

# Resources and Physical Facilities for 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 resources and physical facilities for 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. The findings revealed that guidance counselors and students were generally not satisfied with resources and physical facilities. Specifically, both guidance counselors (6.7%) and students (10.8%) were in fact to a very weak extent satisfied with human resources. This trend was almost the same with financial resources with proportions of 33.3% for guidance counselors and 11.1% for the students, and the situation was neither better with materials nor physical facilities with proportion of 18.2% for guidance counselors and 3.1% for the students respectively. From administrators' perspective, though they acknowledged the limitation of personnel (33.3%), they mostly did not have any idea as far as human resources allocated to guidance and counseling is concerned (61.9%). This was the same with financial resources or budget allocated for guidance and counseling, as 28.6% indicated that there is no budgetary line for guidance and counseling services while 52.4% was simply ignorant of the financial situation of the guidance and counseling services. As for materials and physical resources, administrators mostly indicated that there were no counseling centers in their institution (61.9%). They also pointed out the lack of equipped offices, counseling rooms and halls (19.0%). It was recommended that adequate human resources, finances, physical facilities and equipment should be made available in order to foster the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services in State Universities in Cameroon.

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**KEYWORDS:** Guidance counselor, resources, physical facilities, 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). According to this study, resources are inputs put in place to enable guidance counselors to provide effective guidance and counseling services to students. These include human resources like qualified counselors and other support staff, physical resources or physical facilities like equipped counseling centers with rooms and other conference rooms for individual and group counseling sessions and financial resources like a budget to run the center and procure and install material resources like communication gadgets, computers for data storage and other office materials and facilities. The effective and efficient implementation of the school guidance and counseling program will remain a mirage without a realistic consideration of the infrastructural necessities for the counselors to play their roles effectively (Adana, 2004). Guidance Counselors' effectiveness is inextricably linked to their competences which according to this study, refer to the abilities of guidance counselors to organize, implement and manage guidance programs to effectively perform their roles of providing the expected services. These services are counseling, orientation, information, appraisal, referral, selection, placement, follow-up and evaluation and which output depends on the adequacy of resources and physical materials that backed strategies used by guidance counselors which according to Chireshe



(2006), are activities and procedures that guidance counselors undertake to ensure that guidance and counseling services are effectively implemented and managed. 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 resources and physical facilities, 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 resources and physical facilities for 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 the availability of resources and physical facilities in Cameroon State Universities.

The focus of the study was limited to the following concepts: Guidance and Counseling, resources and physical facilities 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>27748</b>	<b>25758</b>	<b>53506</b>

**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
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>37</b>

**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
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>577</b>

**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 (table 4).

### 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 0.685 to 0.876 (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
Human resources	0.762	30	4
Financial resources	0.685	30	3
Material and physical resources	0.876	30	11

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	Nitems
Level of satisfaction with guidance and counseling services	0.885	0.13	563	9
Human resources	0.732	0.56	438	4
Financial resources	0.896	0.00	507	3
Material and physical facilities	0.958	0.01	561	11
Peer counseling	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 11 different faculties (table 7).

**Table 7: Description of institution for administrators**

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
	Faculty of 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** **N=21**

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

### 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 N=26**

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

### 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 N=577**

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	

**Research Question: What is the relationship between resources and physical facilities, and the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services in Cameroon State Universities?**

### Resources and physical facilities

#### Human Resources

#### Guidance counselors' perspective

The proportion of guidance counselors that was actually satisfied with human resources was very low with a weight of 6.7%. In detail, they were mostly satisfied with the available time for guidance counselors with a proportion of 15.4% (4). This was followed by number of guidance counselors, counselor-student ratio, and support staff of guidance and counseling center, all with the same proportion of 3.8% (1), table 11.

