of students getting their problems solved (Research Question 2).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. However the results analysed and interpreted were based on only questions answered by students; unanswered questions were not included in frequencies of tabulations resulting in differences in totals with correspondence to total respondents.

The demographic or general characteristics of the students investigated are presented in Tables 1 to 3.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

Departments	Questionnaires					
	Returned		Non-returned		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Accounting	57	28.5	3	1.5	60	30.0
Marketing	28	14.0	22	11.0	50	25.0
Purchasing and Supply	48	24.0	12	6.0	60	30.0
Secretaryship	27	13.5	3	1.5	30	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>80.0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

It should be observed that Table 1 shows that out of the 200 questionnaires which were sent out, 160 of them were answered and returned. This represents a response rate of 80%.

From Table 2, it should be noted that 135, representing about 84.4%, of the 160 respondents gave responses to questions bothering on both their ages and gender as 25 of them did not respond.

**Table 2: Cross-Tabulation of the Distribution of Gender by Age**

Age	Gender					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
18 – 23	65	48.1	38	28.1	103	76.3
24 – 28	19	14.1	11	8.1	30	22.2
29 – 33	0	0.0	2	1.5	2	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>62.2</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

From Table 2, it can be observed that most of the students were males and were between the ages of 18 and 23 years. Though the students were generally between the ages of 18 and 33, only about 2% of the students were within the age-group of 29-33 years and these were all females.

The distribution of the gender of the students by their marital status is presented in Table 3. It should be noted that 35 out of the 160 respondents did not respond to questions relating to their gender and marital status thus, the total respondents were 125.

**Table 3: Cross-Tabulation of Gender Based on Marital Status**

Gender	Marital status					
	Single		Married		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Male	76	60.8	2	1.6	78	62.4
Female	42	33.6	5	4.0	47	37.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

Expectedly, about 94% (about 61% males and about 34% females) of the students were not married. Only about 6% of them were married with most (5 out of 7 students) being females.

The distribution of the academic level of the students by their programme of study is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Cross-Tabulation of Academic Levels Based on Programme of Study**

Level	Programme of study									
	Accountancy		Marketing		Purchasing and Supply		Secretaryship and Management		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
HND I	9	5.6	13	8.1	34	21.3	1	0.6	57	35.6
HND II	14	8.8	12	7.5	7	4.4	1	0.6	34	21.3
HND III	34	21.3	3	1.9	7	4.4	25	15.6	69	43.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

From Table 4, it can be observed that about 23 out of every 32 (representing about 66%) of the students were studying either Accountancy (about 36%) or Purchasing and Supply (about 30%). Furthermore, most (about 43%) of the students were in the level three hundred of their HND programme.

### **Further Presentation and Analysis**

Further analysis and presentation of the results are dealt with under this section. That is, the three (3) main research questions were tested and addressed under this section.

#### **Research Question 1**

##### **What are the most prevalent counselling needs of Polytechnic students?**

This was intended to find out the areas of students' lives which gave them the greatest concern.

##### **Factor analysis**

A statistical tool used for reducing several related variables into a few underlying concepts or factors that explain the pattern of relationship or correlation between these variables is called Factor Analysis, using the Principal Components method of extraction to identify the counselling needs of the students.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) is a measure which tests whether the relationship or partial correlations among variables are good enough from such a sample whilst the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity tests whether the correlations between the derived factors were

significant enough to indicate their appropriateness. KMO of 0.683 and a p-value of 0.000 for the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated that the responses from the sample for the study were adequate for the analysis and the derived factors appropriate for further analysis.

When data obtained from respondents were subjected to exploratory factor analysis, it was found out that counselling needs for the students were related to Social concerns, employment opportunities available after graduation, academic work, financial, health and psychological concerns. These are presented in Table 5.



**Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix of Prevalent Counselling Needs of Students**

Variables	Counselling Needs					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I find it difficult to make friends	0.830					
I do not know how to relate with some of my course mates	0.819					
I do not know how to maintain friends	0.654					
I have difficulty tolerating people	0.533					
I have problems sharing ideas with other friends	0.529					
I do not like being in public gathering	0.712					
I do not share study materials with colleagues	0.719					
I do not share household equipment with colleagues	0.638					
I do not discuss my problems openly with colleagues	0.616					
I have problems sharing financial resources with room mates	0.585					
I do not know the requirements of various departments	0.846					
I am not happy with my present job	0.848					
I need to change my job	0.840					
I cannot meet the demands at my workplace	0.717					
I do not know how to hold onto a job	0.634					
I need to know various employment opportunities	0.495					
I have problems preparing for examinations			0.735			

**Table 5 continued**

I do not have the skills to plan and follow a personal timetable	0.700
I have problems doing my assignments	0.634
I find it difficult to study on my own	0.600
I do not belong to a study group	0.574
I depend on SSNIT loan to a large extent	0.848
A delay in payment of SSNIT students' loan causes me a lot of stress	0.832
My financial demands are too much for my guardian/sponsor	0.793
Paying rent and other bills gives me stress	0.722
I usually run out of money for self-upkeep	0.693
I need extra money for textbooks and photocopies	0.662
I visit the hospital often	0.635
I often have severe headache	0.605
I often have nightmares	0.591
I am addicted to watching films	0.515
I have self-confidence	0.839
I lack self-confidence	0.825
I am addicted to alcohol	0.851
I am addicted to drugs	0.847
I am concerned about a bad habit	0.843
I easily get persuaded to do things against my wish	0.655

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Source: Field Work, 2011

Based on students' gender, age, marital status, academic levels and programme of study the study sought to find out if the counselling needs of the students generally were the same or otherwise using the Chi-square test of

independence, at 0.050 significance level (also known as 0.050  $\alpha$ -value or 95% confidence level).The Chi-square test significance level of 0.050 is the value at which a null hypothesis can mistakenly be accepted not.

Table 6 depicts the result of the analysis on the general comparison of the counselling needs of students irrespective of their background.

