

Strategies Used by Guidance Counselors and the Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling Services in Cameroon State Universities

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at assessing the extent to which strategies used by guidance counselors (GCs) can foster the effectiveness of the guidance and counseling services in Cameroon State Universities. The research was carried out in four State Universities in Cameroon notably University of Buea, University of Bamenda, University of Douala and University of Yaounde II using a sample of 577 students, 26 guidance counselors and 21 University administrators. The study employed a survey design considering triangulation whereby qualitative and quantitative approaches supported each other to strengthen the validity and reliability of the findings. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample four State Universities while participants were involved in the study conveniently. Two sets of questionnaire, one for students and another one for GCs were used while an interview guide helped to gather data from the administrators. Data were digitalized with the support of EpiData version 3.1, and were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using SPSS 21.0. As for the textual data (qualitative data), their abstraction was reduced following the process of thematic analysis. Guidance counselors generally perceived planning as important for an effective guidance and counseling services (80.8%). However just 23.1% stated that planning was often done, while 76.9% acknowledged that the planning was done at the beginning of the year. Lecturers were least involved in planning (3.8%), followed by students 7.7%, administrators 50.0% while the most involved were guidance counselors (69.2%). Orientation was the most considered concern during planning (84.6%), followed by group session with students (73.1%), which was organized mostly during orientation, then resources required (50.0%) for the main ones. Observations and informal discussion with students with a proportion of 60.0% and 57.7% were the most used techniques. The services that were commonly provided were orientation service 96.2%, information service 69.2%, counseling 73.1% and to an extent selection 34.6%. Only 4.5% of the students were aware of guidance and counselling services in their institution among which only 28.3% went to the guidance counselors themselves. All the guidance counselors' agreed that assessing the needs of students is an integral part of an effective guidance and counseling program but this was done mostly seldom as stated by 65.4% (17) while only 2.3% acknowledged that guidance counselor has ever come to their class or assembled them to assess their needs. The most often used technique by guidance counselors to assess students' needs was behavioral rating scale and end of year students' results (74%). However, 85.7% (12) of the students did not know about the techniques while administrators generally had no idea on whether there is planning or not and they generally claimed not to be involved. Generally, students were not aware of peer counseling (92.4%) which was mostly implemented in the University of Buea (17.8%). Almost half of the students refused to state their stance (50.9%) with respect to their satisfaction with guidance and counselling services while 34.0% was satisfied. Counselors generally were of the opinion that it is important to evaluate guidance and counseling services (96.2%) while 100% of students so wish. Administrators and guidance counselors with proportions of 78.9% (15) and 73.7% (14) respectively controlled the evaluation process and other stakeholder as students 5.3% (1) while lecturers were not often involved. Lack of personnel, physical facilities and finance were the most highlighted challenges. It was recommended that these problems be resolved, that more awareness, adequate planning and service delivery as well as peer counselling should be enhanced in a concerted approach considering all the stakeholders.

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KEYWORDS: *Guidance counselor, strategies, effectiveness, services*

INTRODUCTION

The history of guidance and counseling can be traced back to times when people used to informally sit together in groups and share their experiences on various phenomenal problems and dreams. Years immemorial, human beings have always been faced with incessant problems which have equally always needed solutions. Prominent among these problems are personal, social, health, economic, religious, political, dreams interpretation, making choices and taking decisions about issues concerning their welfare and life expectations. In the past, people of different societies found it very interesting and rewarding sharing their problems and narrating their life histories to significant persons to whom new ideas and suggestions could help them in finding lasting solutions to their problems, hence the need for formal guidance and counseling.

Guidance and counseling actually took off in many countries after the Second World War (WW2). Whatever the situation, the movement began in reaction to societal changes which necessitated greater attention to individual needs. These societal changes were brought about by different events at different times with each country experiencing them differently. As such, different countries introduced guidance and counseling in their educational systems at different times and for different reasons. According to Gibson (2008), school counseling profession in the United States began as a vocational guidance movement at the beginning of the twentieth century to assist students with their educational development and career aspiration. The emphasis was to build career interest, develop character and avoid behavioral problems. Coleman (2001) states that guidance and counseling was introduced in British schools in reaction to societal changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, urbanization, and the World Wars. Those events which brought changes in the society, family life and in schools also created turbulence among students. Coleman further noted that students studied under higher anxiety levels during this period as competition levels had become stiffer, putting pressures on students to choose careers. There was therefore need for vocational guidance to help students take their decisions and make appropriate choices. Also, the wars created social crises like traumatic war experiences which students had undergone with their families and friends. All these events necessitated greater attention to individual needs hence the need for counseling to help them overcome certain experiences.

Guidance counselors are professionally trained and certificated individuals who provide guidance and counseling services in schools and other parastatals needing their services (Shertzer and Stone, 1980). In the context of Cameroon, MINESUP (2000) states that professionally trained guidance counselors posted to work in Cameroon's State Universities are by Ministerial Circular No: 00/0003/MINESUP/DAO/SDOA of 31/03/2000 assigned specific counseling missions. In the same document, their roles and activities are also outlined and their documented services also stated. Documented Services according to this study are the standard guidance and counseling services that guidance counselors are expected to render to students in order to guide and help them in solving their personal, social, vocational and educational problems. These services include; counseling, information, referral, appraisal, selection, placement, follow-up, evaluation and orientation. These components are benchmarks or criteria against which guidance and counseling services can be measured. Other criteria that can be used for the evaluation of guidance and counseling services include; resources and physical facilities, cooperation, outcomes, balance, stability, flexibility, competences of guidance counselors, strategies of guidance counselors, records and counselor-student ratio (Cobia, 2007; Dimitt, Carey and Hatch, 2007; Gysbers, 2006). Strategies used by guidance counselors: According to Chireshe (2006), these are activities and procedures that guidance counselors undertake to ensure that guidance and counseling services are effectively implemented and managed. These strategies include: Sensitization (of students and other stakeholders of the existence and importance of guidance and counseling services), planning of guidance and counseling services, assessing students' needs and evaluating guidance and counseling services. Peer Counseling: This refers to a situation where students are trained to offer counseling services to other students (their peers) (Arudo, 2006). They are trained in basic skills like listening, helping, problem-solving and decision-making. Where guidance counselors maximize the use of peer counselors, especially where counselor-student ratio is high, it helps a wider audience and gives guidance counselors more time to provide effective guidance and counseling services to students (Myrick, 1991; Lapan, 2001). Peer counselors are also called Peer Helpers (Chireshe, 2006).

Theories greatly influence the strategies and techniques that guidance counselors use in helping their clients. A theory helps to guide the counselor in a counseling relationship; it also assists the counselor in predicting, evaluation and improving results (Corey, 1990). More importantly, a theory serves as a working tool that helps to explain what clients may be like and what may be helpful to them. In this study, the following theories are considered; Psychoanalytic Theory by Sigmund Freud, Trait and Factor Theory by E.G Williamson, Rational Emotive Theory by Albert Ellis, Self-Theory by Carl Rogers and Eclectic Theory by Frederick C. Thorne. These theories are examined in chapter two under Theoretical Review.

Contextually, State Universities in Cameroon are meeting grounds where students from different social, cultural, economic, religious and educational backgrounds converge to study. Students therefore have problems created by these diversities. As they come to study in the universities, they encounter additional problems. These problems which are personal, social, educational, vocational and psychological include: poor sexual behaviors, smoking, alcoholism, violence, unrests, poor study habits, poor time management, fear, anxiety, choice of companions, decisions on careers and selection of courses, adaptation to university life, stress, frustration, depression, discouragement, poor self-concept, vandalism, disrespect for constituted authority, etc.

Aware of these problems, the government of Cameroon decided to establish guidance and counseling services in higher institutions in Cameroon in 1989. To emphasize the importance of these services in Cameroon State Universities, the government has come out with important texts like the Ministerial Circular Letter No. 00/0003/MINESUP/DAO/SDOA of 31/03/2000 and the 2001 law on higher education where the specific missions and activities of Guidance Counselors have been outlined. In those same documents, their roles and the services they are expected to render are given. Guidance Counselors in Cameroon state Universities are expected to provide effective guidance and counseling services to help students find solutions to their problems. This standpoint is backed up by MINESUP (2000) which states: *"It should be noted that in the university environment, the guidance counselor is called upon to contribute to the success of the students by identifying the difficulties they encounter and guiding them in the search and identification of solutions to these difficulties through appropriate activities"*. The importance of guidance and counseling services in Cameroon State

Universities is further highlighted in MINESUP (2000), in its declaration as follows: *"Considering the importance of guidance and counseling in the process of improving on higher education training system, services and officials in charge of guidance and counseling should be provided as much as possible with adequate working means (consultation rooms, offices, basic equipment, access to statistics, scientific reviews, computers and internet site) by the competent officials of the universities"*

From the above excerpt, it is clear that the government of Cameroon is confident that provided with adequate working means, guidance counselors who are professionally trained and competent are able to effectively develop methods and strategies to guide and help students solve their personal, social, vocational and educational problems. These problems are manifested in the negative behaviors and attitudes of students. With effective guidance and counseling, this situation can improve with positive outcomes like improved behavioral attitudes, improved academic achievements, improved use of time, good study habits, positive self-concept, encouragement etc. On the contrary, this researcher has observed that deviant behaviors, poor study habits, poor time management etc. are on the increase. Unfortunately, in Cameroon State Universities especially in the University of Buea where this researcher has been a student for many years, he observed with keen interest that Guidance Counselors (who are the providers of guidance and counseling services) are assigned administrative duties which conflict their normal duty as counselors. He also observed that guidance counselors share the same offices with other administrative and academic officials. This does not only make the place of privacy and confidentiality which is central to counseling complicated, but discourages students from presenting themselves for counseling. This is more so because specialized physical facilities like consultation rooms, test rooms for psychological consultations and interviews, as well as information centers and equipment are lacking.

Statement of the problem

As mentioned earlier, the duty of the guidance counselor is very demanding. Assigning them with additional duties which conflict their normal work as counselors might make it difficult for them to have enough time to provide all the guidance services as expected and to carry out all the activities they need to, in order to render effective guidance services. The inadequacy of their services is glaring as from concrete observations, which could stem from the inadequacy of their operational strategies, thus prompting the need for an empirical study as to come

out with appropriate and contextualized resort measures.

Objective

This study is to find out the extent to which strategies employed by guidance counselors (GCs) can foster the effectiveness of the guidance and counseling services in Cameroon State Universities.

Significance of the Study

This study is important in that the findings will provide vital information that will help not only the students but also guidance counselors, researchers, University authorities and policy makers. Students will, through the study, gain from the increased awareness of the available guidance and counseling services that guidance counselors in Cameroon State Universities can offer. They will also not only be able to have needed information to rate the value of guidance and counseling services offered to them but also have the opportunity to make suggestions for the improvement of the services offered and how they are implemented.

From the study, guidance counselors will be able to have a set of criteria with which to evaluate their services. They will also need information from the study to make some decisions as regards what resource and physical facility they need. Such information will also help guidance counselors to be more effective in service delivery.

Policy makers in the Ministry of Higher Education and the University authorities can also use the results of the study to base their future policy on guidance and counseling activities in other universities with particular focus on resources and physical facilities. This study will add to the literature on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services in Cameroon, especially in State Universities.

Justifications for the Study

Guidance and counseling was introduced in Cameroon State Universities in 1989. Since then, different legal instruments such as the circular letter No.00/003/MINESUP/ DAO/ SDOA of 31/03/2000 and the law of 2001 on education have come up to strengthen the activities or the roles guidance counselors in State Universities have to play in order to meet students' concerns. Despite this effort by the government, it is observed that students in Cameroon State Universities are increasingly involved in problems such as smoking, alcoholism, poor sexual behaviors, poor dressing, violence, vandalism, thefts, unrests etc. The universities should through the activities of guidance counselors help students to solve these problems. It is for this reason that this investigator deemed it important to evaluate the

extent of effectiveness of guidance counselors' activities vis-à-vis the services they render to students. Also, this investigator is not aware of any study carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of guidance counselors' activities vis-à-vis their documented service in Cameroon State Universities since the inception of guidance and counseling in these institutions. It was therefore important to attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of guidance services to see whether they are meeting their intended objectives of helping students solve their problems or whether there are needs for adjustments or improvement on service delivery.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This study was expected to be carried out in the eight Cameroon State Universities. For proper control and management, four of them were sampled to represent the eight. The four selected for the study were the Universities of Buea, Bamenda, Douala and Yaounde II. All guidance counselors posted to work as counselors in these universities were involved in the study. Third year students from departments of faculties and schools of the universities concerned were also involved in the study. Contextually, the study was limited to the evaluation of the effectiveness of guidance counselors' activities vis-à-vis their operational strategies in Cameroon State Universities.

The focus of the study was limited to the following concepts: Guidance and Counseling, Strategies and Effectiveness of Services.

Research Design

The study employed a survey design considering triangulation whereby qualitative and quantitative approaches supported each other to strengthen the validity and reliability of the findings.

Area of study

This study was carried out in four selected state universities in Cameroon. The universities included: the University of Buea, the University of Bamenda, the University of Douala and the University of Yaounde II. States universities in Cameroon have been observed to have structural and functional inadequacy as far as GCSs are concerned. In the University of Buea, GCSs offices are located in areas that are not conducive for counseling. For instant, GCs' offices are found in the Vice Dean's secretariat (Faculty of Social and Management Sciences), GCs share offices with non-professionals (Faculty of Education), GCs are assigned different functions etc. Some faculties/schools do not even have counselors. Two of these universities, the University of Buea and the University of Bamenda are in the English speaking regions of Cameroon while the other two;

the University of Douala and the University of Yaounde II are in the French speaking regions of Cameroon. The reason for this was that it was judged by the researcher that these state universities were representative in terms of the bi-cultural and linguistic nature of our country. Selected students from all the departments of faculties and schools of the universities concerned were involved in the study. All the guidance counselors in these universities and one administrator who could either be an HOD, a Vice Dean, a Dean, a Deputy Director or a Director. from each faculty/school were also targeted for the study.

Population of the Study Sites

The population of interest to this study was 53570 in the four selected state universities distributed as follows; 53506 third year students, 37 guidance counselors and 27 administrators. This is the target (parent) population of the study. Guidance counselors are those who provide guidance and counseling services while students are the intended beneficiaries. University administrators are major stakeholders whose involvement is that guidance and counseling services should be successful. They are therefore better placed to give the relevant information needed on the effectiveness of guidance counselors' activities as regards their services in the State Universities. The breakdown of the target population can be seen on the tables 1 & 2 below.

Table 1: Distribution of students' population by universities

Universities	Population		Total
	Male	female	
University of Bamenda	7844	7591	15435
University of yaounde II	3796	3385	7181
University of Buea	2234	1903	4137
University of Douala	13874	12879	26753
Total	27748	25758	53506

Source: University of Bamenda, Yaounde II, Buea and Douala.

Table 2: Distribution of Guidance Counselors by Universities.

Universities	Population		Total
	Male	Female	
University of Bamenda	7	3	10
University of Yaounde II	6	4	10
University of Buea	3	2	5
University of Douala	5	7	12
Total	20	17	37

Source: University of Bamenda, Yaounde II, Buea and Douala.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Simple random sampling was used to sample the two francophone universities. To do this, the names of all the francophone universities were written on pieces of paper, folded and mixed in a cup and two universities were then drawn. The two francophone universities were universities of Douala and Yaounde II. For the Anglophone universities, the two state universities were involved.