**Table 11: Guidance counselor's satisfaction with the human resources**

Human resources	Satisfied	Marginally satisfied	Not satisfied	N
Number of guidance counselors	3.8%(1)	61.5%(16)	34.6%(9)	26
Counselor-student ratio	3.8%(1)	53.8%(14)	42.3%(11)	26
Available time for guidance counselors	15.4%(4)	84.6%(22)	0.0%(0)	26
Support staff of guidance and counseling center	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
MRA	6.7%(7)	50.0%(52)	43.3%(45)	(104)

#### Students' perspective

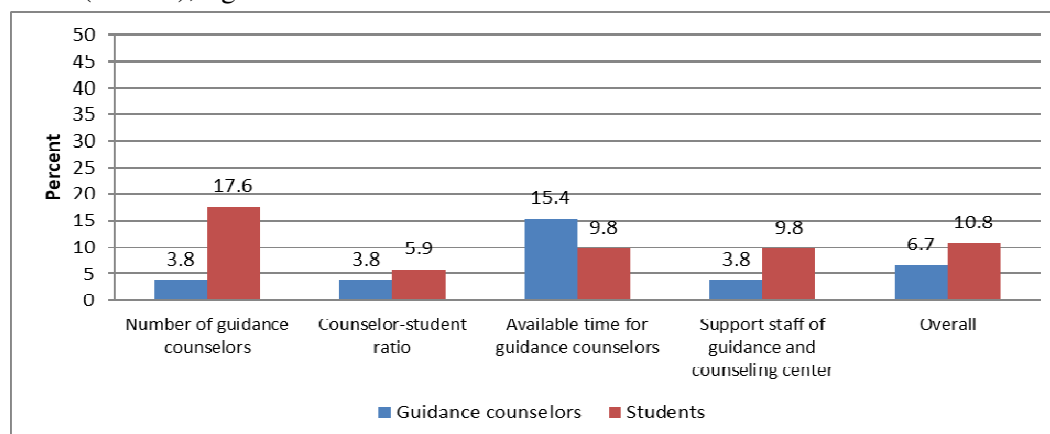
Out of the 53 who said they have ever benefited from guidance and counseling services of their institution, 51 participated in characterizing the services. In overall, only 10.8% (22) of the students were satisfied with the human resources involved in guidance and counseling services. They were mostly satisfied with the number of guidance counselors 17.6% (9) and least with counselor-student ratio 5.9% (3), table 12.

**Table 12: Perceived students' satisfaction with human resources allocated to guidance and counseling services.**

Human Resources	Satisfied	Marginally satisfied	Not satisfied	N
Number of guidance counselors	17.6%(9)	7.8%(4)	74.5%(38)	51
Counselor-student ratio	5.9%(3)	7.8%(4)	86.3%(44)	51
Available time for guidance counselors	9.8%(5)	15.7%(8)	74.5%(38)	51
Support staff of guidance and counseling center	9.8%(5)	9.8%(5)	80.4%(41)	51
MRS	10.8%(22)	103%(21)	78.9%(161)	204

#### Contrasting students and guidance counselors' perspective

Both the students and the guidance counselors were not really satisfied with guidance and counseling services. As for the students, the proportion of those that were satisfied ranged from 9.8% to 17.6% for all the indicators and this trend was more lower for the guidance counselors, ranging from 3.8 to 15.4% and these differences were significant ( $P < 0.05$ ), figure 1



$\chi^2$ -test:  $\chi^2=9.35$ ;  $df=3$ ;  $P=0.025$

**Figure 1: Comparing students and guidance counselors' perceptions on human resources**



## Financial Resources

### Guidance counselors' perspective

Guidance counselors were generally not satisfied with financial resources given the overall low weight of 33.3%. Guidance counselors generally agreed that financial allocation from the university was essentially geared towards the procurement of equipment with proportion of 92.3% (24) while their services and means to go out to the communities and companies to get information or job opportunities and to link the school to the business world were really ignored as only 3.8% (1) of them expressed satisfaction in relation to these aspects of their functions (table 13).

**Table 13: Guidance counselors' perception on the financial resources**

Statements	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	N
There is a budgetary allocation for guidance counselors to run their services	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
There is a financial allocation from the university to procure office equipment	92.3%(24)	0.0%(0)	7.7%(2)	26
There are means for guidance counselors to go out to the community and companies to get information on job opportunities and to link the school to the business world.	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
MRA	33.3%(26)	(0)	66.7%(52)	78

### Students' perspective

Only 11.1% (17) students were satisfied with financial resources allocated to guidance and counseling services. Only 11.7% (6) of them agreed that there is a budgetary allocation for guidance counselors to run their services and the same proportion was of the opinion that there is a financial allocation from the university to procure office equipment. A lower proportion of 9.8% (5) acknowledged the availability of means for guidance counselors to go out to the community and companies to get information on job opportunities and to link the school to the business world (table 14).