**Table 6: Ranking Students' Counselling Needs**

Needs	Percentage of Students		Rank (Counselling)
	Counselling	No Counselling	
Finance	74.7	25.3	1 <sup>st</sup>
Employment	54.1	45.8	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Social	48.4	51.6	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Psychological	36.9	63.1	4 <sup>th</sup>
Academic	33.5	66.5	5 <sup>th</sup>
Health	27.6	72.4	6 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Field Work, 2011

Students' most pressing need which required them to seek for guidance and counselling was Finance (Table 6). From the table, it can be seen that about three-quarters (75% or three out of every four) of the students indicated they needed counselling on finance because they were having problems there. The next pressing need as indicated by about 54% of them was Employment. Respondents' need for funds to support their education had precipitated their need for employment since the financial needs of a working student would be quite lesser than those of a non-working student.

Perhaps the exuberance that comes with being young is what made the students suffered less health problems, therefore not requiring much

counselling on health issues. Only about 28% indicated that they needed counselling regarding their health.

**Table 7: Comparison of Students' Counselling Needs Based on Gender**

Need	Gender								$\chi^2$ - test	p- value
	Male				Female					
	C		N C		C		N C			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Social	39	46.4	45	53.6	28	56.0	22	44.0	1.149	0.284
Employment	47	56.0	37	44.0	24	49.0	25	51.0	0.805	0.437
Academic	28	33.3	56	66.7	15	30.0	35	70.0	0.160	0.689
Financial	62	73.9	22	26.2	33	67.3	16	32.7	0.633	0.428
Health	21	25.0	63	75.0	16	33.3	32	66.7	1.051	0.305
Psychological	32	38.1	52	61.9	18	36.7	31	63.3	0.024	0.876

Source: Field Work, 2011

Based on their gender, Table 7 indicates that the most prevalent counselling need of the students was their finances (about 74% male and about 67% female). It can also be seen that most (about 56%) of the male students had higher employment needs than their female (about 49%) counterparts. Students, both male (about 75%) and female (about 67%), generally indicated that they did not have much troubles with their health and thus, did not need counselling in that respect.

Comparing the p-values, the lowest significance level at which the null hypothesis can conveniently be discarded without problems, associated with the Chi-square values with the significance value of 0.050, and conclude that

there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of male and female students since there was none lesser than 0.050.

The effect of the age of the students on their counselling needs is presented in Table 8.

**Table 8: Students' Counselling Needs Based on Age**

Need	Age-group												$\chi^2$ -test	p-value
	18 – 23				24 – 28				29 - 33					
	C		N C		C		N C		C		N C			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Social	58	50.9	56	49.1	17	39.5	26	60.5	2	100.0	0	0.0	3.765	0.152
Employment	56	50.0	56	50.0	28	65.1	15	34.9	1	50.0	1	50.0	2.874	0.238
Academic	37	32.5	77	67.5	14	33.3	28	66.7	2	100.0	0	0.0	4.024	0.134
Financial	81	71.7	32	28.3	36	83.7	7	16.3	1	50.0	1	50.0	3.041	0.219
Health	31	27.9	80	72.1	10	23.3	33	76.7	2	100.0	0	0.0	5.663	0.059
Psychological	42	37.5	70	62.5	15	34.9	28	65.5	1	50.0	1	50.0	0.240	0.887

Source: Field Work, 2011

Table 8 showed that with the exception of about 50% of those within the age-group of 29-33, who needed counselling on their employment, financial and psychological needs, (100%) of them had issues on their social relations on campus which in turn affected their academic work and their health. It can be seen that those with most financial difficulties were the students in 24-28 (about 84%) and 18-23 (about 72%) years' age-groups.

Looking at the percentage differences in these values one may be inclined to say that there exist some significant differences. However, like in Table 7, it can be seen that the p-values were all greater than the significant level, 0.050, of the study indicating that the observed percentage differences were not

statistically significant and, therefore, the age of students of the School of Business and Management had no influence on their counselling needs.

The influence of marital status of the students on their counselling needs is presented in Table 9.

**Table 9: Students' Counselling Needs Based on Marital Status**

Need	Gender								$\chi^2$ - test	p- value
	Single				Married					
	C		N C		C		N C			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Social	67	48.9	70	51.1	3	33.3	6	66.7	0.821	0.365
Employment	78	56.9	59	43.1	2	22.2	7	77.8	4.108	0.043
Academic	42	30.7	95	69.3	7	77.8	2	22.2	8.410	0.004
Financial	105	76.6	32	23.4	5	55.6	4	44.4	2.021	0.155
Health	36	26.3	101	73.7	5	55.6	4	44.4	3.585	0.058
Psychological	47	34.3	90	65.7	5	55.6	4	44.4	1.663	0.197

Source: Field Work, 2011

Table 9, indicated that counselling needs varied between the married and the single students greatly. For example, it can be seen that as the married students were concerned most about their academic work (about 78%) which was probably having a toll on their health (about 56%), the unmarried students were much concerned about their finances (about 77%) and, probably, employment opportunities after school (about 57%). This gave way to significant percentage differences between the groups.

There was significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between counselling needs in the values for their academic (78% and 31% for married and single students respectively) and employment (22% for married versus 57% for single students) needs since the p-values were 0.004 and 0.043 respectively, were less. This means that a student's academic level has an influence on his or her academic and social needs on campus.

The influence of Academic level on students' counselling needs is presented in Table 10.

**Table 10: The Influence of Academic Levels on Students' Counselling Needs**

Need	Academic Level												$\chi^2$ -test	p-value
	HND I				HND II				HND III					
	C		N C		C		N		C		N C			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Social	35	61.4	22	38.6	15	44.1	19	55.9	27	39.7	41	60.3	6.167	0.046
Employment	33	60.0	22	40.0	18	52.9	16	47.1	34	50.0	34	50.0	1.250	0.526
Academic	26	45.6	31	54.4	11	32.4	23	67.6	51	23.9	51	76.1	6.553	0.038
Financial	45	78.9	12	21.1	26	76.5	8	23.5	20	70.1	20	29.9	1.334	0.513
Health	14	25.5	41	74.5	8	23.5	26	76.5	46	31.3	46	68.7	0.879	0.644
Psychological	22	40.0	33	60.0	9	26.5	25	73.5	41	39.7	41	60.3	2.044	0.360

Source: Field Work, 2011

By comparing the p-values of the tests with the 0.050 significance level it can be observed that the p-values for their academic (0.038) and social (0.046) needs were less. This means that the academic level of Takoradi

Polytechnic students from the School of Business and Management Studies had an influence on their academic and social needs on campus.