Administrators

Twenty seven (27) administrators (the Dean, vice Dean, Director, Deputy Director or Head of department) were targeted for convenient sampling from twenty seven Faculties/ schools from the four selected Universities. That is to say any administrator that was available and willing to accept us was used in the study.

Guidance Counselors

There were 37 Guidance counselors in the four selected universities but only 26 were effectively involved in the study, 6 refused for personal reasons and 5 were absent from work.

Students

Students were sampled conveniently, that is, the researcher went to the universities and visited all the faculties and departments and whenever a student was available, he or she was included in the study provided he or she was a third year student. The number of students was proportionately distributed based on the population of the third year students of the respective universities.

Sample size

Sample size was calculated using sample calculation for one proportion with the support of EpiInfo 6.04d (CDC, 2001) as explained by Nana (2012).

$$n = \frac{NZ^2P(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + Z^2P(1-P)}$$

Where N=total population, Z= Z value corresponding to the confidence level, d= absolute precision, P=expected proportion in the population, n effective=n*design effect.

The prospected prevalence will be 50% for an optimal sample size. The precision will be 5%, a design effect (marginal error) of 1.5 that is greater than 1, given that we are applying convenience sampling for the selection of students and not simple random sampling. By increasing the design effect, we increase the sample size and so far the variability of the sample.

For a total students population, of 53506, the sample size at 95% CI estimated as explained above is 577. This sample size is shared to the school proportionately to their population (table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of sample of third year students by Universities

Universities	Sample		
	Male	Female	Total
University of Bamenda	88	85	173
University of Yaounde II	53	49	102
University of Buea	51	50	101
University of Douala	98	103	201
Total	290	287	577

Source: University of Buea, University of Douala, University of Yaounde II, University of Bamenda.

Table 4: Sample flow table

Specification	Expected	Effectively sampled	Coverage rate
Students	577	577	100%
Guidance counselors	37	26	70.3%
Administrators	27	21	77.77%

The overall coverage was perfect for students and satisfactory for administrators and guidance counselors with a return rate of 77.77% and 70.3% respectively.

Instrument and Measurement

Instruments are what the researcher uses to collect information for any investigation. The instruments used for this study included students' questionnaire, guidance counselors' questionnaire and an interview guide for university administrators. The items for the instruments were adapted from the roles that GCs are expected to carry out and from literature reviews. The questionnaires were self-administered.

Validity and reliability

Validity as a concept is the ability to produce findings that are in agreement with theoretical or conceptual values (Amin, 2005). Validity can therefore be referred to as the accuracy of an instrument in measuring what the researcher intends to measure. Validity goes with reliability. Reliability is the degree of consistency that the instrument(s) show(s) (Amin, 2005). The research instruments underwent content, construct and face validity. As for content and construct validity, they were validated by supervisor, the statistician and a guidance counselor not involved in the study based on the relevance, adequacy and comprehensiveness of the items of the tests.

Pilot study

The data collection instruments were trial-tested in a University not involved in the study. It was an opportunity to check for face validity and reliability. It also helped to perfect the instruments by testing them, eliminating ambiguous items, anticipating and amending difficulties regarding the study and establishing feasibility of the study. The instruments were administered to 30 students, 4 Guidance Counselors and 5 University Administrators. The internal consistency was not violated for any of the conceptual components with Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient ranging from 0.507 to 0.956 (table 5). Generally above 0.5, Alpha is considered satisfactory (Nana, 2018).

Table 5: Reliability analysis for the pre-testing of research instrument

Conceptual components	Cronbach's Alpha	Ncases	Nitem
Planning	0.851	30	17
Students' needs assessment	0.507	30	15
Service evaluation	0.956	30	43
Peer counselling	0.875	30	9

As for the final study, the internal consistency assumption was not violated for any of the conceptual components as in all instances; Alpha was greater than 0.05. The results of the reliability tests showed that the instruments were highly reliable, and to the other sense, that the questions were well understood and answered objectively (table 6).

Table 6: Reliability Analysis for the Study

Conceptual components	Cronbach's Alpha	Variance	Ncases	Nitens
People involvement in the planning of guidance and counseling services	0.872	0.00	125	4
Areas giving attention to during guidance and counseling services	0.909	0.13	118	9
Assessment of students needs	0.630	0.04	44	4
Techniques used in assessing students' needs	0.834	0.08	51	7
People involvement in the evaluation of guidance and counseling services	0.388	0.161	34	4
Handling of issues when evaluating guidance and counseling service	0.908	0.16	29	7
Techniques used in evaluating the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services	0.912	0.08	53	10
Provision of guidance and counseling services	0.891	0.12	324	9
Level of satisfaction with guidance and counseling services	0.885	0.13	563	9
Peer counselling	0.905	0.11	20	7

Data management and analysis

All survey questionnaires were entered into a pre-designed EpiData Version 3.1 (EpiData Association, Odense Denmark, 2008) database which had in-built consistency and validation checks. Further, consistency data range and validation checks were also performed in SPSS version 21.0 (IBM Inc., 2012) to identify invalid codes. They were now analyzed descriptively and inferentially using SPSS 21.0. As for the textual data (qualitative data), they were transcribed verbatim their abstraction was reduced following the process of thematic analysis whereby concepts or ideas were grouped under umbrella terms or key words.

Ethical Considerations

Several researchers have articulated the need to address ethical issues in conducting research in education (Amin, 2005; Johnson and Turner, 2003). It is therefore ethical that this researcher ensures that the research is conducted in a way that is in the best interest of the respondents. Ethical issues concern aspects such as identification, informed consent, confidentiality and voluntary participation. It is argued that if such issues are addressed adequately, it increases the chances of getting honest responses from respondents and consequently more reliable data. In this study, ethical considerations pervaded each phase of data collection.

Findings

Socio-demographic characteristics

Administrators as well were sampled from the four sampled universities namely University of Buea 28.6% (6), University of Bamenda 38.1% (8), University of Douala 23.8% (5) and University of Yaounde II 9.5% (2). They were from 19 different faculties.

Table 7: Description of institution for administrators

		n	%
Institutions	University of Buea	6	28.6
	University of Bamenda	8	38.1
	University of Douala	5	23.8
	University of yaounde II	2	9.5
Faculties	Arts	2	9.5
	Science	3	14.3
	SMS	1	4.8
	HICM	1	4.8
	FSJP	2	9.5
	COLTEC	2	9.5
	Education	2	9.5
	FSEGA	1	4.8
	ENSET/ HTTTC	3	14.3
	ENS/ HTTC	1	4.8
	Engineering	1	4.8

Age

The mode age was 46-55 years with proportion of 42.9% (9), followed by 36-45 years with a proportion of 33.3% (7) while the least represented was 56 years and above with proportion of 28.6% (6).

Highest certificate

Most of the administrators had PhD with proportion of 90.5% (19) as against 9.5% (2) for those who had masters.

Specialties

Administrators were of 20 different specialties.

Posts of responsibility

Among the administrators, 80.95% (17) were heads of department and 19.5% (4) were vice deans.

Academic ranks

They were 12(57.14%) lecturers, 8(38.1%) associate professors and 1(4.8%) professor.

Gender

Administrators were dominantly male with a proportion of 86.0% (18) as against 14.0% (3) for the female.

Sample description for administrators**Age**

Their mode age was 46-55 years with proportion of 38.1% (8). This was followed by those aged 36-45 years 33.3% (7) while those aged 56 years and above were 28.6% (6).

Highest certificate

They generally had a Ph.D. 90.5% (19) while just 2 making 9.5% had a Master degree.

Specialty

They were very diversified in their specialty ranging from literature, petroleum geology, anthropology, corporate financing, private law, political and economic history, political science, creation and management of tourism, crop production, agric. Financing, molecular and cellular biology, counseling, marketing, geotechnical engineering, applied zoology, electronics, special education, fisheries and hydrology, then agriculture and veterinary medicine.

Table 8: Personal information of administrators

Indicators	Categories	N	%
Age	36-45	7	33.3
	46-55	8	38.1
	56 and above	6	28.6

Highest certificate	PhD	19	90.5
	Masters	2	9.5
Specialty	Literature	2	9.5
	Petroleum geology	1	4.8
	Anthropology	1	4.8
	Corporate financing	1	4.8
	Private law	1	4.8
	Political and economic history	1	4.8
	Political science	1	4.8
	Creation and management of tourism	1	4.8
	Crop production	1	4.8
	Agric. Financing	1	4.8
	Molecular and cellular biology	1	4.8
	Counseling	1	4.8
	Marketing	1	4.8
	Geotechnical Engineering	1	4.8
	Applied Zoology	1	4.8
	Electronics	2	9.5
	Special Education	1	4.8
	Fisheries and hydrology	1	4.8
	Agric and Vet Med	1	4.8
Current post of responsibility	Head of department	16	76.2
	Vice Dean	5	23.8
Rank	Lecturer	12	57.1
	Associate professor	8	38.1
	Professor	1	4.8

N=21

Sample Description for Guidance Counselors

Guidance counselors were sampled from the University of Buea 19.2% (5), University of Bamenda 26.9% (7), University of Douala 26.9% (7) and then University of Yaounde II 26.9% (7)

Gender

Though the majority of guidance counselors were male with proportion of 53.8% (14), this proportion was not too far from the 46.2% (12) of the female.

Highest academic qualifications

As far as highest qualification for guidance counselors was concerned, the mode was Bachelor degree with a proportion of 69.2% (18) followed by master's degree 23.1% (6) and the least represented was PhD with a proportion of 7.7% (2). All of them had DIPCO.

Table 9: Sample description for guidance counselors

Background indicators	Categories	n	%
Gender	Male	14	53.8
	Female	12	46.2
Highest academic qualification	Bachelor degree	18	69.2
	Masters	6	23.1
	PhD	2	7.7
Highest professional qualification	DIPCO	22	84.6
	DIPCO II	4	15.4
University	Douala	7	26.9
	Buea	5	19.2
	Bamenda	7	26.9
	Yaounde II	7	26.9

N=26

Sample Description for Students**Gender**

The ages of the students were distributed as follows: 1.7% (10) were aged 16-17 years, 19.8% (114) 18-20 years and 78.5% (453) were aged 20 years and above.

Level

Only third year students were sampled for the study.

University

Students were sampled from four different universities among which were university of Buea with a proportion of 17.5% (101), University of Bamenda 30.0% (173), University of Douala 34.8% (201) and University of Yaounde II 17.7% (102) and from 89 different departments.

Duration of schooling

The average duration of stay in the institution was 3.3 years (Median=3.00; Min=3; Max=5).

Table 10: Sample description for students

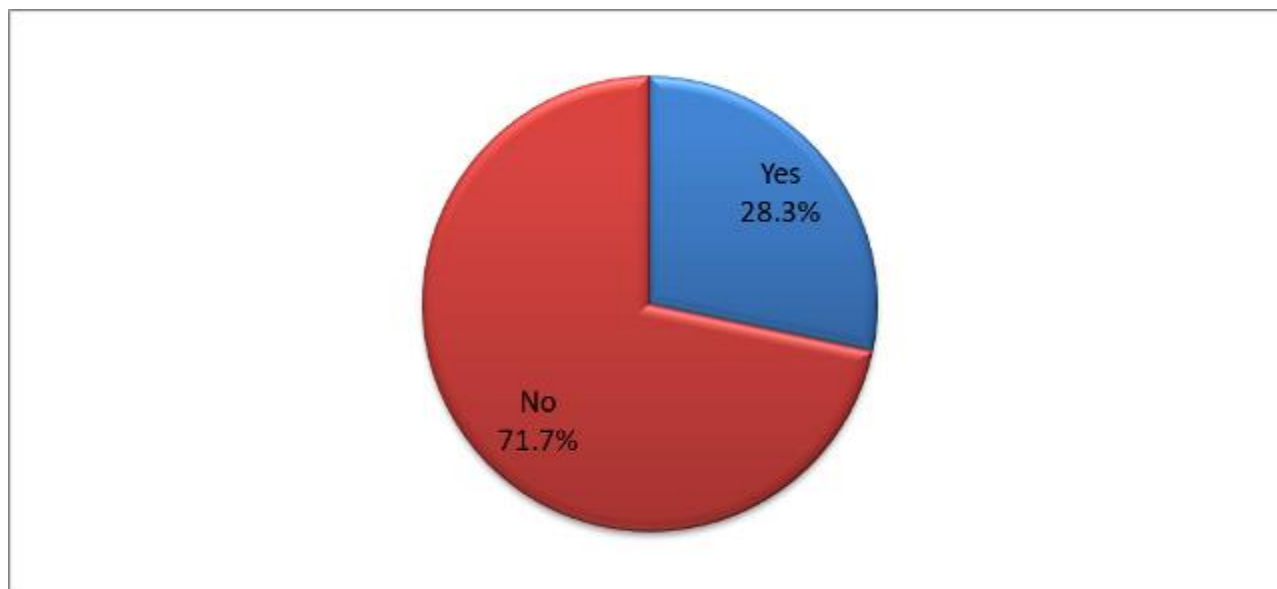
Background indicator	Categories	n	%
Gender	Male	239	41.4
	Female	338	58.6
Age	16-17	10	1.7
	18-20	114	19.8
	20+	453	78.5
Level	300/400 (third year)	557	100
University	University of Buea	101	17.5
	University of Bamenda	173	30.0
	University of Douala	201	34.8
	University of Yaounde II	102	17.7
Duration of schooling in the institution		Mean=3.3; Median=3.00; Min=3; Max=5	

N=577

Research Question: What is the relationship between strategies used by GCs and the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services in Cameroon State Universities?

Guidance counselors' strategies**Students' perspective****Benefiting from guidance counselors' services**

Out of the 53 students who benefitted from the guidance and counseling services, 28.3% (15) went to the guidance counselors themselves as against those the guidance counselors went to 71.7% (38), figure 1. Among the 15 that went to the guidance counselor themselves, five of them making a proportion of 33.3% went to the guidance counselors twice, 13.3% (2) thrice and the rest 53.3% (8) did it once. As for those who said the guidance counselor came to them, 57.9% (22) said they did it once while 42.1% (16) said they did it twice.

**Figure 1: Did you go to the guidance counselor yourself to seek for advice?**

Satisfaction with services

Almost half of the students refused to state their stance 50.9% (27) with respect to their satisfaction with guidance counselors' services. A proportion of 18.9% (10) was fairly satisfied, 15.1% (8) not satisfied, having the same proportion with those that were satisfied (figure 2).