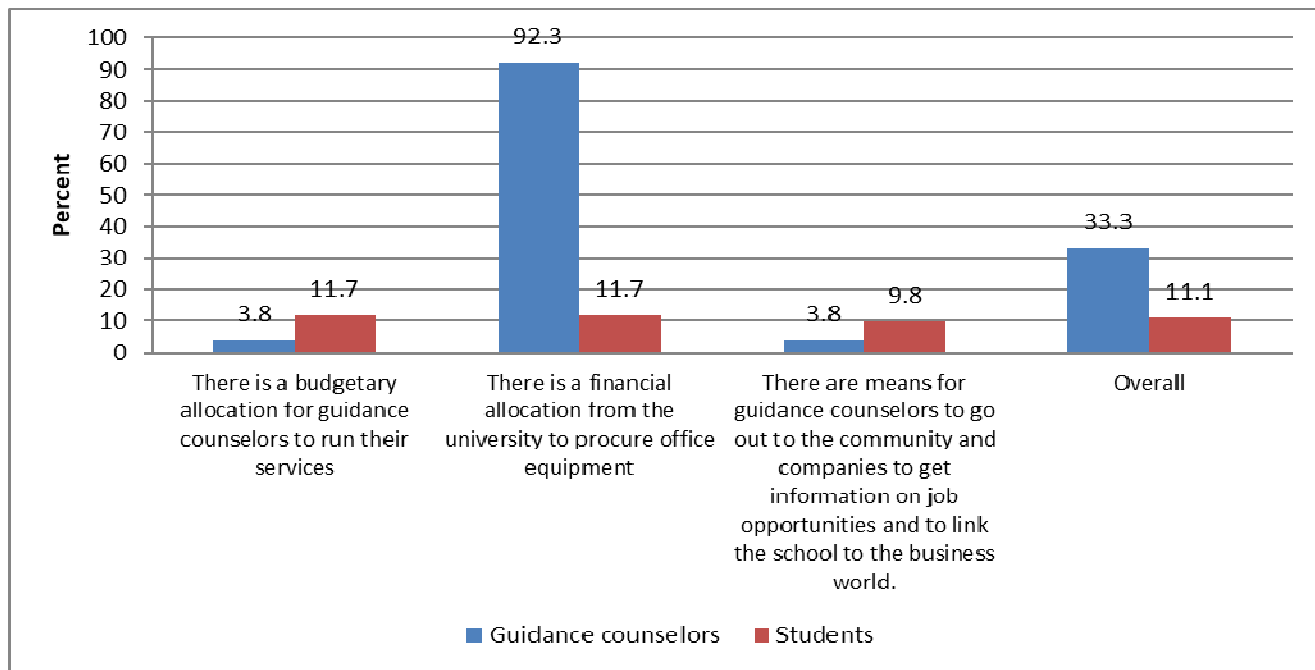
**Table 14: Students' perception of financial resources needed by guidance counselors**

Financial Resources	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	N
There is a budgetary allocation for guidance counselors to run their services	11.7%(6)	7.8%(4)	80.4%(41)	51
There is a financial allocation from the university to procure office equipment	11.7%(6)	5.9%(3)	82.3%(42)	51
There are means for guidance counselors to go out to the community and companies to get information on job opportunities and to link the school to the business world.	9.8%(5)	9.8%(5)	80.4%(41)	51
MRS	11.1%(17)	7.8%(12)	81.0%(124)	153

### Contrasting students and guidance counselors' perspective

The discrepancy was significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) high only with the indicator "there is a financial allocation from the university to procure office equipment" whereby 92.3%(24) of the guidance counselors as against 11.7%(6) of the students expressed satisfaction and this could account to the fact students might attribute the inefficiency of guidance and counseling services as they so perceived to the inadequate provision of resources as well (figure 2).





$\chi^2$ -test:  $\chi^2=50.63$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $P=0.000$

**Figure 2: Comparing students and guidance counselors' perceptions on financial resources**

### Material and physical facilities

#### Guidance counselors' perspective

Guidance counselors generally did not expressed satisfaction with respect to material and physical facilities with proportion of satisfied ranging from 0% to 3.8% for all the indicators. In fact, none of them acknowledged the existence of equipped guidance and counseling center(s) as well as private offices and conference rooms for individual counseling and group sessions (table 15).