Table 10, indicated that though there are differences in the percentage values for those who needed counselling or not under the different academic levels, those of the academic (about 46%, HND I; about 32%, HND II; and about 24%, HND III) and social (about 61%, HND I; about 44%, HND II; and about 40%, HND III) needs were the most significant.

Table 11 presents the analysis on finding out if students' counselling needs depended on their programme of study.

**Table 11: Frequencies of the Influence of Students Programmes of Study on their counselling Needs**

Need	Programme of Study								$\chi^2$ -test	p-value
	Accountancy		Marketing		Purchasing		Secretaryship			
	C	N C	C	N C	C	N C	C	N C		
(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)	(N)			
Social	22	35	15	13	26	22	14	12	3.441	0.328
Employment	25	31	17	11	30	17	13	13	4.479	0.214
Academic	15	40	10	18	19	29	9	18	1.815	0.612
Financial	40	16	22	6	40	8	16	10	4.813	0.186
Health	9	46	5	23	17	30	12	14	11.021	0.012
Psychological	22	34	10	18	16	31	10	16	0.346	0.951

Source: Field Work, 2011



**Table 12: Percentages of the Influence of Students Programmes of Study on their Counselling Needs**

Need	Programme of Study								$\chi^2$ -test	p-value
	Accountancy		Marketing		Purchasing		Secretaryship			
	C (%)	N C (%)	C (%)	N C (%)	C (%)	N C (%)	C (%)	N C (%)		
Social	38.6	61.4	53.6	46.4	54.2	45.8	53.8	46.2	3.441	0.328
Employment	44.6	55.4	60.7	39.3	63.8	36.2	50.0	50.0	4.479	0.214
Academic	27.3	72.7	35.7	64.3	39.6	60.4	33.3	66.7	1.815	0.612
Financial	71.4	28.6	78.6	21.4	83.3	16.7	61.5	38.5	4.813	0.186
Health	16.4	83.6	17.9	82.1	36.2	63.8	46.5	53.8	11.021	0.012
Psychological	39.2	60.7	35.7	64.3	34.0	66.0	46.2	61.5	0.346	0.951

Source: Field Work, 2011

It was observed that with the exception of health there were non-significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) percentage differences in the counselling needs of the students across the programme of study. The respective p-values showed that the health of the students had a p-value (0.012) lesser than 0.050. This suggested that the null hypothesis be discarded in favour of the alternative one except health needs. It could be concluded that counselling on health needs of students was significantly influenced by students' programme of study.

Finally, it could be concluded that students' gender and age do not have any influence on any of their counselling and guidance needs. However, students' academic needs were influenced by their marital status and academic levels whilst their employment, social and health needs were influenced by marital status, academic levels and programme of study respectively.

### **Students` Problematic Areas**

The areas or aspects of students' lives which expose them to problems as opined by 144 respondents are presented in Table 13. The table is a Multiple Response table, a table for questions or items which allows the respondents to choose or provide as many as appropriate responses from a set of responses, and so the percentages were calculated based on the total number of responses and the number of people who chose or selected a particular response. In that case the total percentage of students' column cannot be one hundred since there is the possibility that all (that is, 100%) the students could select a particular response.

**Table 13: Students` Problematic Areas**

Area	Responses		Percent of Students
	Frequency	Percent	
Family	76	11.8	51.0
Spouse/Lover	37	5.7	24.8
Employment prospects of choice of programme	94	14.6	63.1
Behaviour/Attitude	71	11.0	47.7
Drug/Alcohol Abuse	13	2.0	8.7
Disease/Illness	29	4.5	19.5
Guardian/Sponsor	83	12.9	55.7
Studies	101	15.7	67.8
Relationships with school mates	60	9.3	40.3
Choosing a job	81	12.6	54.4

<b>Total</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>432.9</b>
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Source: Field Work, 2011

Table 13 indicated that most of the students were concerned with their studies (about 68%), the job prospects their choice of programme offers them (about 63%), guardians or sponsors (about 56%), choosing a job (about 54%) and their families (about 51%). This suggested that students were much concerned about their future and the effect it will have on their families. It was, however, found out that their love lives (about 25%) and health (about 20% for diseases/illnesses and about 9% for drug/alcohol abuse) were the least of their problems.

Two studies conducted separately by Wonk and Kwok (1997) in Hong Kong and Okon (1980) in Nigeria revealed that students in tertiary institutions have problems relating to academic, marriage and family, sex, health, psychological, career and interpersonal relationships. The problems of students of Takoradi Polytechnic were in line with earlier research works.

Campus Blues (2002) outlined a number of common reasons why college students experience academic problems. He explained that some students go to tertiary institutions without a clear vision on jobs they wish to go into after school. Campus Blues (2002) continued that students find themselves in school, and offer programmes at the insistence of their parents, peers or others, and societal influence. These factors tended to have a negative effect on students' performances and progress.

The next problem that students indicated that they had is the job prospects their choice programme offers. According to Lopez and Andrews (1987), arriving at career decision is a difficult and anxious task for all

students and it has been estimated that 25% of all students entering into colleges and universities do so without having decided on a career. They stated that some students will continue to experience career decision making difficulties through their college years and beyond. Hartman, as cited in Lopez and Andrews (1987), attributed inability of students to take decisions on their future career before entering college because of informational and character deficits.

Problems of drug and alcohol abuse ranked least of their problems. Two case studies carried out by Wonk and Kwok (1997), revealed that lack of financial, emotional and parental support for the upcoming changes in young-adult students posed many problems to them. Studies conducted by Slotnik et al. (1993) on adult students showed that students have a sense of purpose and perspective. They know what they want and are willing to work for their needs.