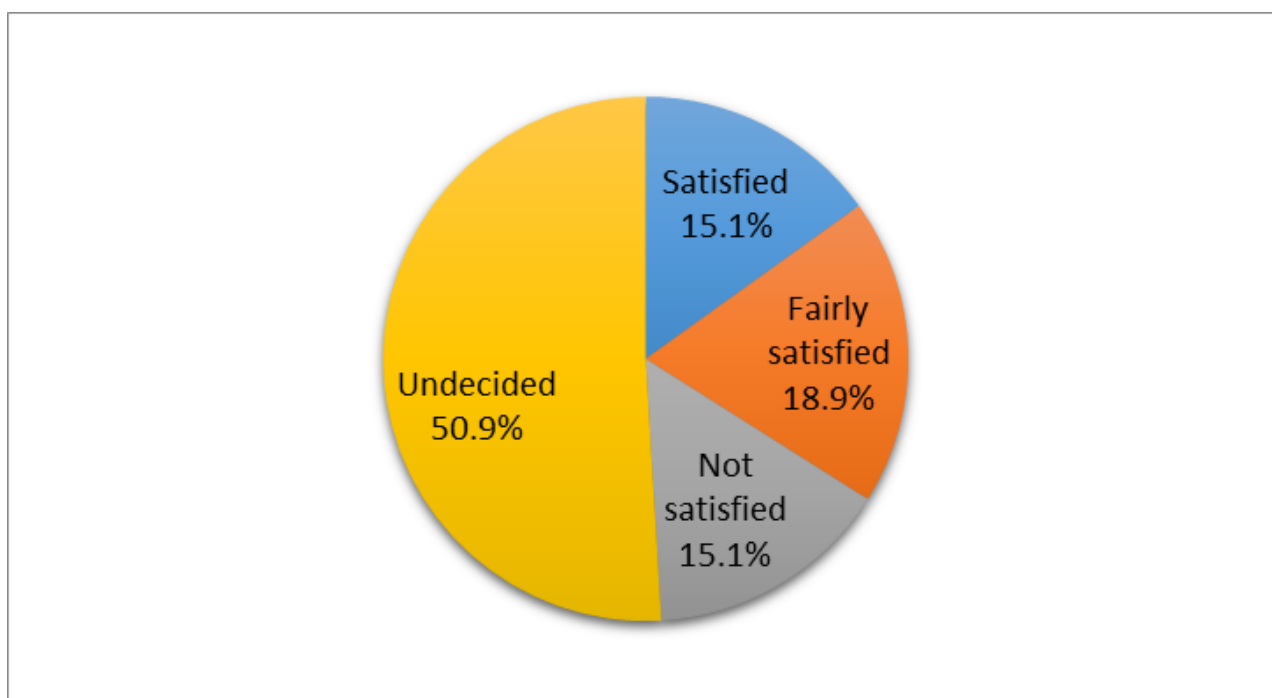


Figure 2: Students' satisfaction of guidance and counselor service

Awareness of planning

Generally, students were not aware with guidance and counselor services with weight of 92.5% (534) while 4.5% (26) were aware.

Among those who have benefited from the service, 26 out of the 53 making a proportion of 49.1% expressed satisfaction for the service (figure 3).

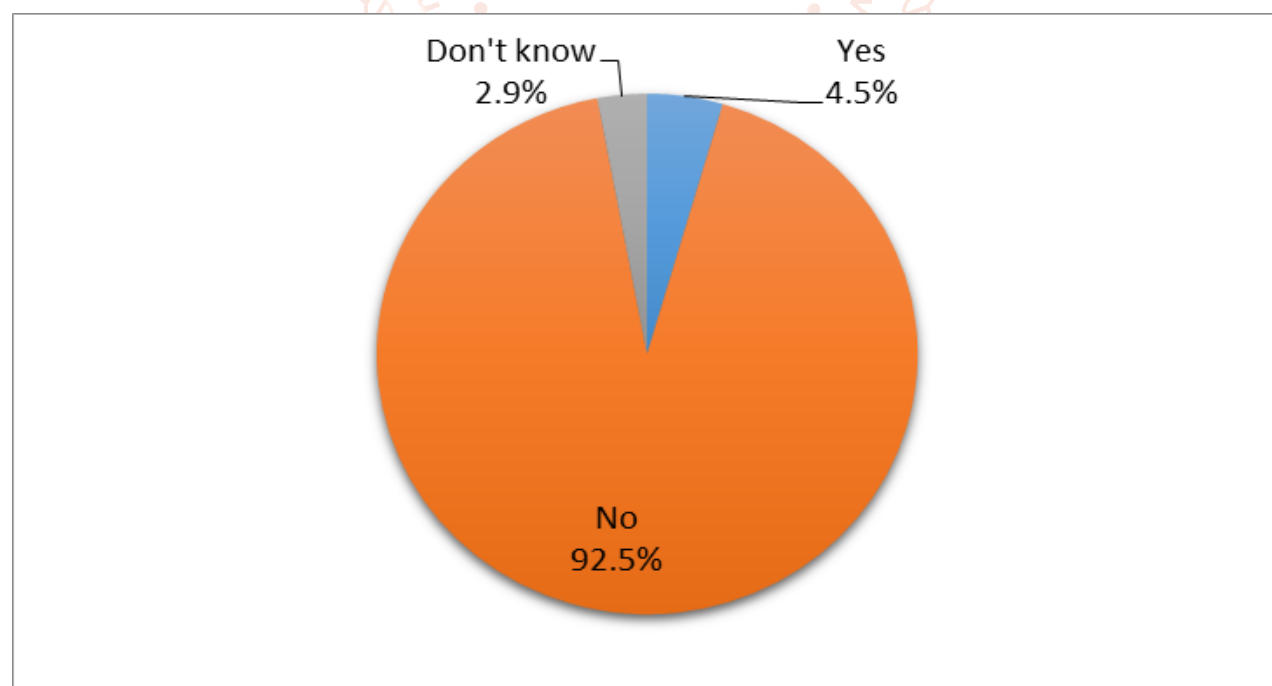


Figure 3: Students' awareness of planning

Planning of Guidance and Counseling Services

Guidance counselors' perspective

Guidance counselors generally perceived planning as important for an effective guidance and counseling services with a proportion of 80.8% (21). However just a proportion of 23.1% (6) stated that planning was often done (figure 4).

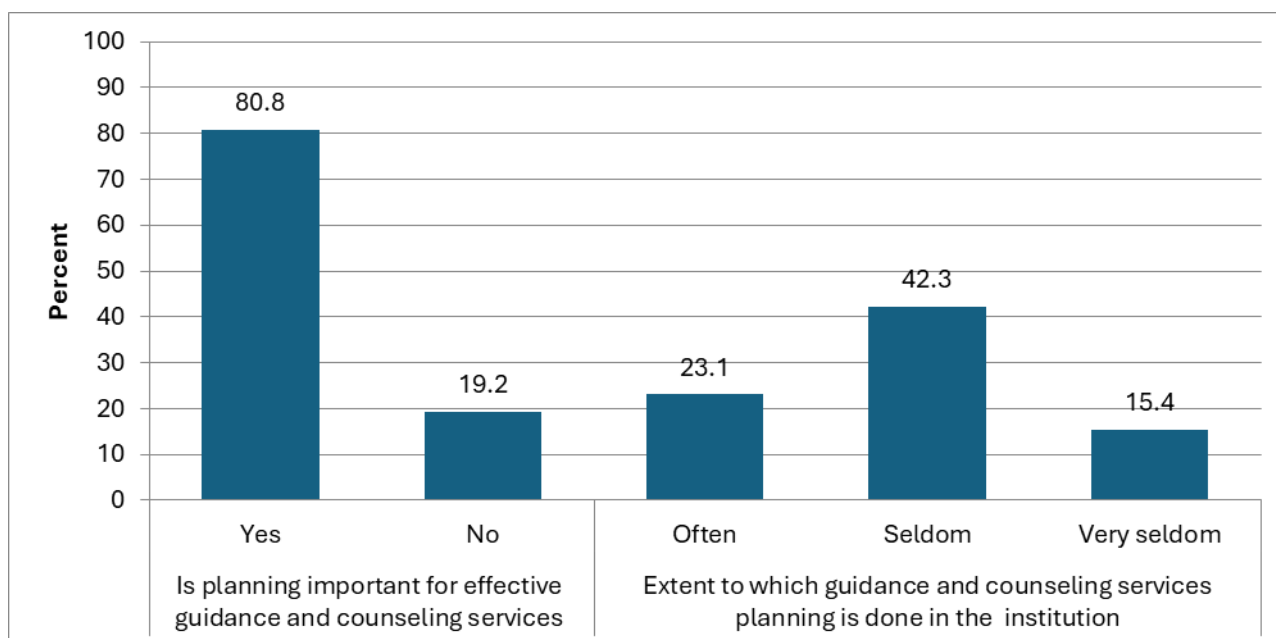


Figure 4: Counselors' perception of guidance and counseling planning

Students' perspective

Out of the 26 that were aware of guidance and counseling planning, 20 making a proportion of 76.9% acknowledged that the planning was done at the beginning of the year. But if we consider the entire sample, then only 3.5% (20) acknowledged the planning at the beginning of the year. All the students agreed that without a plan, guidance and counseling services are ineffective. Compared with guidance counselors' view, which held a proportion of 23.1% for effective planning of activities, it can be resolved that planning was generally perceived as poor (figure 5).

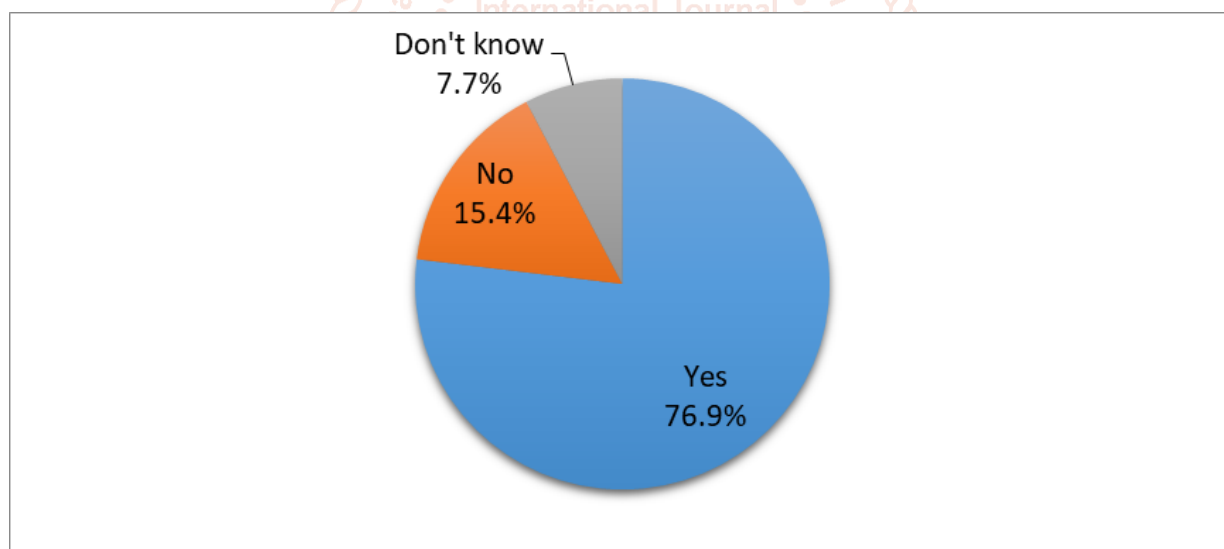


Figure 5: The planning of GCSs is done at the beginning of every year

Stakeholders' involvement in the planning

Guidance counselors' perspectives

Lecturers were the least often involved with a proportion of 3.8% (1), followed by students 7.7% (2), administrators 50.0% (13) and the most involved being the guidance counselors with proportion of 69.2% (18), table 11.

Table 11: Guidance counselors' stand point on stakeholders' involvement in the planning of guidance and counseling services

Stakeholders	Often	Seldom	Never	N
Students	7.7%(2)	0.0%(0)	80.8%(21)	23
Lecturers	3.8%(1)	3.8%(1)	80.8%(21)	23
Guidance counselors	69.2%(18)	19.2%(5)	0.0%(0)	23
Administrators	50.0%(13)	34.6%(9)	3.8%(1)	23

Students' perspectives

Among the 26 students who said they were aware of guidance and counseling service planning, 14 making a proportion of 53.8% stated that the various stakeholders namely students, lecturers, guidance counselors' and administrators were often involved. Comparing students and guidance counselors' perspectives on this point, students unlike the guidance counselors seemed not to perceive any major discrepancy as far as the involvement of stakeholders is concerned (table 12).

Table 12: Students' appreciation of involvement of stakeholders in guidance and counseling services planning

Stakeholders	Often	Seldom	Never	Don't know	N
Students	53.8% (14)	23.1% (6)	23.1% (6)	0.0% (0)	26
Lecturers	53.8% (14)	19.2% (5)	23.1% (6)	3.8% (1)	26
Guidance counselors'	53.8% (14)	23.1% (6)	23.1% (6)	0.0% (0)	26
Administrators (Deans, HODs, etc.)	53.8% (14)	19.2% (5)	23.1% (6)	3.8% (1)	26

Concerns in the planning of guidance and counseling services**Guidance counselors' perspectives**

Orientation was the most often considered concern during planning 84.6%(22), followed by group session with students 73.1% (19), which was organized mostly during orientation, then resources required 50.0%(13) which is discussed mostly during planning for the orientation exercise, guidance counselors' activities 42.3% (11), students 34.6% (9), time to be spent on each service to students 30.8% (8) and the least considered was individual counseling 30.43% (7), table 13.

Table 13: Guidance counselors' consideration of concerns in the planning of guidance and counseling services

Concerns	Often	Seldom	Never	N
Required resources	50.0%(13)	19.2%(5)	19.2%(5)	23
Time to be spent on each service to students	30.8%(8)	34.6%(9)	23.1%(6)	23
Students	34.6%(9)	30.8%(8)	23.1%(6)	23
Orientation	84.6%(22)	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	23
Group sessions with students	73.1%(19)	11.5%(3)	3.8%(1)	23
Individual counseling	30.43%(7)	52.17%(12)	17.4%(4)	23
Guidance counselors' activities	42.3%(11)	23.1%(6)	23.1%(6)	23
Methods to be used	57.7%(15)	7.7%(2)	23.1%(6)	23

Students' perspectives

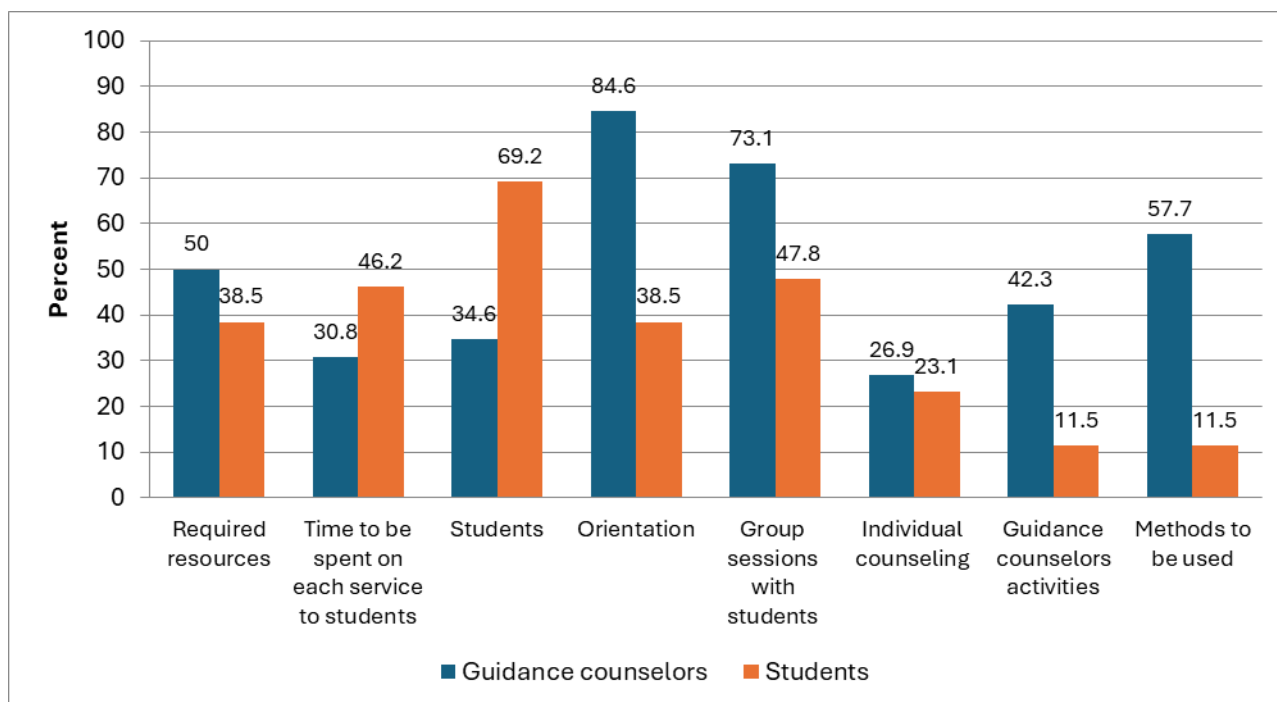
Among the 26 students that were aware of guidance and counseling service planning, 38.5% (10) were of the opinion that time to be spent on each service to students was often considered, 46.2% (12) stated that students were often considered, 69.2% (18) agreed that orientation, was often considered, 38.5% (10) were of the opinion that group sessions with students were often considered, 47.8% (11) were of the opinion that individual counseling was often considered, 23.1% (6) perceived that guidance counselors' activities were often considered while 11.5% (3) acknowledged that methods to be used or meetings with support agencies are often considered (table 14).