**Table 15: Guidance counselors' satisfaction with the material and physical facilities**

Material and physical facilities	Satisfied	Marginally satisfied	Not satisfied	N
Equipped guidance and counseling center(s)	0.0%(0)	0.0%(0)	100.0%(26)	26
Private offices and conference rooms for individual counseling and group sessions	0.0%(0)	3.8%(1)	96.2%(25)	26
Adequately furnished, conducive and spacious offices for guidance counselors	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
Modern communication gadgets like telephones, computers, internet and recorders etc.	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
Software data storage facilities	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
The location and accessibility of guidance counselor's offices of your institution	3.8%(1)	3.8%(1)	92.3%(24)	26
Reading room with calendar, program requirements, newsletters and brochures on available guidance and counseling services, jobs and studies opportunities	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
Audio/video recording equipment and direct observation facilities	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
Lockable storage facilities for the clients' records and materials	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
Reception area that provides a comfortable and private waiting area for clients	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
Testing room for individual and group testing procedures	3.8%(1)	0.0%(0)	96.2%(25)	26
MRA	3.1%(9)	0.7%(2)	96.2%(275)	286



**Students' perspective**

Students generally did not express satisfaction with respect to material and physical facilities for guidance and counseling services within their institutions with proportion of satisfied ranging from 1.2% to 2.4% for all the indicators (table 16).

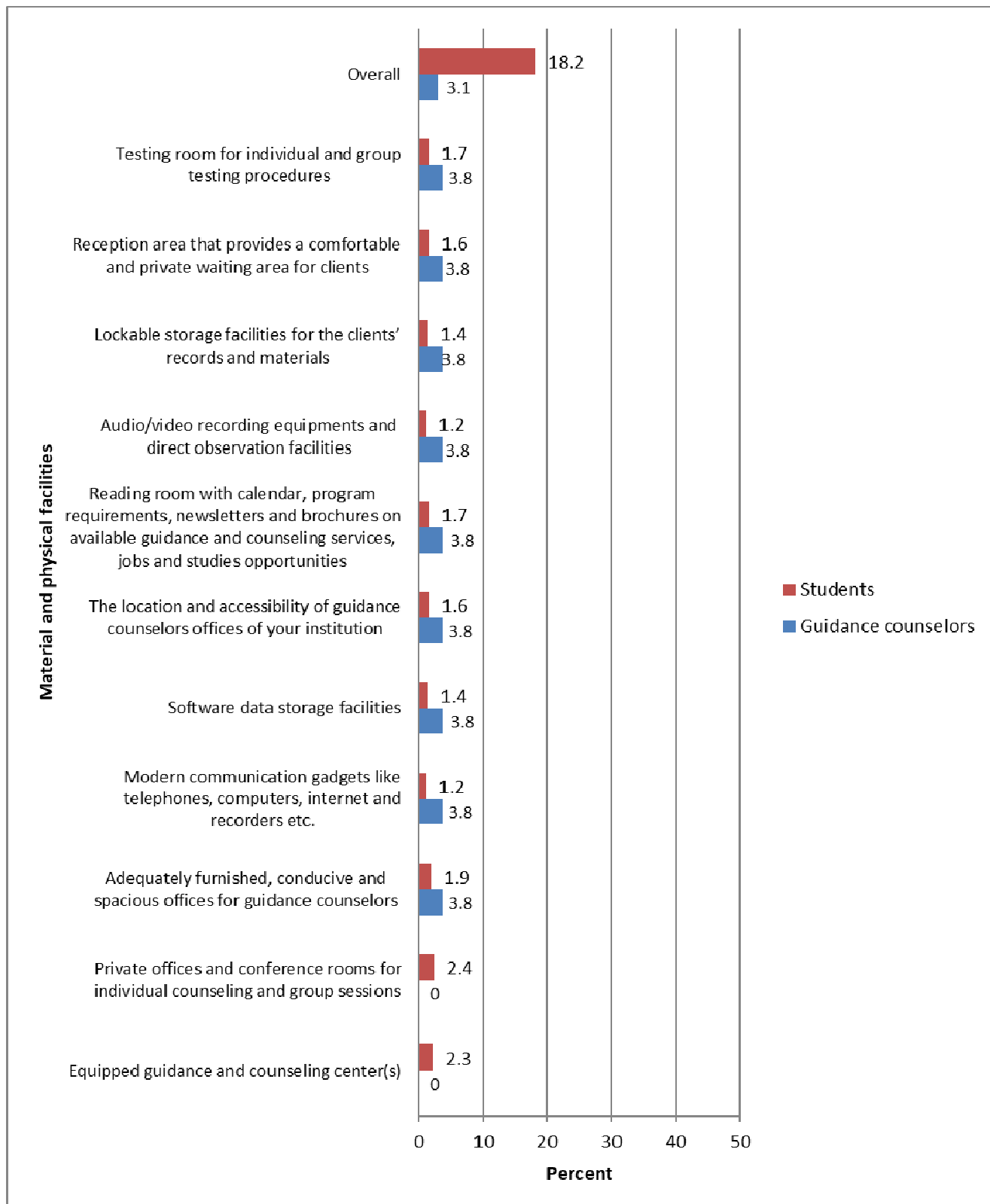
**Table 16: Students' perception on material and physical facilities needed for counseling services**