## **Research Question 2**

**What are the most predominant sources of help or support available to Polytechnic students as far as their counselling needs are concerned?**

As a natural phenomenon, problems are part of a person's being. When these problems occur there is the need for another person's intervention if one cannot handle it alone. For this reason, the study sought to find out the source from which students get their support in times of problems.

Table 14 is also a Multiple Response table and it shares the same characteristics like Table 13.

**Table 14: Sources of Support Preferred by Students when Facing Problems**

Source	Responses		
	Frequency	Percent	Percent of Students
Spouse /Lover	71	16.0	49.3
Family member	59	13.3	41.0
Lecturers	32	7.2	22.2
Mentor	44	9.9	30.6
Religious leader	76	17.2	52.8
Friends	97	21.9	67.4
Counsellor	64	14.4	44.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>307.6</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

Table 14 indicates that most of the students, in times of problems or difficulties, solicit help or support mostly from their friends (about 67%), religious leaders such as their pastors and imams (about 53%) and their spouse or lover (about 49%). This is expected since one would, naturally, confide in those they can trust. Lecturers were the least source (about 22%) of help for students.

As indicated by the respondents, the majority of students were unmarried; and young. They could only rely on other sources of support other than spouses. This findings agrees with the work of Gordon (1994) whose report revealed that single adult especially women find their niche in network

made up of friends and relatives. She also indicated that though friends were an important source of intimacy, many of the women in her study found it easy to turn to their relatives for support. Again, the finding supports Hoyt and Lester, as cited in Kerker (1995) who reported that about 40% of adult students would turn to their families and friends first for support, especially on issues relating to career.

An interview with the acting head of the Counselling Centre of Takoradi Polytechnic revealed that there were 27 recorded cases in 2009, 46 cases in 2010 and the most prevalent cases were related to their studies followed by problems with relationships. The low number of students who sought for professional support suggested that majority rely on their friends and other sources as indicated by the respondents. The table also revealed that only 22% of the students go to their lecturers for counselling when facing problems. This may be due to the fact that most students do not want to confide in their lecturers about issues not relating to their academic work and their relationship with their lecturers end after lectures.

### **Frequency at which students get their problems solved**

Table 15 shows how frequent students from the School of Business and Management Studies could get their problems solved. This is irrespective of whether they solicited support from elsewhere or did that on their own.

**Table 15: Rate at which Students Get their Problems Solved**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Very often	47	29.4	31.5
	Often	86	53.8	57.7
	Rarely	12	7.5	8.1
	Not at all	4	2.5	2.7
	Total	149	93.1	100.0
Missing	No response	11	6.9	
<b>Total</b>		<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Field Work, 2011

Table 15 indicated that 11 (about 7%) of the students who returned their questionnaires did not respond to the question for finding how frequent they got their problems solved. However, 149 students responded and about 89% of them indicated that at least they often got their problems solved.

Tables 16 to 26 present the results of the analysis which intends to find out if students' programme of study, age, gender, academic levels and marital status had any influence on the frequency at which they got their problems solved. The results of the analysis to find out the influence students' programme of study had on the rate at which they got their problems resolved is presented in Table 16.

**Table 16: Influence of Programme of Study on Rate of Getting Problems Solved**

Frequency	Programme of Study							
	Accountancy		Marketing		Purchasing and Supply		Secretaryship and Management	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Very often	21	39.62	5	19.23	15	34.09	6	23.08
Often	27	50.94	18	69.23	23	52.27	18	69.23
Rarely	5	9.43	3	11.54	2	4.55	2	7.69
Not at all	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	9.09	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

Whilst about 9% of the students (all offering the Purchasing and Supply programme) had never got their problems solved, most of them, about 86% - (about 91%, Accountancy; about 88%, Marketing; about 86%, Purchasing and Supply; and about 92%, Secretaryship and Management Studies) - at least, often got their problems solved. By comparing the p-value associated with the test, 0.076, in Table 17 with the significant alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of 0.05, it can be observed that the p-value, 0.076, is greater than 0.05. This indicated that the null hypothesis is retained. This suggested that there is no significant difference in students offering the various programmes getting their problems solved which is shown by a fairly weak contingency and Cramer's V coefficients of 0.308 and 0.187 respectively.



The study also sought to determine if a student's age could influence the frequency at which he or she got his or her problems solved. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 17.

**Table 17: Influence of Age on Rate of Getting Problems Solved**

Frequency	Age-group					
	18 – 23		24 – 28		29 – 33	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Very often	34	31.78	12	30.00	1	50.00
Often	60	56.07	25	62.50	1	50.00
Rarely	10	9.35	2	5.00	0	0.0
Not at a	3	2.80	1	2.50	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

Table 17 depicts that though all (100%) the students in the 29 - 33 years age group had been able to solve their problems; a maximum of about 12% of those with ages less than 29 years did not or rarely got their problems solved. However, most (about 88%) of the students, at least, got their problems solved irrespective of the age-group the students belong to since the relationship (measured by Cramer's V of 0.068 and Contingency coefficient of 0.096. see Appendix B; Table 4) between the age-groups and the frequency at which they get their problems solved is closer to zero (0).

The influence of a student's gender on the frequency at which he or she gets his or her issues resolved was also looked at and the result is presented in Table 16 and discussed thereof. It is worthy to note that the

students who responded to the question on their age and the frequency at which they got their problems solved were 129.

**Table 18: Influence of Gender on Rate of Getting Problems Solved**

Frequency	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Very often	25	31.25	15	30.61
Often	47	58.75	2	57.14
Rarely	7	8.75	4	8.16
Not at all	1	1.25	2	4.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

There is evidence of no significant dependency (see Appendix A; Table 5) of how frequent students got their problems solved based on their gender. From Table 18, about 90% male and about 88% female students indicated that they, at least, often got their problems solved. However, only a few (a maximum of about 12%) of them indicated that they either did not get their problems solved at all or rarely did. The finding supports the report of Berry (1995) on “The Experience of Women Students” which indicates that majority of the women in her study were satisfied with the support they received from their colleagues in relation to their studies and with the availability and quality of their social lives. Furthermore, this might be due to the fact that women are usually known to be chatty and easily share their issues with peers more than men.