Table 14: To what extent are the following considered in planning guidance and counseling services in your institution?

Required resources	Often	Seldom	Never	Don't know	N
Time to be spent on each service to students	38.5% (10)	23.1% (6)	30.8% (8)	7.7% (2)	26
Students	46.2% (12)	26.9% (7)	19.2% (5)	7.7% (2)	26
Orientation	69.2% (18)	15.4% (4)	7.7% (2)	7.7% (2)	26
Group sessions with students	38.5% (10)	30.8% (8)	23.1% (6)	7.7% (2)	26
Individual counseling	47.8% (11)	15.4% (4)	30.8% (8)	11.5% (3)	26
Guidance counselors' activities	23.1% (6)	26.9% (7)	42.3% (11)	7.7% (2)	26
Methods to be used	11.5% (3)	30.8% (8)	50.0% (13)	7.7% (2)	26
Meetings with support agencies	11.5% (3)	23.1% (6)	57.7% (15)	7.7% (2)	26

Contrasting students and counselors' perspective

For both the students and guidance counselors', orientation was the most considered in planning with proportion of 69.2% (18) and 84.6 % (22) respectively but contradicted as far as group session with students was concerned as the proportion of those who perceived it to be often considered was 38.5% (10) as compared to a significantly ($P<0.05$) higher proportion of 73.1%(19) for the guidance counselors (figure 6).



χ^2 -test: $\chi^2=5.35$; $df=7$; $P=0.045$

Figure 6: Comparing guidance counselors' appreciation of the extent to which indicators are considered in planning guidance and counseling services

Students' needs assessment

Guidance counselors' perspective

All the guidance counselors' agreed that assessing the needs of students is an integral part of an effective guidance and counseling program but this was done mostly seldom as stated by 65.4% (17) and only 23.1% (6) who said it was often done (figure 7).

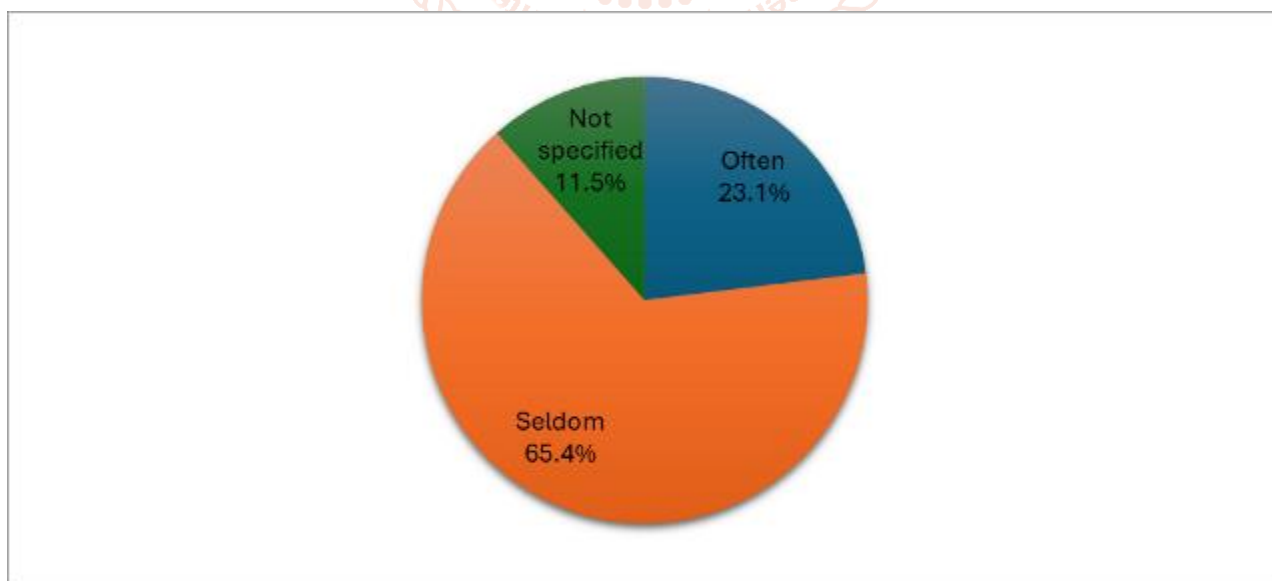


Figure 7: Frequency of assessment of students' needs

Students' perspective

Out of the 577 students, only 14 making a proportion of 2.3% acknowledged that guidance counselor has ever come to their class or assembled them to assess their needs. A very weak proportion of guidance counselors as well acknowledged to often assessing students' needs, thus jointly characterizing the assessment of students' needs as poor (figure 8).

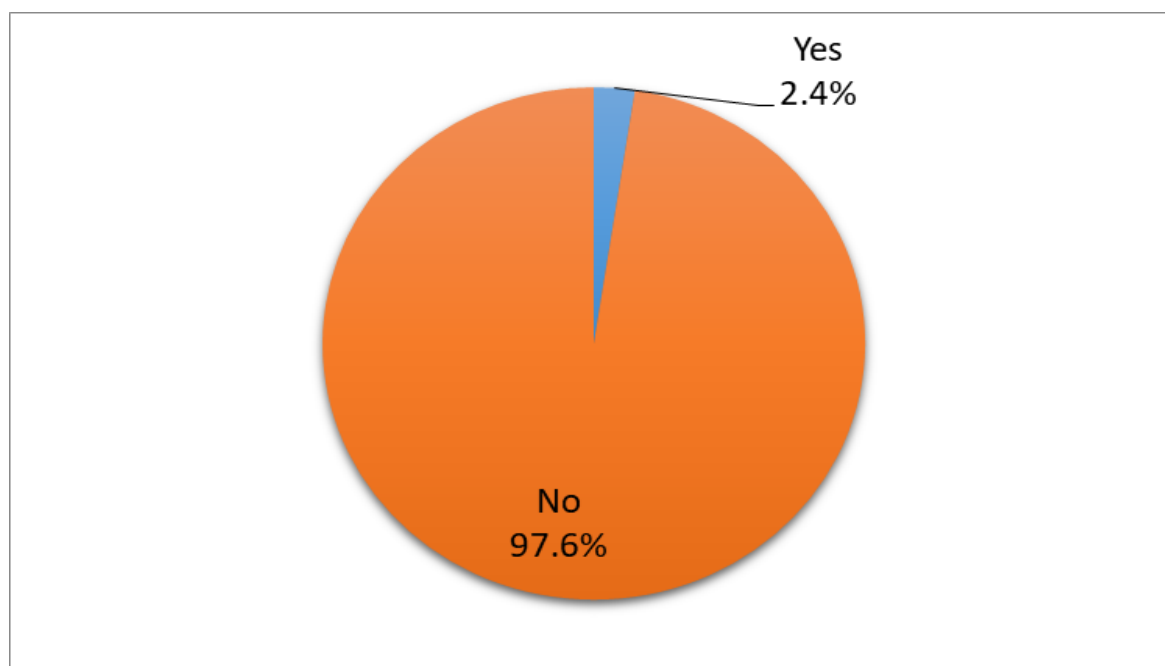
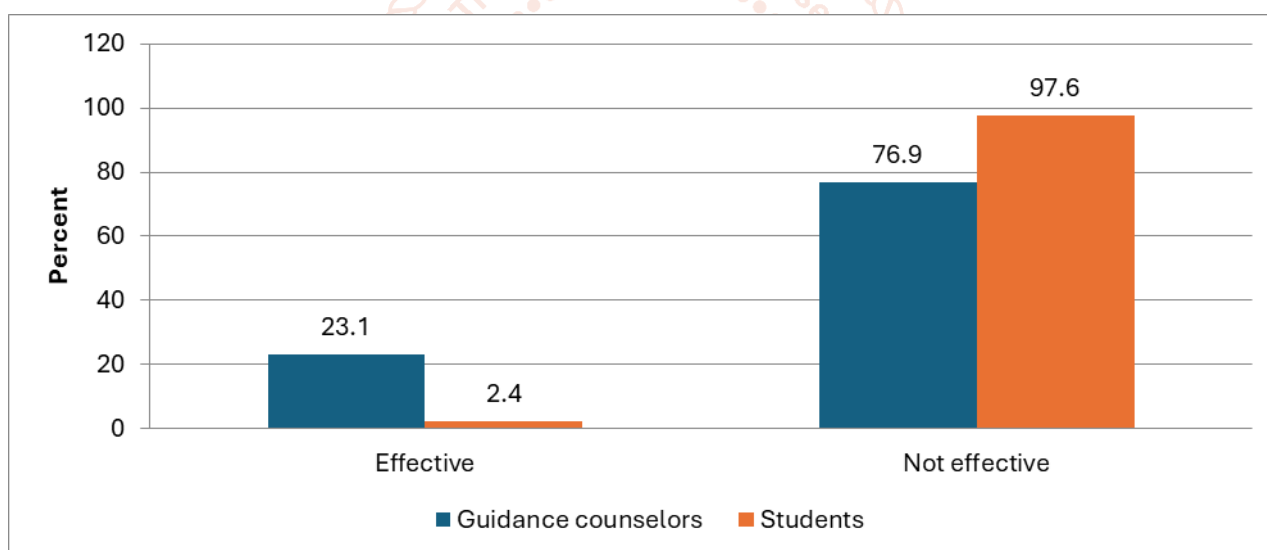


Figure 8: Guidance counselors' visiting of students to assess their needs

Contrasting students and guidance counselors perspective

Out of the 577 students, only 14 making a proportion of 2.3% acknowledged that guidance counselor has ever come to their class or assembled them to assess their needs as against a very low proportion of 23.1% (6) for the guidance counselors who acknowledged that students' needs are often assessed ($P < 0.05$), figure 9.



χ^2 -test: $\chi^2=17.90$; $df=1$; $P=0.000$

Figure 9: Comparing students' and counselors' perceptions of students needs assessment

Stakeholders' involvement in assessing the needs of students

Guidance counselors' perspective

Guidance counselors stated that school administrators were the most involved in assessing students' needs with proportion of 76.9% (20), followed by guidance counselors' 73.1% (19), then the students 4.16% (1) while lecturers were not involved at all (table 15).

Table 15: Guidance counselors' standpoint on stakeholders' involvement in assessing the needs of students

Stakeholders	Often	Seldom	Never	N
Students	4.17%(1)	8.3%(2)	87.5%(20)	24
Lecturers	0.0%(0)	23.1%(6)	69.2%(18)	24
Guidance counselors	73.1%(19)	15.4%(4)	3.8%(1)	24
School administrators	76.9%(20)	11.5%(3)	3.8%(1)	24

Students' perspectives

Students generally did not know whether stakeholders were involved in guidance and counseling service or not and this was the case for 85.7% (12) as far as lecturers, guidance counselors and school administrators were concerned. As for students, 85.7% (12) of them acknowledged that they were never involved (table 16).

Table 16: Students' perception of the extent to which stakeholders are involved in conducting students' needs assessment

Stakeholders	Often	Seldom	Never	Don't know	N
Students	1%(7.1)	7.1%(1)	85.7%(12)	0.0%(0)	14
Lecturers	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	85.7%(12)	14
Guidance counselors	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	85.7%(12)	14
School administrators	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	85.7%(12)	14

Techniques used in assessing student's needs**Guidance counselors' perspectives**

The most often used technique by guidance counselors to assess students' needs was behavioral rating scale and end of year students' results with the same proportions of 74% (17). They were followed by feedbacks from other stakeholders 42% (10), informal conversations with students 26.9% (7), students' records 23.1% (6), standardized test 7.7% (2) having the same weight with interviews and the least was questionnaire 3.8% (1), table 17.

Table 17: Guidance counselors' characterization of the techniques used in assessing student's needs

Techniques	Often	Seldom	Never	N
Students' records	23.1%(6)	19.1%(5)	50.0%(13)	24
Questionnaire	3.8%(1)	11.5%(3)	76.9%(20)	24
Behavioral rating scales	74.0%(17)	8.33%(2)	20.33%(5)	24
Interviews	7.7%(2)	11.5%(3)	73.1%(19)	24
End of year students' results	74.0%(17)	20.33%(5)	8.33%(2)	24
Informal conversations with students	26.9%(7)	50.0%(13)	15.4%(4)	24
Standardized tests	7.7%(2)	3.8%(1)	80.0%(21)	24
Feedbacks from other stakeholders	42.0%(10)	42.0%(10)	16.0%(4)	24

Students' perspectives

Generally, 85.7% (12) of the students did not know about the techniques involved in students' evaluation in the framework of guidance and counseling services. All the students were of the opinion that assessing the needs of students is an integral part of guidance and counseling services (table 18).

Table 18: Students' perception of the extent to which techniques used in assessing students' needs in your institution are used

Techniques	Often	Seldom	Never	Don't know	N
Students' records	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	85.7%(12)	14
Questionnaire	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	85.7%(12)	14
Behavioral rating scales	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	85.7%(12)	14
Interviews	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	85.7%(12)	14
End of year students' results	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	85.7%(12)	14
Informal conversations with students	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	85.7%(12)	14
Standardized tests	0.0%(0)	0.0%(0)	14.3%(2)	85.7%(12)	14
Feedback from other stakeholders	7.1%(1)	7.1%(1)	0.0%(0)	85.7%(12)	14

Administrators' perspective**Table 19: Thematic analysis depicting whether guidance and counseling services are planned, students' needs assessed and guidance and counseling services are evaluated as perceived by administrators**

Activities	Code	Code description	Groundings	Quotations
Planning of guidance and counseling services	No common ground or forum for planning	What, How and When to plan should be defined from the ministry of higher education. There is no such blue print at the moment.	5	'Planning should be defined from the ministry so that stakeholders at the level of the universities know what they should do' 'Stakeholders should come together and work as a team to do planning' 'A forum should be organized for all counselors and stakeholders at the beginning of each year to set their goal for the year'.
	Counseling centers	All the universities should each have a counseling center headed by an expert	5	'A counseling center should be created in each university headed by an expert who oversees the activities of counselors' 'Counselors should be appointed with specific job descriptions'
	No knowledge of what obtains	Many administrators have no idea on whether there is planning or not.	8	'Aucune idee' 'AUCUNE' 'No idea' 'Nothing'
Students needs assessment	Nonexistence of needs assessment	Many administrators stated that assessing the needs of students is not done in their institutions	4	'This service does not exist' 'Service pratiquement in existant'
	Students Affairs Department	Some administrators stated that students needs assessment is handled by the department of students affairs	2	'Handled by students affairs department'
Evaluation guidance and counseling services	No knowledge of what is done	Some administrators do not have an idea on whether or not guidance and counseling services are evaluated	16	'No idea' 'Not aware' 'Nothing' 'Not involved' 'Nothing is done about evaluation' 'Never been involved' 'Aucune idee' 'Aucune' 'Not really involved in this. It would appear little or no evaluation is done' 'Non existent' 'Inexistent'
	Reports on guidance and counseling activities	This is done through reports at meetings	2	'Through reports presented in the senate and other meetings'
	Students	Students should evaluate these services'	1	'They should be evaluated by students on annual basis'
	Programmed activities	Guidance counselors' activities should be programmed and followed up strictly	4	'Leur exiger un calendrier et un plan d'action' 'Leur exiger des fiches d'entretien' 'Un plan d'action defini par un calendrier'

Findings reveal that a majority of the administrators have no idea on whether there is planning or not (*Aucune idee*'' *AUCUNE*'' *No idea*'' *Nothing*'') and that they exist no blue print on What, How and When to plan should be done thereby possess that *"Stakeholders should come together and work as a team to do planning"* *"A forum should be organized for all counselors and stakeholders at the beginning of each year to set their goal for the year"*. Same trend was also observed with regard to student's needs assessment whereby Many administrators stated that assessing the needs of students is not done in their institutions (*"This service does not exist"* *"Service pratiquement in existant"*), although some administrators stated that students needs assessment is handled by the department of students affairs (*"Handled by students affairs department"*). Moreover, looking at evaluation, no idea on whether or not guidance and counseling services are evaluated was the highest so far observed among administrators (*"No idea"* *"Not aware"* *"Nothing"* *"Not involved"* *"Nothing is done about evaluation"* *"Never been involved"* *"Aucuneidee"* *"Aucune"* *"Not really involved in this. It would appear little or no evaluation is done"* *"Non existent"* *"Inexistant"*) thereby possess that Guidance counselors' activities should be pro grammed and followed up strictly (*"Leur exiser un calendrier et un plan d'action"* *"Leur exiser des fiches d'entretien"*). Though, few of them reported that evaluation of guidance and counseling services is done through reports at meetings (*Through reports presented in the senate and other meetings*'), table 19.

Table 20: Thematic analysis depicting how involved are stakeholders (administrators, lectures, guidance counselors and students) in the planning of guidance and counseling services, assessing the needs of students and evaluating the guidance and counselors' services

Activities involve	Code	Code description	Groundings	Quotations
Planning of services	No idea		8	
	Not existing		11	'Nothing is done, everybody stay in his own corner'; 'Never been involved'; 'Departmental orientation not necessarily within the frame of guidance and counseling services'
Assessing students' needs	No idea		8	
	Not existing		11	
Evaluating the services	No idea		8	'Never been involved'
	Not existing		11	'The university work with the department to achieve this'; 'We are expected to be involved during working hours in the offices'; 'All stakeholders should be involved to find out if these services are doing fine or not such that corrections can be made'; 'Stakeholders should be sampled to get information about what they think about counseling services'; 'They can institute a central control committee to watch over counselor'; 'Nothing is done about this'
	Feedback from students	Students' evaluation	I	'They should be evaluated by students on annual basis'
	Action plan	Well scheduled action plan needed	I	'Un plan d'action défini par un calendrier'

Findings reveals that stakeholders do not only have no idea of the planning of guidance and counseling services but at the same time, involvement of stakeholders in planning of guidance and counseling services does not exist (*"Nothing is done, everybody stay in his own corner"* *"Never been involved"*). The same trend is also visible with

regard to assessment of students' needs ("Never been involved") and the evaluation of guidance and counseling service (table 20).

Table 21: Thematic analysis depicting the proposed suggestions for the improvement of guidance and counseling services planning, assessment of students needs and on the evaluation of guidance and counseling services as perceived by administrators

Activities involved	Code	Code description	Groundings	Quotations
The planning of guidance and counseling services	Visits to classrooms	Counselors need to use any available means to reach out to students	5	'Visites dans les salles et dans les départements' 'Counselors should visit students in class and organize sessions with them. They should not sit in their offices' 'Affichage des heures de reception'
	Involvement of all stakeholders	The involvement of all the stakeholders is very important if planning of guidance and counseling services has to be effective	6	'All should be involved' 'Aunit involving all stakeholders should be set up for planning' 'A forum should be organized for all involved to come together at the beginning of the year to set goals for guidance and counseling services' 'Administrators at all levels(HODs,ViceDeans, Deans,Directors, DVCs&VCs) should be involved in planning'
	Procedures of planning	Some administrators think that procedures for planning guidance & counseling services should come from the ministry	2	'Planning should come from the ministry so stakeholders know what, when and how to plan' 'The ministry should provide a road map for planning for all to follow'
Assessment of students needs	Contacts with students	Contacts with students are a necessity if students' needs must be known and asse ² d	10	'Students should actually be contacted by counselors to find out what their needs really are' 'Students should be contacted really to know what they want' 'Ecoute des etudiants' 'Counselors need to meet students to identify and assess their needs' 'Counselors should have many sessions with students in order to assess their needs' 'Counselors should assess students' needs by engaging student leaders in informal discussions'
The evaluation of guidance and counseling services	Visits to counseling units	Other stakeholders should visit counseling units to assess the work of guidance counselors	3	'Visit the counseling units and assess output directly or indirectly'
	Sampling of information	Information on the effectiveness of guidance counselors can be collected from different sources	8	'Stakeholders should sample information from students to get feedback' 'Counselors should be evaluated by students on annual basis'

	Supervisory committee	Some administrators think that counselors should be evaluated by a committee	3	'Each faculty or school should have a committee to evaluate their guidance counselors. This committee should be headed by the Dean or Director' 'Institute central control unit to supervise and evaluate the services of guidance and counseling'
	Program of evaluation	There is need to have a plan of action for services evaluation	8	'Evaluation should be done at the end of the year or at the end of each semester'

Looking at the proposed suggestions for the improvement of planning in guidance and counseling services, Involvement of all stake holders was most mention (*All should be involved* 'A unit involving all stakeholders should be set up for planning'), followed by classroom visitation (*Visites dans les salles et dans les départements* 'Counselors should visit students in class and organize sessions with them. They should not sit in their offices') and lastly, believing in hyper-rationality (*Planning should come from the ministry so stakeholders know what, when and how to plan* 'The ministry should provide a road map for planning for all to follow'). Furthermore, with regard to assessment of student's needs, contacting or meeting with students was the only mentioned suggestion by administrators (*Students should actually be contacted by counselors to find out what their needs really are* 'Students should be contacted really to know what they want' 'Ecoute des étudiants' 'Counselors need to meet students to identify and assess their needs' 'Counselors should have many sessions with students in order to assess their needs'). Finally, as concerned the evaluation of guidance and counseling service, sampling of information (*Stakeholders should sample information from students to get feedback* 'Counselors should be evaluated by students on annual bases) and program of evaluation (*Evaluation should be done at the end of the year or at the end of each semester*"), were the two techniques highly suggested by administrators. Visitation to the counseling units by other stakeholders (*Visit the counseling units and assess output directly or indirectly*) and establishment of supervisory committee (Each faculty or school should have a committee to evaluate their guidance counselors. This committee should be headed by the Dean or Director' 'Institute central control unit to supervise and evaluate the services of guidance and counseling') were other suggestions put forward by administrators (table 21).

Evaluation of guidance and counseling services

Guidance counselors' perspective

Counselors generally were of the opinion that it is important to evaluate guidance and counseling services with proportion of 96.2% (22) as presented on figure 10, though only 15.4% (4) of them said it was often done (figure 11).

As for the students, all of them acknowledged the importance to evaluate guidance and counseling service.

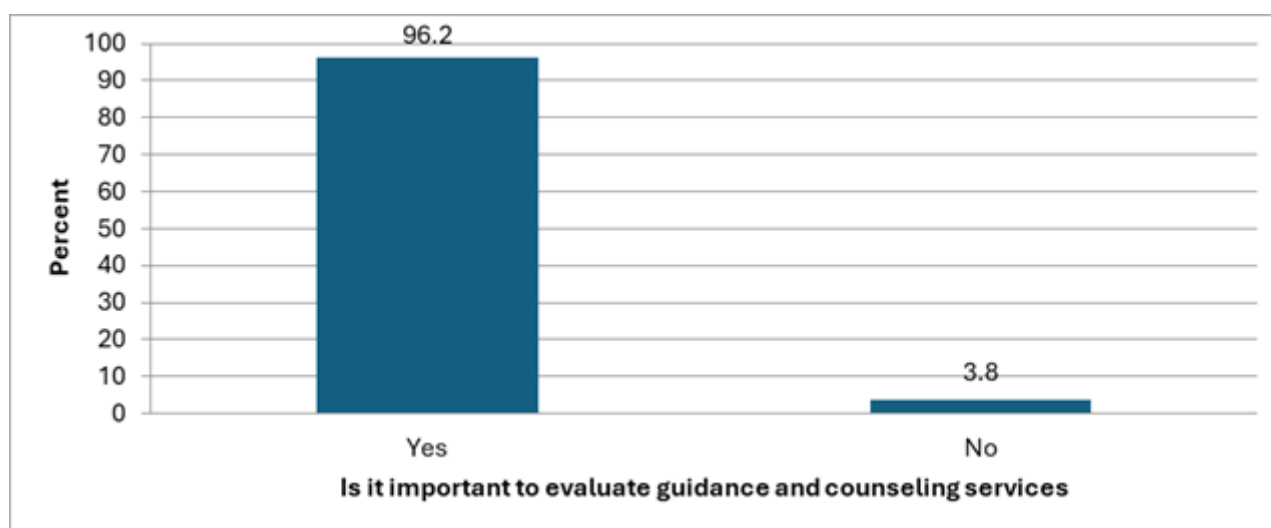


Figure 10: Counselors' perception of the importance to evaluate guidance and counseling services

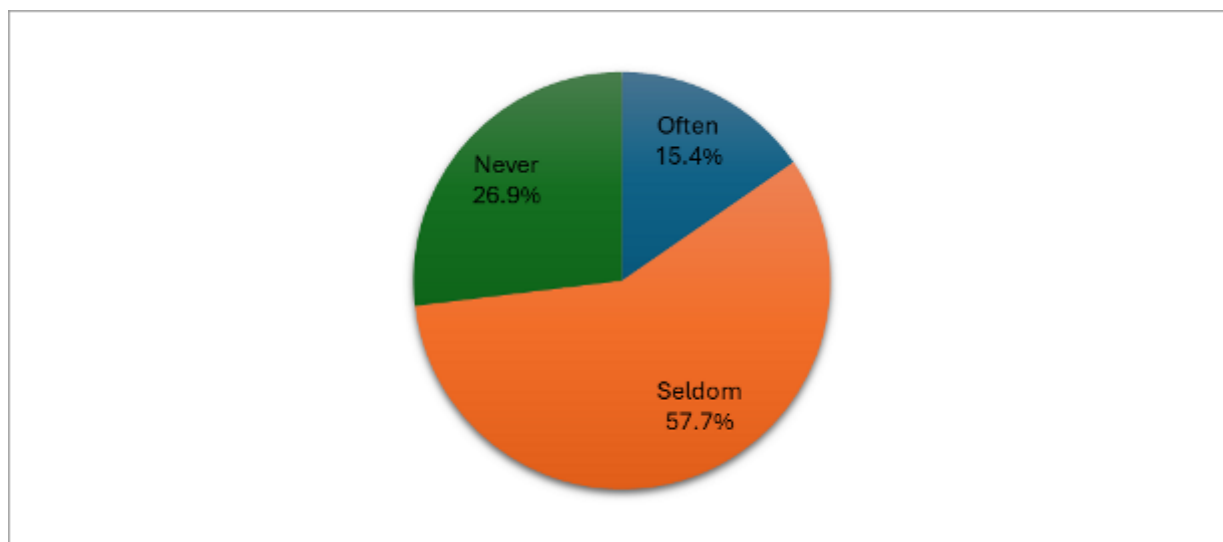


Figure 11: Frequency of evaluation of guidance and counselor services

People involved in the evaluation of guidance and counseling services

Guidance counselors' perspectives

Administrators and guidance counselors with proportions of 78.9% (15) and 73.7% (14) respectively controlled evaluation process and other stakeholder as students 5.3% (1) or lecturers 0.0% (0) were not often involved (table 22).

Table 22: Guidance counselor's characterization of the people involved in the evaluation of guidance and counseling services

Stakeholders	Often	Seldom	Never	N
Students	5.3%(1)	10.5%(2)	84.2%(16)	19
Lecturers	0.0%(0)	5.2%(1)	94.7%(18)	19
Guidance counselors	73.7%(14)	10.5%(2)	15.8%(3)	19
Administrators	78.9%(15)	15.8%(3)	5.3%(1)	19

Students' perspective

Out of the 53 students who have ever benefitted from the guidance and counseling services of their institution, only 4 making a proportion of 7.5% have ever been involved in the evaluation of GCSs (figure 12).