The result of the analysis shows the results of influence of Academic Levels (HND 1, HND 2 or HND 3) on frequency at which students got their problems solved.

**Table 19: Influence of Academic Levels on Rate of Getting Problems Solved**

Frequency	Academic Level					
	HND I		HND II		HND III	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Very often	13	25.49	9	28.13	25	37.88
Often	31	60.78	18	56.25	37	56.06
Rarely	5	9.80	4	12.50	3	4.55
Not at all	2	3.92	1	3.13	1	1.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

Almost all of the final-year students (about 94% of level 300 students/HND III, 86% first year (HND I) and 84% second year (HND II) students indicated that they could, at least, often get their problems solved. Surprisingly, about 16% of the second year students could not solve their problems at all or rarely did. The test statistics' (Pearson Chi-square, 4.315; Cramer's V, 0.120 and Contingency coefficients, 0.168) significant values of 0.634, indicated that the frequency of students getting their problems solved did not depend on their academic levels. (see Appendix B; Table 4).

The higher percentage of students in Level 100 (HND I) getting their problems solved may be due to the fact that they had their seniors to consult in

times of difficulties with regards to studies they were still building relationships, which might have led to less hardships and stress. The first-years were allocated halls in Takoradi Polytechnic where they live together which might have resulted in the formation of supportive social units.

The frequency at which married or unmarried students got their problems solved is presented in Table 20. It should, however, be noted that 11 out of the 149 students in Table 17 did not give out their marital status and so those who gave out both their marital status and the frequency at which they got their problem solved were 138.

**Table 20: Influence of Marital Status on Rate of Getting Problems Solved**

Frequency	Marital Status			
	Single		Married	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Very often	40	31.01	3	33.33
Often	76	58.91	6	66.67
Rarely	9	6.98	0	0.0
Not at all	4	3.10	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

As one would expect, all the married students often got their problems settled whilst a few of the non-married students (about 10%) could either not solve their problems at all or rarely did. Generally, about 91% of the students indicated that they, at least, often got their problems solved. This is irrespective of their marital status.

The married respondents constituting 6.5% often had their problems settled. This finding agreed with findings of Baret and McIntosh as cited in Gordon (1994) that family is an important societal institution which defines the lives of those outside it too and that family status had monopolized caring, security, sharing, trust and intimacy. The responses also supported the work of Wonk and Kwok (1997) which stated that spouses as support generally provide supports ranging from information, instrumental, emotional and companionship to their partners.

**Table 21: Students Preference to Discuss their Problems with Professional Counsellors**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	123	76.9	82.0
	No	27	16.9	18.0
	Total	150	93.8	100.0
Missing	No response	10	6.3	
<b>Total</b>		<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Field Work, 2011

Table 21 showed that 82% of student-respondents would prefer discussing their problems with a professional counsellor whilst the remaining 12% indicated they would not.

Tables 22 to 26 present the results on the analysis of effect of influence of age, gender, academic levels and marital status and students` programme of study on their preference to discuss their problems with a professional counsellor.

The analysis on finding out the influence students' programme of study had on their preference to talk to a professional counsellor about their problems is presented in Table 22.

**Table 22: Influence of Programme of Study on students' Preference to Discuss Problems with a Professional Counsellor**

Preference	Programme of Study							
	Accountancy		Marketing		Supply		Purchasing and Secretaryship and Management	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	45	84.91	21	77.78	38	86.36	19	73.08
No	8	15.09	6	22.22	6	13.64	7	26.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

Generally, Table 22 indicated that about 78% of the students were of the view that they would prefer the services of a professional counsellor whilst about 22% indicated they would not. The p-value, 0.458, associated with test statistics is greater than the significant value, 0.05. This suggested that there was no significant relationship between students' programme of study and their preference for professional counsellors to discuss their problems with (see Appendix B; Table 8).

The desire by majority of student sampled to consult professional counsellors supported earlier studies by Taylor and Buku (2006) that counselling is needed by people of all ages since it assists them in problem resolution and behaviour change regardless of age. Taylor and Buku's (2006),

Principles of Counselling advocated for the use of counselling skills in handling clients of all ages and statuses.

**Table 23: Influence of Age on students` Preference to Discuss their Problems with a Professional Counsellor**

Preference	Age					
	18 – 23		24 – 28		29 – 33	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	88	81.45	34	85.00	1	50.00
No	20	18.52	6	15.00	1	50.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

Students above 28 years of age expressed equal opposing views (50%, Yes; and 50%, No; Table 21) on their preference for counselling from a professional counsellor whilst about 81% of those aged 28 years or less reported they would. Generally, about 82% of the students preferred the services of a professional counsellor whilst a few of about 18% did not. The alpha value of 0.05 compared with the p-value of 0.438 suggested that age had no significant effect on students' preference to consult professional counsellors.

Miller (1976) showed that, “guidance is for all ages” and “guidance must be an integral part of every educational programme”. Although, students may find solutions to their problems through other sources, these solutions may not be the best for them and may have repercussions which may, lead to

their desire for professional counselling that would provide them with lasting solutions to their problems.

The result of the analysis on the preference of male and female students in discussing their problems with a professional counsellor is presented on Table 24. It should be noted that 20 out of the 150 student-respondents in Table 21 did not give out their gender status and 130 gave out both their gender status and the preference for discussing their problem with a professional counsellor.

**Table 24: Influence of Gender on Students' Preference to Discuss Problems with a Professional Counsellor**

Preferences	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	67	82.7	38	77.6
No	14	17.3	11	22.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

The male students who preferred consulting professional counsellors tended to be higher (83%) than female students (77.6%) sampled. The difference was not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Counselling is a service designed to help an individual analyse him/herself by relating his capabilities, achievements, interests, and mode of adjustments to what new decisions he has made or has to make (Makinde, 1990). He explains that counselling is concerned with feelings, attitudes, emotional dispositions of an individual about himself and the situation facing



him/her. As human beings everyone has the attributes outlined regardless of gender and would need the same interaction with counsellors to enable them resolve their problems. This might have accounted for the result observed in the current study.

The study, further, sought to investigate if students' academic levels could influence their preference for discussing or not their problems with a professional counsellor. The result is presented in Table 25.

**Table 25: Influence of Academic Level on Students' Preference to Discuss Problems with a Professional Counsellor**

Preference	Academic Level					
	HND I		HND II		HND III	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	44	84.6	28	87.5	51	77.3
No	8	15.4	4	12.5	15	22.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

The preference of Level 100 (HND I; 84.6%), level 200 students (HND II; 87.5%), to consult professional counsellors tended to be higher than those in Level 300 (HND III; 77.3%), but not statistically different ( $p > 0.05$ ; Table 25). This observation was in line with results obtained and Miller's (1976) report that all students needed professional guidance irrespective of academic level. He stated that guidance is for all students and showed the need for professional counselling by students to resolve their myriads of problems to enable them achieve their academic objective.

The table indicates that a great proportion of respondents from all level would like to employ the services of a professional counsellor to discuss their problems with. This agrees with Miller (1976) that “guidance is for all students”. This also shows the need of professional counselling to resolve their myriad of problems to enable them achieve their academic objectives.

The result of the preference of single and married students in sharing their problems with a professional counsellor is presented in Table 26. It should, however, be noted that 11 out of the 150 students in Table 26 did not give out their gender status and so 139 gave out both their gender status and the preference for discussing their problem with a professional counsellor.

**Table 26: Influence of Marital Status on Students’ Preference to Discuss Problems with a Professional Counsellor**

Preference	Marital Status			
	Single		Married	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Yes	106	81.5	8	88.9
No	24	18.5	1	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Work, 2011

Table 26 shows that about 89% of the married students as against 82% of the non-married indicated that they preferred discussing their problems with professional counsellors. The observedpercentage difference in the students’ marital status preferences was not significant based on the Chi-square, Cramer’s V and contingency coefficient values obtained 0.308, 0.047 and 0.047 respectively(see Appendix B; Table 11).

The high percentage of single and married students desiring counselling also confirmed the need for professional counselling by all students regardless of their marital status. Although married people may be supported by their spouses and single students by their friends when encountering problems, there may be some problems encountered in the marriages and friendships themselves that may still call for professional counselling.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study assesses the counselling needs of Polytechnic students, using Takoradi Polytechnic as a case study. Polytechnic education gives students technical and vocational training, which prepares them to be streamlined into the various job markets. The success of this is based on the various factors that interplay with students' quest to excel academically. Some of these factors that manifest in various forms are social relationships, employment, academic, financial, health and psychological needs as identified by the researcher.

Although there is a counselling centre, very few students (less than 50) per annum patronize this centre which has professional counsellors specialized in various areas. Therefore there is the need for some formalized counselling programmes to be incorporated into the educational curriculum as an audited course. This will enable majority of students to benefit from counselling.

#### **Summary**

The study was generally descriptive in nature with statistical instruments used in the analysis. It investigated six problem areas of concern encountered by polytechnic students who are adults. These were social, employment, academic, financial, health and psychological needs. Higher National Diploma (HND) students of the School of Business were the targeted population. The sample consisted of 57 Accountancy; 28 Marketing; 48

Purchasing and Supply, and 27 Secretaryship and Management Studies students who were selected making a total of 160 respondents, using both the Stratified and Simple Random sampling techniques. The resulting data was then analysed using frequencies, percentages, Cronbach's Alpha reliability test, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, Pearson's Chi-square Test of independence and Cramer's V.

### **Key Findings**

The research revealed that majority of students in Takoradi Polytechnic had problems relating to Finance. This is due to the fact that most of the respondents are very young and were admitted straight from the senior high schools and therefore still dependent on their parents or school authorities who catered for their needs. Therefore, finding themselves in a tertiary institution where they have to take care of all their needs in terms of accommodation, transportation (from hostels/halls to and from lectures), feeding and purchase of stationary and photocopies can be a strain on whatever money is being provided by their sponsors as revealed by the research. Most of them also depended on Social Security and National Insurance Trust Fund(SSNIT) loans, so a delay in the payment causes them stress as they have to look for alternate means of sustenance.

In terms of areas that students have problems, is the job prospects regarding their choice of programme being pursued. From interactions with students during the research, the researcher found out that most students entered the polytechnic either because they did not satisfy the entry requirement into universities or due to their technical endowment without

enough information about the programme they desire to pursue or are being offered. They, after some time in the school, realize that the programme they are pursuing does not interest them, or will not enable them meet their future career aspirations. HND graduates, at times, face the problems of job placement in the various public and private establishments. The concern of their future career is realistic owing to Ghana's qualification-oriented system of one acquiring a job depending on academic level, qualification and being promoted accordingly.

The least of the students' problem was their health. This is due to the introduction of the National Health Insurance Scheme which caters for their health needs without stretching their finances, the establishment of a well-equipped clinic on campus to cater for their health, occasional talks organized to handle health related issues and vaccinations to prevent students from contracting diseases such as Hepatitis B and Yellow Fever.

The study revealed that, although students stated that they encountered financial problems, in analysing the areas under which they had problems, the majority indicated that they were concerned about their studies. These two areas though different in nature, are intertwined as the stress or anxiety experienced when students face financial difficulties affects them psychologically and impacts on their academic work.

Regarding their sources of support when facing problems, a greater proportion of students said they solicit for support from their friends. This is to be expected because during their years in school, majority build up closer relations with people whom they can rely on. They also build some amount of trust in these friends, and turn to them in times of need. The next group of

people they rely on are religious leaders. This is not surprising as religious leaders are always available to lend their ears to people's problems and counsel them accordingly at times, given them spiritual support which reassures individuals and comforts them rather than letting them feel judged. Individuals, due to improved communication technologies, can stay in touch with religious leaders no matter the distance between them.

1. The needs of polytechnic students were not determined by their age. Majority of students, irrespective of their age replied that they very often or often had their problems solved and almost all of them also said they would prefer to discuss their problems with a professional counsellor.