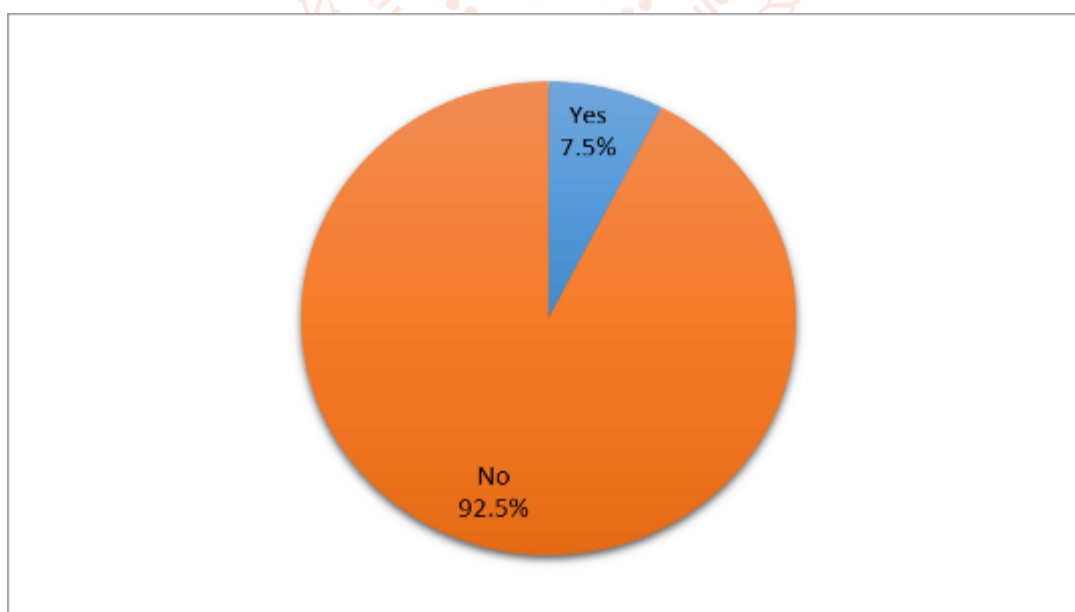


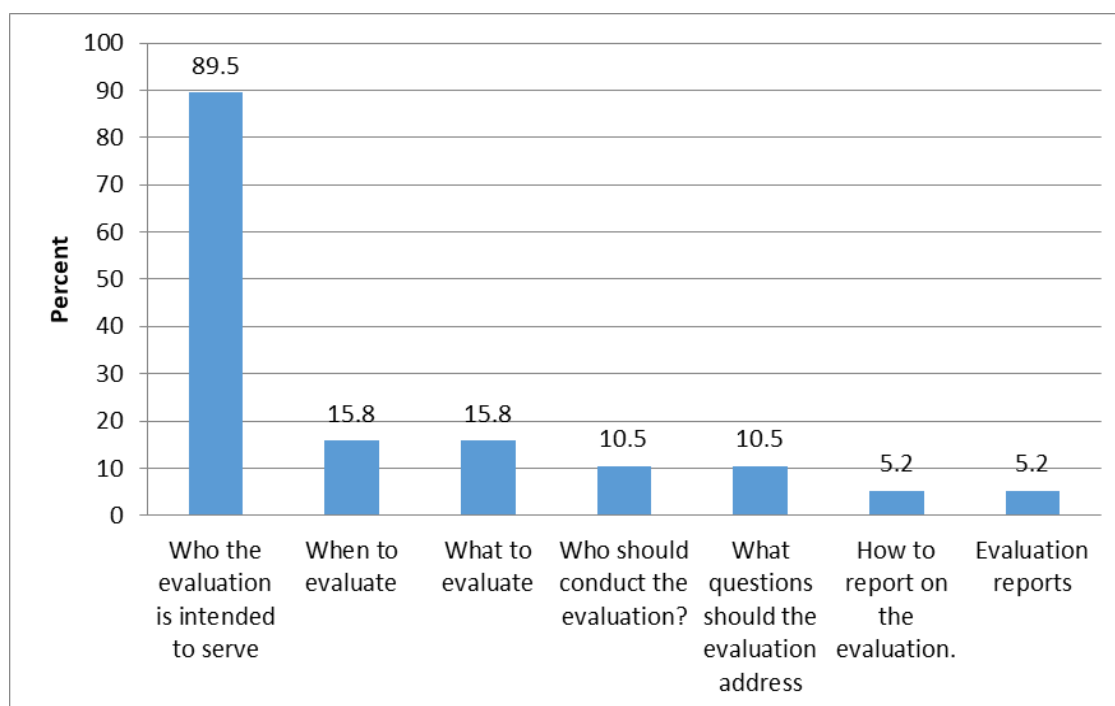
Figure 12: Perceived students' involvement in the evaluation of GCSs

Contrasting students' and counselors' perspective

Generally students and guidance counselors acknowledged the importance to evaluate guidance and counselors' services with proportion of 100% and 96.2% (22). Given that only 4 students stated to have ever been involved in guidance and counseling service evaluation, there was no need appraising other indicators from students' perspective.

Issues handled when evaluating guidance and counseling services**Table 23: Guidance counselors' characterization of how often these issues are handled when evaluating guidance and counseling services**

Issues	Often	Seldom	Never	N
When to evaluate	15.8%(3)	0.0%(0)	84.2%(16)	19
What to evaluate	15.8%(3)	0.0%(0)	84.2%(16)	19
Who the evaluation is intended to serve	89.5%(17)	5.3%(1)	5.3%(1)	19
Who should conduct the evaluation?	10.5%(2)	0.0%(0)	18%(94.7)	19
What questions should the evaluation address	5.2%(1)	5.2%(1)	89.5%(17)	19
How to report on the evaluation.	5.2%(1)	0.0%(0)	94.7%(18)	19
Evaluation reports	5.2%(1)	0.0%(0)	94.7%(18)	19

**Figure 13: Comparing how the issues of interests are considered when evaluating guidance and counseling services**

Only those whom the evaluation was intended to serve were really considered during the evaluation of guidance and counseling service with proportion of 89.5% (17), figure 13.

Table 24: Guidance counselors' characterization of the techniques used to appraise the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services

Techniques	Often	Seldom	Never	N
Students' outcome	40.0%(10)	40.0%(10)	20.0%(5)	25
Questionnaire	7.7%(2)	3.8%(1)	84.6%(22)	25
Tests	0.0%(0)	3.8%(1)	92.3%(24)	25
Inspection of records	3.8%(1)	38.5%(10)	53.8%(14)	25
Interviews	16.0%(4)	8.0%(2)	76.0%(19)	25
Formative evaluation	3.8%(1)	46.2%(12)	46.2%(12)	25
Summative evaluation	16.0%(4)	24.0%(6)	60.0%(15)	25
Observation	60.0%(15)	20.0%(5)	20.0%(5)	25
Focus group discussion	11.5%(3)	34.6%(9)	50.0%(13)	25
Informal discussion with students	57.7%(15)	34.6%(9)	3.8%(1)	25

Observations and informal discussion with students with a proportion of 60.0% (15) and 57.7%(15) were the most used techniques, followed by students' outcome 40.0% (10), summative evaluation 16.0% (4), interviews

with the same proportion, focus group discussion 11.5% (3), questionnaire 7.7% (2) and then inspection of records and formative evaluation 3.8% (1) while nobody stated that tests was often used, instead 92.3% (24) said it was never used (table 24).

Services provided to students

Table 25: Guidance counselors' perception of the services provided to students

Services	Often	Seldom	Never	N
Counseling service	73.1%(19)	23.1%(6)	3.8%(1)	26
Orientation service	96.2%(25)	0.0%(0)	3.8%(1)	26
Information service	69.2%(18)	26.9%(7)	3.8%(1)	26
Appraisal service	3.8%(1)	11.5%(3)	84.6%(22)	26
Referral service	3.8%(1)	3.8%(1)	92.3%(24)	26
Selection service	34.6%(9)	53.8%(14)	11.5%(3)	26
Placement service	3.8%(1)	3.8%(1)	92.3%(24)	26
Follow-up service	3.8%(1)	3.8%(1)	92.3%(24)	26
Evaluation service	3.8%(1)	7.7%(2)	88.5%(23)	26

The services that were commonly provided were orientation service 96.2% (25), information service 69.2% (18) then counseling 73.1% (19) and to an extent selection 34.6% (9), table 25. The least provided were appraisal service, referral service, selection service, placement service, follow-up service and evaluation service.

Satisfaction with the guidance and counseling services

Counselors perceived they were satisfied with orientation service with proportion of 50.0% (13), followed by counseling service 30.8% (8) and information service 23.1% (6) for the first three. As for the rest, their perceived satisfaction weighted less than 5% except selection service with proportion of 7.7% (2), table 26.

Table 26: Guidance counselors' satisfaction with the guidance and counseling services they provide

Services	Satisfied	Marginally satisfied	Not satisfied	N
Counseling service	30.8%(8)	57.7%(15)	11.5%(3)	26
Orientation service	50.0%(13)	50.0%(13)	0.0%(0)	26
Information service	23.1%(6)	65.4%(17)	11.5%(3)	26
Appraisal service	3.8%(1)	3.8%(1)	92.3%(24)	26
Referral service	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
Selection service	7.7%(2)	50.0%(13)	42.3%(11)	26
Placement service	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
Follow-up service	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
Evaluation service	3.8%(1)	3.8%(1)	92.3%(24)	26
MRA	34			

Peer counseling

Counselors' knowledge of peer counseling

The greater majority of counselor knew about peer counseling with proportion of 73.1% (19) but only one of them acknowledged it existence within his institution (figure 14).

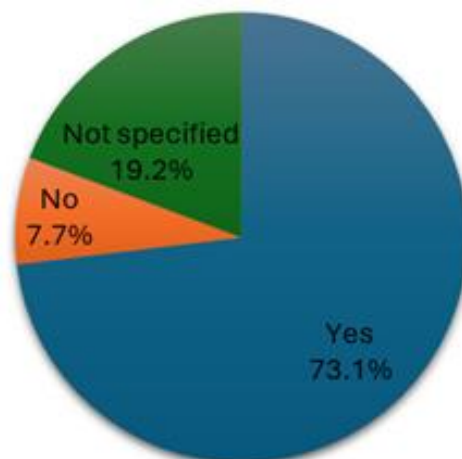


Figure 14: Counselors knowledge of peer counseling

Students' awareness of peer counseling

Generally, students were not aware of peer counseling in their institution with a proportion of 92.4% (533) as against 7.6% (44) for those that were not. A lower proportion of 7.1% (41) acknowledged the existence of peer counseling in their institution (figure 15).

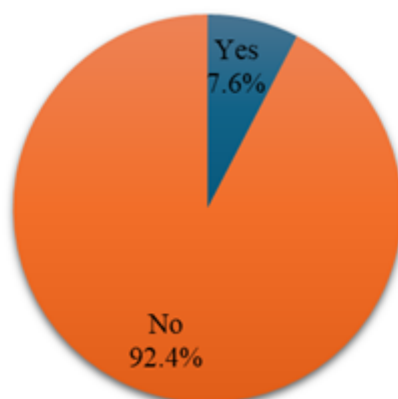


Figure 15: Students' awareness of peer counseling

Students' perceived existence of peer counselling

It was perceived that peer counseling was the most implemented in the University of Buea with proportion of 17.8% (18), followed by the University of Bamenda 12.1% (21), the University of Douala 1.0%(2) and not existing at all in the university of Yaounde II (table 27).

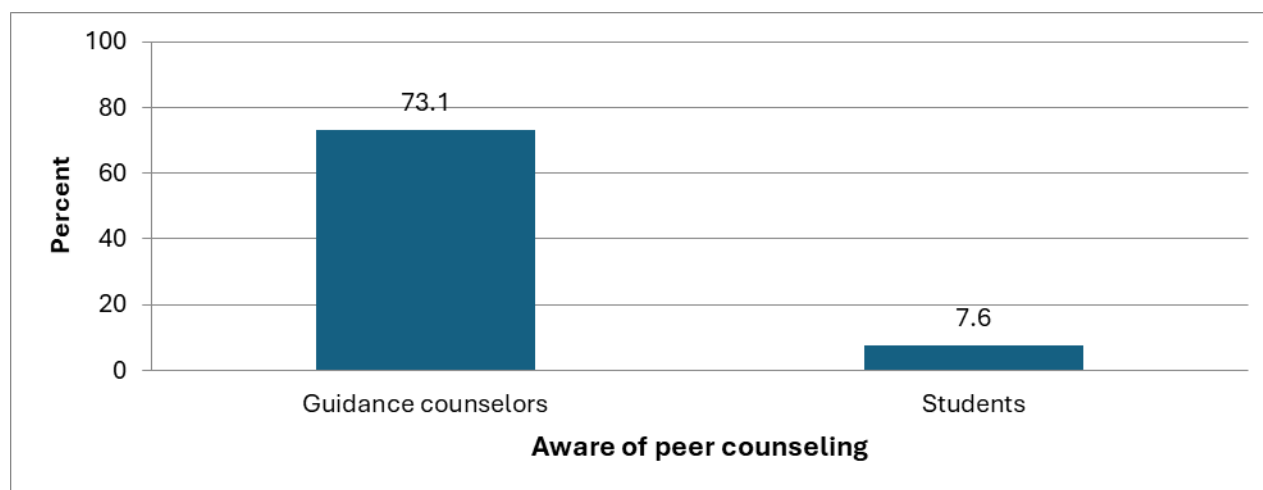
Table 27: Students' perceived existence of peer counseling by institution

Universities	Stats	Does peer counseling exist in your institution		Total
		Yes	No	
University of Buea	n	18	83	101
	%	17.8%	82.2%	100.0%
University of Bamenda	n	21	152	173
	%	12.1%	87.9%	100.0%
University of Douala	n	2	199	201
	%	1.0%	99.0%	100.0%
University of Yaounde II	n	0	102	102
	%	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	n	41	536	577
	%	7.1%	92.9%	100.0%

Cramer's V: =0.274; P=0.000.

Contrasting students and counselors' perspective

The contrast was obvious ($P < 0.05$) with 73.1% (19) of guidance counselors been aware as against 7.6% (44) for the students (figure 16).



χ^2 -test: $\chi^2=107.02$; $df=1$; $P=0.000$

Figure 16: Comparing students' and guidance counselors' awareness of peer counseling

Challenges and response measures

Lack of personnel (“*Counselors are lacking*”), material and physical facilities (“*Lack of a complete counseling unit and counseling laboratory*”; “*The absence of a counseling center, and office*”; “*No conducive offices especially when it involves individual counseling*”) and finance (“*Insufficient fund to follow up students*”; “*The absence of financial resources makes it difficult for counselors to carry out effective counseling*”) were the most highlighted problems faced by guidance counselors. The response measures suggested were essentially the need to provide finance for services and equipment, good working environment or office, counseling center, special equipment for psychological tests.

They also pinpointed lack of career profile in their field, inferiority complex provoke by lecturers who under look them and don’t cooperate and get involved, lack of awareness from students, the need to be provided allowance equivalent to that lecturers, and a general supervisor (“*Real experts in counseling to follow up and implement counseling programs should be posted to the institution*”), table 28.

Table 28: Thematic analysis depicting the challenges guidance counselors’ faced in guidance and counseling services and the suggestions on how to improve on guidance and counseling services as perceive by the guidance counselors

Challenges faced			Proposed suggestions		
Code	Groundings	Quotations	Code	Groundings	Quotations
Inadequate personnel	10	“Inadequate guidance counselors” “Counselors are lacking” ‘absence de personnel d’orientation’	Personnel/ experts	8	“Provision of adequate personnel” “Real experts in counseling to follow up and implement counseling programs should be posted to the institution” “More guidance counselors should be posted to the institution”
Facilities	15	“Lack of a complete counseling unit and counseling laboratory” “The absence of a counseling center, and office” “No conducive offices especially when it involves individual counseling” ‘absence de matériel informatique et de documentation spécialisée’ ‘absence de bureau’	Facilities	14	“Provision of a well equip facilities” “A complete counseling center be created with counseling laboratory”: “Conducive offices should be provided for consultation with students”
Working materials	10	“The absence of specialized working	Providing material for psychological	9	“Psychological test be purchased” ‘mettre a notre

		materials” “No guidance and counseling facilities” “No materials for psychological tests” ‘absence de matériel informatique et de documentation spécialisée’	test, computers and other offices needs		disposition un cadre approprié et les moyens matériels’
Cooperation and collaboration	3	“Lack of cooperation from lecturers, instead of sensitizing students and directing them to us, they pose as counselors” “Lack of effective collaboration from lecturers”	Cooperation and collaboration	1	“Administrators and lecturers should collaborate with counselors”
Finance	10	“No financial allocation for guidance and counseling services” “Insufficient fund to follow up students” “The absence of financial resources makes it difficult for counselors to carry out effective counseling”	Finance	8	“Budgetary allocation should be provided for guidance and counseling services” “More funds should be provided to the counseling department to facilitate their services” “The university should have a budget for counseling activities”
Tolerant	1	“Students lack patient because counselors are lacking”			
Portfolios	5	“Lack of career profile for counselors”	Portfolios	4	“Provide a career profile for counselors” ‘instaurer un plan de carrier pour les conseillers d’orientation’
Ignorance	3	“Lack of awareness of the	Recognizance	2	‘Reconnaitre l’importance du

		importance of counseling in the university community” “Students do not seem to understand the importance of guidance and counseling”			conseiller d’orientation’ ‘accepter l’importance du conseiller d’orientation dans la progression académique des étudiants’
			Sensitization	1	“They should be proper sensitization”
			Allowance	1	“Allowance be given to guidance counselors in the same manner as allowance is given to lectures”.
Inferiorly complex	2	‘Complex d’infériorité des conseillers d’orientation masqués par les enseignants’	Special center or office	2	‘doter d’un Centre de conseil d’orientation alloué au conseiller d’orientation’ ‘des primes de recherches équivalents celles perçus par les enseignants’ ‘créer un centre d’orientation équiper’

Guidance counselors’ suggestions to improve on guidance and counseling services

Provision of well-equipped offices (“*creation of a full counseling unit with adequate facilities and sufficient number of counselors*”, “*Provision of a well-equipped facilities*”), employment of real experts in counseling (“*Real experts in counseling to follow up and implement counseling programs should be posted to the institution*”) and finances (“*Financial support to run services*”). were the most highlighted aspects that guidance counselors think need to be met for the improvement of guidance and counseling services. Sensitization, purchase of psychological tests (“*Psychological test be purchased*”), cooperation from lecturers and administrators (“*Administrators and lecturers should collaborate with counselors*”) and allowances (“*Allowance be given to guidance counselors in the same manner as research allowance is given to lecturers*”). were other aspects that guidance counselors also emphasized on as concerned the improvement of their services (table 29).