The findings indicated that, the issue of students getting their problems solved does not depend on gender. As both sexes indicated that they very often or often had their problems solved.

Only a few respondents were married. They also indicated that they often had their problems solved, although majority of the married students expressed the desire for professional counselling.

The study revealed that, as far as the areas investigated are concerned, the counselling needs of polytechnic students in Takoradi were not determined by their academic levels neither are their preferences to discuss their problems with professional counsellors.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Abraham Maslow (1970) Needs theory and Anne Roe (1956) Personality theory form the theoretical base for the study. To Maslow, every need arises from an imbalance or disequilibrium between what human nature deems necessary for the health of a person and what a person's environment

provides (Oladele, 1998). Maslow postulated human needs in a hierarchical order, with deficiency needs at the base and the growth needs at the top. According to him, an individual is ready to act upon the growth needs only if the deficiency needs are met. The findings show that students from Takoradi Polytechnic's School of Business and Management Studies, face problems in all the investigated areas to some degree with higher percentages on financial, academic and employment issues.

Financial concerns which are the most problematic areas for students will deprive the individual access to basic needs such shelter (accommodation), food, clothing and health care which motivate them to have a successful life. Gaining employment after school will satisfy the individual's self-esteem needs. Anne Roe's theory draws out the relationships within the family and their subsequent effects on the individual's career. The significance of this theory for polytechnic students is that, needs, interests and abilities are important in choosing a job. These factors must be taken into consideration in making a career choice, and not just the academic qualification or how much their salaries will be. This will enable students to choose jobs that are compatible with their personalities so that they will have the job satisfaction and put in their best when employed to maximize productivity.

### **General Education Implications**

The concern for academic, finance and employment needs by polytechnic students highlights some of the challenges to polytechnic education in Ghana, which aims at providing career-focus education and skills training at the tertiary level with emphasis on the practical rather than the theoretical aspect. Although, Takoradi Polytechnic has huge infrastructures as



libraries and teaching spaces, these are not sufficient for the large number of students, most students therefore, depend on photocopying books which are meant for reference purposes and have to rush to classrooms to wait long before lectures begin, which influences students time management.

From the study students indicated finance as an area of need as they use most of their monies for photocopying, feeding, accommodation and transportation and run out of money as their funds have to be stretched among these various needs. Students admissions should commensurate with, man, monetary and material resources available to the tertiary institution. This would ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning processes being carried out with minimum stress on learners and facilitators.

### **Implications for Guidance and Counselling**

The expression of the desire by most students no matter their age, gender, marital status, programme of study and academic levels for professional counselling suggest that, although students may discuss their problems with friends and family members, there are some problems that they would prefer to discuss with professional counsellors. However, the low patronage of existing counselling services at the Takoradi Polytechnic, which indicates students shying away from the services, call for another option or mode of professional counselling. It is being suggested that curricular for counselling course should be drawn and run alongside the HND curricular as an audited course.

### **Conclusions**

This study was conducted to find out the prevalent counselling needs of students, and their impact on the choices of their future careers. It also

sought to highlight on the sources of support available to students in finding solutions to their problems using the School of Business of Takoradi Polytechnic as a case study.

The finding of this study revealed that, most students of the Takoradi Polytechnic had problems with their finance, academic and employment opportunities relating to their areas of study among others. These findings supported the purpose of this study. The study also revealed that despite the desire of most students to discuss their problems with professional counsellors, and the presence of a counselling centre and qualified personnel in the institution, most students do not patronize their services but rather rely on friends, religious leaders and other sources of support.

### **Recommendations**

Counselling, due to the role it plays in societies, should be an integral part of educational institutions, with programmes that would benefit all. The study brought to light various problems encountered by students in tertiary institutions using Takoradi polytechnic as a case study.

Polytechnic authorities should liaise with the numerous financial institutions and credit unions to provide financial assistance to students who can provide guarantors with low interest rates and repayment effected when students complete school and start work to complement SSNIT's efforts.

Counselling services, exposing students to the world of work, giving information about the types of jobs and required qualification should be run as audit course alongside student's curriculum.

Due to lack of employment in the country, students should be encouraged to either start their own businesses or form cooperatives which

will enable them to pull their resources together and start small scale businesses after graduating from the Polytechnics.

To ease Polytechnic students of their financial burden, financial support schemes or institutions such as the Ghana Educational Trust Fund (GETFund) and other educational funds should be sensitized by the Polytechnics to cater for good but needy students.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Further research should be conducted in the same area to investigate the reason for low patronage of the Counselling Centre of Takoradi Polytechnic.

The issue of most students preferring to discuss their problems with their religious leaders for counselling should also be further investigated.

Studies should also be conducted on the role of the family in students' choice of programmes in tertiary institutions.

The issue of student`s access to financial support from various institutions should also be researched into.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A**

**Questionnaire**

**CAREER NEEDS OF POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS; A CASE STUDY OF  
TAKORADI POLYTECHNIC, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS STUDIES”.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am conducting a research on the above topic. The research is for the purpose of writing a thesis as part of the requirement for the award of Masters of Arts, Guidance and Counselling. I would appreciate if you could provide frank responses to the items in the questionnaire. Confidentiality in respect of whatever information you give is fully assured.

Thanks for your cooperation.

**PART I**

**PERSONAL DATA ON RESPONDENT**

Please respond by ticking  $\surd$  in the appropriate box [ ] or provide information.

Name of institution.....

Department.....

Programme of study.....

Age 18-23 years [ ]

Age 24-28 years [ ]

Age 29-33 years [ ]

- Age 34 and above [ ]
- Sex Male [ ]
- Female [ ]
- Level: HND I [ ]
- HND II [ ]
- HND III [ ]
- Marital status: Single [ ]
- Married [ ]

**PREVALENT COUNSELING NEEDS OF POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS**

	<b>SECTION A</b>	<b>Very True</b>	<b>True</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Not True</b>	<b>Completely Untrue</b>
1.	I am restless most of the time.					
2.	I often have severe headaches.					
3.	I visit the hospital often.					
4.	I often experience sleepless nights.					
5.	I often have nightmares.					
6.	I do not have the skills to plan and follow a personal timetable.					
7.	I find it difficult to study on my own.					
8.	I do not belong to a study group.					
9.	I find it difficult to handle my course workload.					

10.	I have problems doing my assignments.					
11.	I have problems preparing for examinations.					
12.	I have difficulties in paying my school fees.					
13.	I usually run out of money for self upkeep					
14.	Paying rent and other bills gives me stress.					
15.	My financial demands are too much on my guardian/sponsor					
16.	I need extra money for textbooks and photocopies.					
17.	I depend on SSNIT loan to students to a large extent					
18.	A delay in the payment of SSNIT student's loan causes me a lot of stress					
19.	Unable to relate with some of my course mates.					
20.	Unable to maintain friends.					
21.	I find it difficult to make friends.					

22.	I easily pick up quarrels with my colleagues.					
23.	I have problems sharing ideas with other people					
24.	I do not share household equipments with roommates					
25.	I do not discuss my problems openly with colleagues.					
26	I do not share study materials with colleagues.					
27.	I have problems sharing financial resources with roommates.					
28.	I easily get upset.					
29.	I feel rejected by colleagues.					
30.	I have difficulty tolerating people.					
31.	I feel uneasy when I have people around me.					
32.	I do not like being in public gatherings.					
33.	I feel inferior to others.					
34.	I lack self-confidence.					
35.	I have self-confidence.					
36	I have been disappointed in a love					



	affair.					
37	I find it difficult to discuss sexual matters					
38	My partner complains of my excessive sexual demands					
39	I wish I could stick to only one sexual partner					
40	Unable to satisfy my partner sexually					
41	I am afraid I have contract HIV/AIDS					
42	I am addicted to drugs					
43	I am addicted to alcohol					
44	I am addicted to watching films					
45	I am addicted to computers					
46	I need to take up a job immediately after the course because of economic hardship.					
47.	I am not happy with my present job.					
48.	I need to change my job.					
49.	I cannot meet the demands at my workplace.					

50.	Unable to hold onto a job.					
51.	I have problems working under pressure.					
52.	I easily get persuaded to do things against my wish.					
53.	I am concerned about a bad habit.					
54.	I am sometimes not honest as I should be					
55.	I need information about various jobs.					
56.	Unable to write a CV					
57.	I do not have information for further studies					
58.	I do not have information on how to establish my own business					
59.	Ignorant about financial resources available.					
60.	Ignorant about the requirements of various work places.					

## **PART II**

### **SOURCE OF SUPPORT**

Please respond to the following:

In which of these areas are you having problems?

Please indicate by ranking or prioritizing by ranking 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> your problems.

Family [ ]

Spouse [ ]

Employment Opportunities associated with your choice of HND programme [ ]

Behaviour/Attitude [ ]

Drug/Alcohol Abuse [ ]

Disease/illness [ ]

Guardian/sponsor [ ]

Studies [ ]

Relationships with school mates [ ]

Choosing a job [ ]

### **SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS**

Whom do you mostly talk to about your problems?

(Please indicate 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> etc.)

My spouse (Wife) [ ]

My spouse (Husband) [ ]

My girlfriend [ ]

- My boyfriend [ ]
- An extended family member [ ]
- My lecturers [ ]
- My mentor [ ]
- A religious leader [ ]
- My friends [ ]
- A counsellor [ ]

2b. Indicate how often you get your problems solved.

- Very often [ ]
- Sometimes [ ]
- Rarely [ ]
- Not at all [ ]

Indicate whether or not you prefer to discuss your problems with a professional counsellor.

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

## Appendix B

### Chi-Square Tests

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics of Items Analysed.**

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.817	37

Source: Field Work, 2011

**Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test.**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.683	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2031.905
	Degrees of Freedom	666
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Field Work, 2011

**Table 3: Chi-Square Tests for Table 14**

Test	Value	Approx. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	15.609	0.076
Cramer's V	0.187	0.076
Contingency Coefficient	0.308	0.076

Source: Field Work, 2011

**Table 4: Chi-Square Tests for Table 15**

Test	Value	Approx. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	1.388	0.967
Cramer's V	0.068	0.967
Contingency Coefficient	0.096	0.967

Source: Field Work, 2011

**Table 5: Chi-Square Tests for Table 16**

Test	Value	Approx. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	1.077	0.783
Cramer's V	0.091	0.783
Contingency Coefficient	0.091	0.783

Source: Field Work, 2011

**Table 6: Chi-Square Tests for Table 17**

Test	Value	Approx. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	4.315	0.634
Cramer's V	0.120	0.634
Contingency Coefficient	0.168	0.634

Source: Field Work, 2011

**Table 7: Chi-Square Tests for Table 18**

Test	Value	Approx. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	1.007	0.800
Cramer's V	0.085	0.800
Contingency Coefficient	0.085	0.800

Source: Field Work, 2011

**Table 8: Chi-Square Tests for Table 20**

Test	Value	Approx. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	2.599	0.458
Cramer's V	0.132	0.458
Contingency Coefficient	0.131	0.458

Source: Field Work, 2011

**Table 9: Chi-Square Tests for Table 21**

Test	Value	Approx. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	1.651	0.438
Cramer's V	0.105	0.438
Contingency Coefficient	0.104	0.438

Source: Field Work, 2011

**Table 9: Chi-Square Tests for Table 21**

Test	Value	Approx. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	0.524	0.469
Cramer's V	0.064	0.469
Contingency Coefficient	0.063	0.469

Source: Field Work, 2011

**Table 10: Chi-Square Tests for Table 23**

Test	Value	Approx. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	1.896	0.388
Cramer's V	0.112	0.388
Contingency Coefficient	0.112	0.388

Source: Field Work, 2011

**Table 11: Chi-Square Tests for Table 24**

Test	Value	Approx. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	0.308	0.579
Cramer's V	0.047	0.579
Contingency Coefficient	0.047	0.579

Source: Field Work, 2011