Table 29: Thematic analysis depicting what guidance counselors think can be done to improve on guidance and counseling services

Code	Code descriptions	Groundings	Quotations
Offices	Providing adequate working environment with adequate equipment and personnel	14	“creation of a full counseling unit with adequate facilities and sufficient number of counselors” “Provision of a well-equipped facilities” “A complete counseling center be created with counseling laboratory” ‘Créer un bureau d’orientation’ “Conducive offices should be provided” “Guidance and counseling facilities should be provided”
Expert personnel	Individuals who have the skills in the field of counseling	10	“Real experts in counseling to follow up and implement counseling programs should be posted to the institution” “More guidance counselors should be posted to the institutions

			<p>“ More counselors should be recruited”</p> <p>“Send more counselors to reduce counselors/students ratio to increase effectiveness”</p>
Psychological test	Test that can help in diagnosis students’ needs	3	<p>“Psychological test be purchased”</p> <p>“ They should be materials for psychological test”</p>
Finance	To purchase the necessary facilities	9	<p>“Financial support to run services”.</p> <p>‘mettre a notre disposition les moyens financiers pour mener a bien ce métier’</p>
Sensitization	To help students be aware of the existence of guidance and counseling services	4	<p>“They should be proper sensitization”</p> <p>“ Students need to know the importance of guidance and counseling services”</p>
Collaboration	Lectures should work hand in glove with the guidance counselors	2	<p>“They should be effective collaboration from lecturers”</p> <p>“Administrators and lecturers should collaborate with counselors”</p>
Allowances	Allowance for research to be specifically given to guidance counselors the same as it is done with lecturers	1	<p>“Allowance be given to guidance counselors in the same manner as research allowance is given to lecturers”.</p>

Administrators’ suggestions to improve organization and implementation of guidance and counseling services

Table 30: thematic analysis depicting the proposed suggestions on how to improve on the organization and implementation of guidance and counseling services as perceived by administrators

Code	Code description	Groundings	Quotations
Qualified counselors	Some administrators stated that there is a need for well trained and qualified counselors	3	‘There is a need for well trained counselors with specified job descriptions’ ‘real experts in counseling to follow up and implement existing programs are needed’.
Sensitization	Some administrators believe that there is need to sensitize students and other stakeholders	4	‘Sensitization is necessary for the university community to know what services guidance counselors can provide’ ‘guidance counselors have withdrawn and do not want to be assertive .it is necessary that they should first of all sell the needs of these services to students through workshops and seminars’. ‘Counselors should do everything to reach out to students even in their classes and not wait for them only in their offices’. ‘Guidance counselors should meet students in their classrooms’
Meetings	There is need for regular meetings between counselors, students and other stakeholders		‘Regular meetings with students in and out of class’. ‘organiser en début d’année une rencontre entre étudiants enseignants et conseilles’. ‘All stakeholders should come together at the beginning of the year to plan how to carry out guidance and counseling services’.
More Guidance Counselors	Administrators generally believe that counselor-student ratio is very high hence the need for more counselors	12	‘The institution needs more counselors who are well trained’. ‘More guidance counselors should be employed because the existing ratio of counselors to students is very high. It is unbelievable that FSMS has only one counselor’. ‘Increase the number of counselors’.

			'The number of counselors in each faculty should be increased'. 'There should be at least one counselor in every faculty'.
Equipped offices and facilities	Administrators believe that there should be equipped offices and facilities for guidance counselors.	4	'Counselors' offices should be equipped and facilities provided for them to do their work effectively'.
Guidance and counseling centers	Counseling centers should be created in all the state universities	6	'A Counseling center should be created in each university'. 'Cr��er une direction de l'orientation.'

Employment of more guidance counselors (*'The institution needs more counselors who are well trained'*). *'More guidance counselors should be employed because the existing ratio of counselors to students is very high. It is unbelievable that FSMS has only one counselor'*) was the most highlighted suggestions put forward by administrators to improve on the organization and implementation of guidance and counseling services. Others suggested were trained and qualified counselors (*'There is a need for well trained counselors with specified job descriptions'*) *'real experts in counseling to follow up and implement existing programs are needed'*), provision of guidance and counseling centers (*'A Counseling center should be created in each university'*). *'Cr  er une direction de l'orientation.'*), sensitization, provision of equipped offices with facilities, (*'Counselors offices should be equipped and facilities provided for them to do their work effectively'*.) and regular meetings. (*All stakeholders should come together at the beginning of the year to plan how to carry out guidance and counseling services'*), table 30.

Administrators' suggestions to improve organization and implementation of guidance and counseling services

Provision of sufficient facilities and office materials (*'Counselors should have offices of their own so that they can attend to students better'*) *'Counselors should be provided with adequately furnished, conducive and spacious offices where students can sit relaxed and comfortable during counseling sessions'*), employment of more trained counselors (*'Get more counselors to meet the needs of students'*) *'The institution needs more guidance counselors who are well trained'*), creation of well-equipped counseling centers (*'An equipped counseling centre should be put in place in each state university'*) *'Set a counseling centre with counseling laboratories in each university'*) and adequate sensitization (*'Sensitize students and lecturers on the existence and importance of guidance and counseling in the university system'*) were the most highlighted aspects that administrators pinpointed as a way forward that need to be taken into consideration so as to improve on guidance and counseling services.

Cooperative involvement from stakeholders (*'Lecturers and administrators should co-operate with counselors by referring students to them'*), institutionalization of peer counseling (*'Peer counselors should be introduced because many students do not take advantage of guidance and counseling services. They prefer meeting their returning peers'*) *'I think that since counselors in state universities are few, selected students should be trained to help in counseling their peers. This like elsewhere will contribute to the effectiveness of guidance and counseling'*), establishing a career profile for counselors (*'Counselors do not have a career profile. The only way to recognize their work is to appoint them in administrative duties which affects counseling negatively'*) and sufficient budgetary allocation (*'Budgetary allocations should be adequate and made available for the effective running of guidance and counseling services'*) were other factors that administrators emphasized on the need to be addressed for better improvement of guidance and counseling services (table 31).

Table 31: Thematic analysis depicting what should be done to improve on the guidance and counselling services as perceived by the administrators

Code	Code description	Groundings	Quotations
Counseling centers	There is a desperate need for equipped counseling centers	10	'An equipped counseling center should be put in place in each state university' 'Set a counseling center with counseling laboratories in each university'; 'Cr��er une direction de l'orientation' 'Cr��er unecentred.

			orientation conseil au sein de l'université'; 'A counseling center should be created in each university. It should be headed by a counseling expert having a terminal degree in counseling to coordinate the activities of all counselors in their respective institutions'
More trained counselors	More counselors are needed to reduce the very high counselor-students ratio and make themselves more available to students'	12	'Get more counselors to meet the needs of students' 'The institution needs more guidance counselors who are well trained' 'Increase the number of counselors and make them accessible to students' 'Provide enough counselors to sensitize students and lecturers on the existence and importance of their services' 'They do not even exist. 'The first thing is to get well trained counselors posted to the institution'
Career ladder for counselors	Establishing a career profile for counselors within which they can grow will solve the problem of being assigned to non-counseling duties.	4	'Counselors do not have a career profile. The only way to recognize their work is to appoint them in administrative duties which affects counseling negatively' 'Many counselors rather prefer to become lecturers or look for appointments outside the university. To avoid this with its negative effects a career profile should be established for them' 'Instaurer un plan de carrier pour le conseiller d'orientation'
Co-operation & Involvement	All stakeholders need to co-operate and be involved in the publication, mobilization, organization & implementation of guidance & counseling services	6	'Lecturers and administrators should co-operate with counselors by referring students to them' 'Le contact n'existe pas entre les deux' 'All stakeholders should work together to plan ,and assess the needs of students so that they can know what to organize and implement' 'Counselors should have the skills to mobilize and get all stake holders involved in the organization and implementation of guidance and counseling services in their institutions'
Sensitization & Awareness	There is high need to raise awareness and to increase sensitization of the importance of guidance and counseling services within the university communities'	10	'Sensitize students and lecturers on the existence and importance of guidance and counseling in the university system' 'Raise awareness through and using any available means' 'I propose that sensitization should be made on their importance to students. A day should be observe for this like what operate in Secondary High Schools' 'Time should be allocated on the time table for counselors to regularly visit the classrooms and talk to students about their services' 'Sensibiliser la communauté universitaire sur le rôle et l'importance des conseillers d'orientation dans l'université'
Peer counseling	The use of peer counselors enhances effectiveness in the	4	'Peer counseling will obviously ease the work of counselors and help them attend to

	provision of guidance and counseling services		many students' 'Peer counselors should be introduced because many students do not take advantage of guidance and counseling services. They prefer meeting their returning peers' 'I think that since counselors in state universities are few, selected students should be trained to help in counseling their peers. This like elsewhere will contribute to the effectiveness of guidance and counseling'
Blue print	There is need for a blue print from the ministry of Higher Education providing a common ground on how the stakeholders should work together as a team though spelling out their roles	3	'To be frank I do not know the need for this because I have neither seen nor heard a situation rescued by them. What I know is that they sit in offices as administrators and wait for students to pass and consult them' On fait des orientations departementales sans rapport avec les conseillers'
Budgetary allocation	There is need for a budgetary allocation for guidance counselors to do effective work	4	'Budgetary allocations should be adequate and made available for the effective running of guidance and counseling services' 'To be able to adequately handle students' problems the counseling unit needs a running budget' 'Mettre a la disposition les conseillers d'orientation des moyens financiers'
Facilities and office materials	These are important assets for counselors to deliver at their best	13	'Counselors should have offices of their own so that they can attend to students better' 'Counselors should be provided with adequately furnished ,conducive and spacious offices where students can sit relaxed and comfortable during counseling sessions' 'Counselors should have nice offices, well equipped with audio; video recorders ,telephones .computers, lockable storage facilities for clients' records & materials' 'Counselors should be given service vehicles to facilitate their movements to reach out for information on job & studies opportunities'

Students' perceived suggestions to improve on guidance and counseling services

Students highlighted number of remedies to improve on guidance and counseling services among which the first five were the improvement on the education and awareness of the students (*Educate students on the importance of a guidance counselor* 'Sensibiliser les étudiants de l'institut par rapport à leur existence'), the performance of guidance counselors (*Planning, orientation and follow up services should be made available* 'Les conseiller doivent résoudre les problèmes des étudiants'), the need for guidance counselors to be close and listen to students (*Il doivent écouter les plaintes des étudiants* 'They need to be friendly with students in order to create a conducive atmosphere for discussion'), the provision of facilities and increase in the number of guidance counselors (*Counselors needs to undergo more training on their field to make them more effective* 'I think in my institution it should be done that the guidance counselor should go for more training'; 'Each department should entitle to one guidance counselor such that he should have enough time for students'; *Let all the guidance and counseling facilities put in the institution. This will go a long way to improve on guidance and counseling services in the institution*'), table 32.

Table 32: Thematic analysis depicting students' perceived suggestions to improve on guidance and counseling services

Code	Code description	Grounding	Quotation
Education / awareness	Educating students on the importance of guidance and counseling service and increasing awareness	163	<p>‘Educate students on the importance of a guidance counselor’</p> <p>‘Sensibiliser les étudiants de l’institut par rapport à leur existence’</p> <p>‘Guidance counselors should make themselves known to students’</p> <p>‘Information about guidance and counseling service should be put out on notice board and through students’ union communication channel’</p>
More efficient	Guidance counselors are expected to do their work effectively, to provide solutions to students’ problems	136	<p>‘Planning, orientation and follow up services should be made available’</p> <p>‘Les conseiller doivent résoudre les problèmes des étudiants’.</p>
Listening / Friendly	Guidance counselors are expected to listen to students grievances	112	<p>‘Il doivent écouter les plaintes des étudiants’ ‘They need to be friendly with students in order to create a conducive atmosphere for discussion’</p>
Training	More training for counselors to improve their efficiency	95	<p>‘Counselors needs to undergo more training on their field to make them more effective’</p> <p>‘I think in my institution it should be done that the guidance counselors should go for more training’</p>
Frequent meetings	Guidance counselors are expected to meet frequently with the students, should be more close to the students	66	<p>‘Les conseiller devraient avoir les rapports plus fréquent avec les étudiants’</p> <p>‘Les rapprochements des conseillers avec les étudiants’</p>
Increase number	Increasing the number of guidance counselors	63	<p>‘Increase the number of counselors on campus’</p> <p>‘Each department should entitle to one guidance counselor such that he should have enough time for students’</p>
Facilities and materials	Providing guidance counselors with the necessary materials and infrastructure	50	<p>‘Provide them with all their working facilities needed with an increase in salary’</p> <p>‘Let all the guidance and counseling facilities put in the institution. This will go a long way to improve on guidance and counseling services in the institution’</p>
Collaboration with administration	Adequate collaboration between the administration and guidance counselors	4	<p>‘The school administration need to work together with the counselors to meet the need of students’</p> <p>‘The administration need to give listening ear to counselors because they know the students’ problem and would have the best solutions to their problems’</p>
Location/center	Rethinking the location of the office of guidance counselors or providing a guidance counselors center	3	<p>‘Adjust the location of their offices’</p> <p>‘The administration should create a counseling unit and sensitize students about it’</p>

Allowance	Allocation of allowance to ease and improving work	2	‘I think counselors should be given allowances to follow up students like calling’ ‘There should be a budget that is allocated for counselors to run their services’
Online communication	Exploiting the possibilities offered by ICT to facilitate on-line communication between counselors and students	1	‘Etablir un système de communication moderne et globale (exemple une application de messagerie) pour pouvoir communiqué au jour le jour avec les étudiants’
Rules information	Make rules and other information available to students on print version	1	‘I think print materials should be made available to the students so that in case the counselors are busy, a students can borrow a print material that is related to his problem and read as to get the remedy to the problem’
Patience	Guidance counselors are expected to be patient with students	1	‘Guidance counselors should be patient with students’
Part of time table	Integrating guidance and counseling into the time table for more efficiency	1	‘By inserting guidance and counseling into our time tables and maybe putting it as a course to ensure seriousness of students’
Evaluation	Evaluating guidance counselors’ services for efficiency	1	‘Each department should be provided such service with regular evaluation using students to check the effectiveness of the counselors’
No suggestion	Not aware of guidance and counselors’ service	1	‘Aucune idée parce que je ne suis pas conscient de son existence’

Discussion of findings

The strategies considered in this empirical study were planning of GCSs, peer counseling, need assessment of students and evaluation of GCSs.

Planning of GCSs

The main items under this dimension/strategy were designed to find out how respondents perceived the importance of planning in effective GCSs, the extent of involvement of stakeholders and the concerns/issues considered in planning GCSs.

Findings emerging from this study revealed that both students and guidance counselors perceived planning as important for effective GCSs. Of the 26 guidance counselors used in this study only 6 (23.1%) indicated that planning was done often. Only 26 (4.5%) out of 577 students who indicated that they were aware of guidance and counseling services (GCSs) planning, 20 (76.9%) acknowledged that planning was done at the beginning of the year. The finding is supported by the research literature which states that planning of guidance and counseling services is done at the beginning of the year (Schmidt, 1993). However, the fact that only 26 out of 577 students sampled for the study were aware of GCSs planning and only 6 out of 26 guidance counselors, indicated that planning was often done, suggests that the planning of guidance and counseling services was not taken seriously in Cameroon State Universities. This situation presented by the findings contradicts the research literature which upholds that effective guidance and counseling services are always planned for by guidance counselors (Reynolds & Cheek, 2002).

Other findings emerging from the study revealed that guidance counselors perceived that where planning was done, those involved were mainly the counselors and administrators. This means that students and lecturers had a lesser degree of involvement. 14 (53.8%) of the 26 students who indicated that they were aware of guidance and counseling services planning, positively viewed that all the stakeholders were often involved in planning. The limited involvement of students and lecturers as perceived by guidance counselors contradicts the research literature which states that in effective guidance and counseling services, planning includes students and teachers. As direct beneficiaries of the services, students can make very important contributions to its planning.

They know what they need and what they do not need at any given time. Keeping them out of planning is an indication of ineffectiveness. Schmidt (1993) points out that plans for effective GCSs provide goals and objectives of the services. The implication is that without planning, GCSs cannot clearly address the needs of students. Chereshe (2006) cautions that unless one plans carefully, one will not have an idea of what exactly is to be done, when it should be done and by whom and how. These findings suggest the need for a clear program of planning involving all stakeholders.

Students' Needs Assessment

Generally both students and counselors perceived that assessing the needs of students is an integral part of effective GCSs. Of the 577 students involved in this study, only 14 (2.3%) acknowledged that GCs have ever come to them to assess their needs as against a very low proportion of GCs (23.1% (6)) who acknowledged that students' needs are often assessed. Going by the analysis of this finding, it can be suggested that students' needs assessment in Cameroon State Universities is done seldom.

For involvement, GCs perceived that school administrators were the most involved in students' needs assessment followed by them (guidance counselors) and then students. The least involved were lecturers.

Also, findings revealed that generally, students did not know whether or not other stakeholders were involved in needs assessment of students. Students also indicated that they were never involved in needs assessment of students. It is surprising to note that guidance counselors who are providers of GCSs do not see students' involvement necessary in assessing their needs. Assessing the needs of students without involving them is just another indication that students' needs assessment is not taken seriously in Cameroon State Universities. This finding goes contrary to the research literature which advocates for the involvement of students in their needs assessment (Euvrard, 1996; Lusky & Hayes, 2001; Borders and Drury, 1992; and Leviton, 1977).

Another finding emerging from needs assessment revealed that GCs perceived behavioral rating scale and end of year students' results as the most often used techniques in assessing students' needs. The least was questionnaire. The findings also revealed that the techniques most often used by GCs are fewer than those in developed countries (Lusky & Hayes, 2001; Reynolds & Cheek). Using only a few techniques could have affected the quality of the services negatively. GCs in Cameroon State Universities might have used fewer assessment techniques because they might be lacking the skills and competences to use all, for example psychological/standardized tests. Students did not generally know about the techniques involved in needs assessment of students.

In all, 14 (2.4%) out of 577 students who indicated their involvement in needs assessment and 6 (23.1%) GCs out of 26 involved in the study rated that needs assessment as effective while 97.6% of students and 76.9% of GCs rated it as ineffective. This finding is backed up by what some administrators said in an open-ended question. The question asked how needs assessment is carried out in their institutions. Some administrators categorically said; "The assessment of students needs is not done in this institution". Many also stated that they had no idea on how this is carried out.

Evaluation of GCSs

The main items here were designed to find out whether respondents had ever been involved in the evaluation of GCSs, extent to which they perceive involvement of stakeholders, techniques used, extent to which GCSs are provided and level of satisfaction for the services provided.

The finding revealed that only 4 (15.4%) out of 26 GCs indicated that evaluation of GCSs is done in their institutions. Similarly only 4 (7.5%) out of the 53 students who claimed they have ever benefited from GCSs, indicated they have ever been involved in the evaluation of GCSs.

The finding also revealed that those involved in evaluation are administrators and counselors alone. Lecturers and students were not often involved in the evaluation exercise. Another finding revealed by this study is the negative view that GCs portray in the frequency of evaluation of GCSs. A significant proportion of counselors perceived the frequency of the evaluation as seldom (57.7%) or never (26.9%). Concerning the issues of interests often considered when evaluating GCSs, the finding shows that only those whom the evaluation was intended to serve were really considered during the evaluation exercise. The rest were very negatively rated by the GCs. They might have considered this issue most because students are the targeted beneficiaries and evaluation is aimed at improving service delivery for them.

The findings also revealed that the services that are commonly provided are orientation, counseling and information and level of satisfaction for the services they provide is as follows; orientation (50%), counseling (30.8%), information (23.1%) and selection (7.7%).

Statistically, findings emerging from this study, revealed that of the 577 students sampled for the study, only 53 (9) indicated that they have benefited from GCSs. It is from this very low percentage that the number of students involved in GCSs planning, students' needs assessment and evaluation of GCSs is taken. Seeing that this number is too small, it is a clear indication that the three strategies considered in this study are not really being used by GCs in Cameroon state Universities. these findings therefore contradict the research literature which states that: Effective GCSs are always planned for by GCs and that the planning is done at the beginning of the year (Reynolds & Cheek, 2002; Laird & Nissila, 2002; Schmidt, 1993). Needs assessment of students is an integral part of any effective GCSs and that effective GCs conduct needs assessment to determine students' strengths and weaknesses (Euvrard, 1996; Leviton, 1977; Borders & Drury, 1992). Evaluation of guidance and counseling services (GCSs) is a standard activity of an effective guidance counselor and is internationally recognized as a component of effective GCSs (Cobia, 2007; Chireshe, 2006).

Peer counseling

The main question items under peer counseling were designed to find out from respondents whether peer counselors are involved in the provision of GCSs in Cameroon state Universities. It also sought to find out how involved the peer counselors are and what impact their involvement has in the effectiveness of GCSs in Cameroon State Universities.

Findings emerging from this study revealed that students were not generally aware of the existence of peer counseling in their institutions. Of the 577 students involved in this study, 533 (92.4%) indicated they were not aware of peer counseling as against 44 (7.6%) who indicated that they were aware. The greater majority of guidance counselors 19 (73.1) were aware of peer counseling. It was obvious because as professional guidance counselors, they should be aware of peer counseling. The existence of peer counseling in their institutions is very negligible for it to have any impact on the effectiveness of GCSs.

Given that only 1 (3.9%) guidance counselor and 41 (7.1%) students acknowledged the existence of peer counseling in their institution, there was really no need appraising the other indicators.

The findings emerging from here are very clear, that peer counselors are not involved in the provision of GCSs in Cameroon state Universities.

Peer counseling in schools contribute to and reinforces the effectiveness of GCSs. Its absence in Cameroon state Universities have a negative effect on the effectiveness of GCSs. There is therefore a relationship between the effectiveness of GCSs and peer counseling.

The implication here is the need for stakeholders to urgently implement peer counseling to help guidance counselors reach a wider audience thereby contributing to effective GCSs. This is very important especially in a situation like ours where counselor-student ratio is very high.

Conclusion

The main purpose for which guidance and counseling was instituted in state universities was to help students to solve their numerous problems (social personal, vocational, educational and psychological). If it was instituted to help students, then students must take advantage of that.

Based on the findings of the study it can be concluded that students have not been sufficiently sensitized on the importance of GCSs. This is why out of 577 students sampled for the study, only 53 of them benefited from GCSs. Furthermore, as many as 290 (50.3%) out of 577 students acknowledged that they were not aware of the existence of GCSs in their institutions.

It can also be concluded that since students are not actually taking advantage of these services, GCSs in Cameroon state universities are largely ineffective. Guidance and counseling services are most effective when students voluntarily seek them (Gibson, 2008).

It can be further concluded based on the findings of this study that, the absence of counseling centers, conducive offices and other career motivations for GCs, all work against GCs competencies. This eventually has negative effects on the effectiveness of GCSs in Cameroon state universities.

From the findings, it can also be concluded that there is high need for more qualified GCs to be posted to state universities. As the universities are expanding, the counselor – student ratio is also leaping.

Findings show that guidance counselor either seldom or very seldom go to students.

These findings have revealed challenges that can be converted into opportunities. This can be done implementing the recommendations given here.

Guidance counselors should make themselves known to students instead of waiting only for students to come to them.

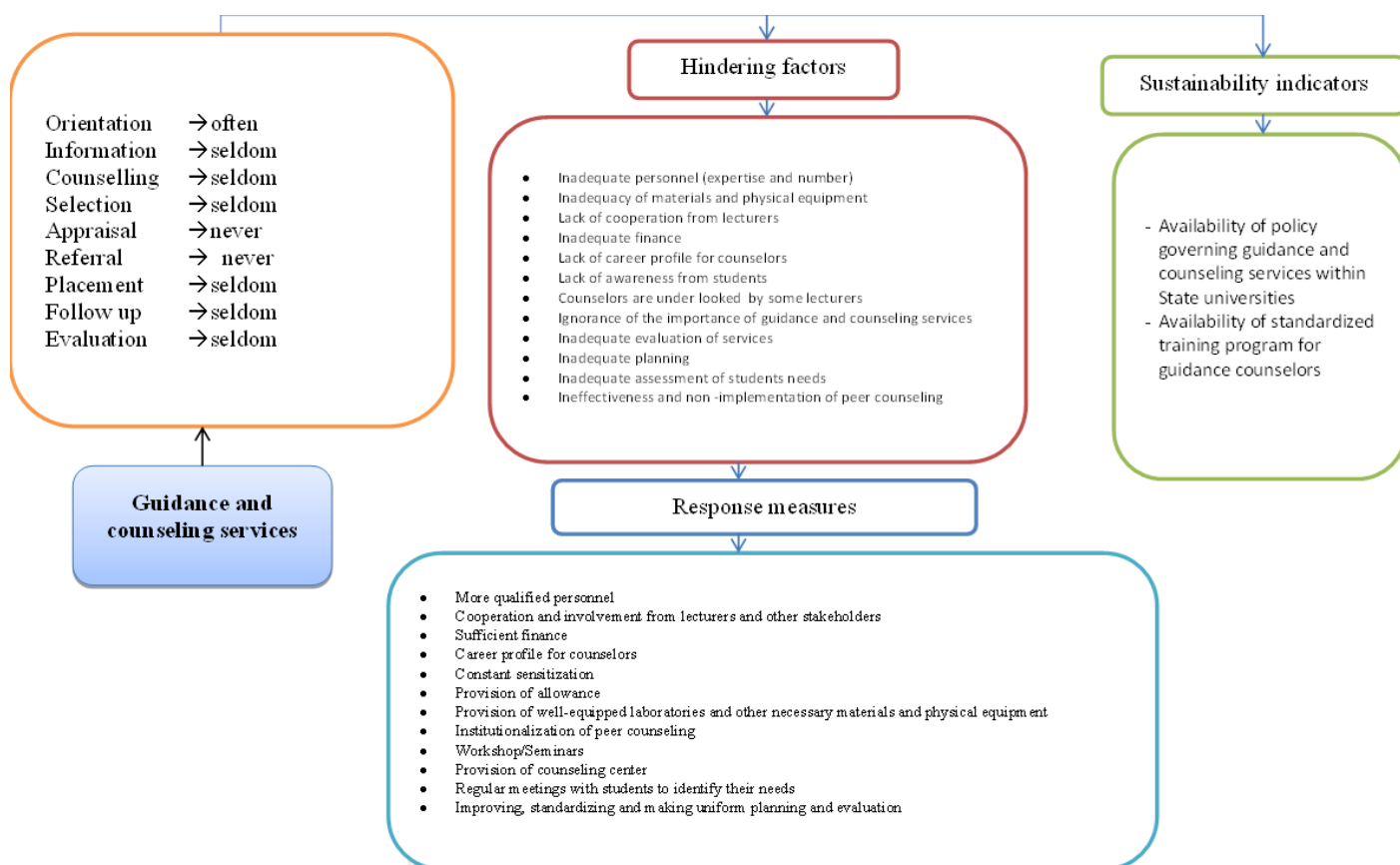


Figure 17: Conceptual diagram depicting guidance and counseling dynamism in Cameroon State Universities

Recommendations

The purpose of introducing GCSs in the university system was to increase students' academic achievement by helping students develop positive self – concept, make wise selection of courses and careers, improve their behavioral patterns, proper adaptation to university life, acquire job searching techniques, effective study habits, effective goals setting and time management etc. Above all, the services should assist students to understand themselves, their situation, their environment, discover their potentials and opportunities in life and learn how best to effectively utilize their assets as well as minimize their weaknesses to live a maximum productive life (Nwachuku, 2007).

The findings of this study revealed that out of the 577 students sampled for the study, slightly below half of this number acknowledged that they were aware of the existence of GCSs in their institutions and only 53 students out of the sampled number acknowledged they have ever benefited from GCSs in their institutions. It is clear that students are not making use of these services because they are not aware of their importance in their education. The effectiveness

of GCSs is affected by how publicized they are and the role guidance counselors play in sensitizing students and other stakeholders about their services. Therefore the low level of usage of these services by students may not be unconnected with the challenges or hindering factors which guidance counselors said they are faced with in discharging their duties. These challenges were also confirmed by the administrators. All these findings emerged from the study. Based on these, the following recommendations are made:

- Massive and consistent sensitization by all stakeholders through every available means to boost awareness of the importance of GCSs in the education of students.
- An equipped modern counseling centre could be constructed in each State university headed by an expert who could be a holder of a terminal degree in counseling. Such a person could have the rank of a director in the central administration and co-ordinate and oversee the activities of all the guidance counselors in the university.
- The presently high student-counselor ratio in all the State universities might be cut down by

training and deploying more counselors. There could be at least a counselor in every department.

- GCs in State universities could be accorded a career profile. They could also be given allowances equivalent to that of the rank of university lecturers.
- Guidance and counseling in each State university could have its own budgetary allocation to run its activities and for which it is accountable.
- GCs might be given opportunities to undergo more training in guidance and counseling of students especially at tertiary level. This will help them improve on their competences and skills.
- GCs could have regular meetings with students to identify their needs.
- GCs could have constant planning and evaluation of GCs to improve on service delivery.
- Peer counseling could be implemented in the State universities to reduce work load on guidance counselors and also to help them reach a wider audience.

In response to an open-ended question which sought to find out from administrators how GCSs planning in Cameroon State Universities could be improved upon, the following suggestions were made:

- The ministry of higher education should provide a roadmap in which all stakeholders should come together at the beginning of the school year to plan for GCSs in their institutions.
- A unit for GCSs planning involving all the stakeholders should be set up in each state university.

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