Material and Physical Facilities	Satisfied	Marginally satisfied	Not satisfied	N
Equipped guidance and counseling center(s)	24.5%(13)	75.5%(40)	0%(0)	53
Private offices and conference rooms for individual counseling and group sessions	26.4%(14)	73.6%(39)	0.0%(0)	53
Adequately furnished, conducive and spacious offices for guidance counselors	20.7%(11)	79.2%(42)	0.0%(0)	53
Modern communication gadgets like telephones, computers, internet and recorders etc.	13.2%(7)	86.8%(46)	0.0%(0)	53
Software data storage facilities	15.1%(8)	84.9%(45)	0.0%(0)	53
The location and accessibility of guidance counselors offices of your institution	17.0%(9)	83.0%(44)	0.0%(0)	53
Reading room with calendar, program requirements, newsletters and brochures on available guidance and counseling services, jobs and studies opportunities	18.9%(10)	81.1%(43)	0.0%(0)	53
Audio/video recording equipment and direct observation facilities	13.2%(7)	86.8%(46)	0.0%(0)	53
Lockable storage facilities for the clients' records and materials	15.1%(8)	84.9%(45)	0.0%(0)	53
Reception area that provides a comfortable and private waiting area for clients	17.0%(9)	83.0%(44)	0.0%(0)	53
Testing room for individual and group testing procedures	18.9%(10)	81.1%(43)	0.0%(0)	53
MRA	18.2%(106)	81.8%(477)	(0)	583

**Contrasting students and guidance counselors' perspective**

Guidance counselors generally did not expressed satisfaction with respect to material and physical facilities with proportion of satisfied ranging from 0% to 3.8% for all the indicators and this trend was equally very low for the students, ranging from 1.2% to 2.4% (figure 3).





**Figure 3: Comparing students and guidance counselors' perceptions on material and physical facilities needed for counseling services**

### Administrators' perspectives

Administrators generally perceived that guidance and counselling services are affected negatively due to inadequate human resources (*Negatively because the counsellors are not sufficient to adequately meet the needs of the students*'), (*Negatively affected due to very few counsellors*'), (*Negative effect since insufficient counsellors poses a serious hindrance in providing the services*'), financial resources (*Negatively because the finances are less to adequately handle the problem*'), (*Budget needs and requests take a long time to have them supplied*'), and material and physical facilities (*Negatively because there are no equipped counselling centres with counselling*

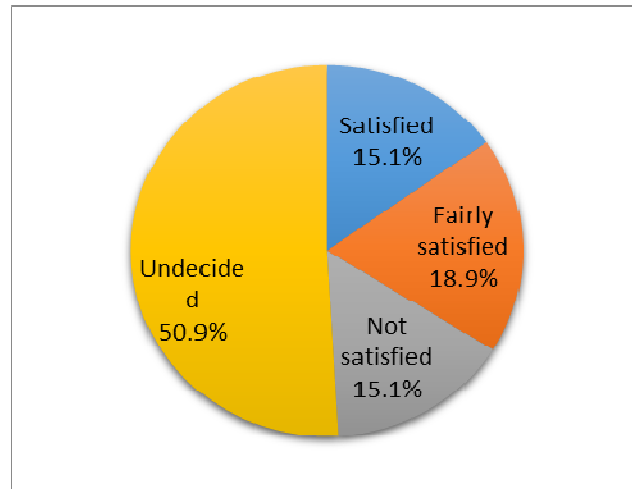


*laboratories to enable counsellors to do effective counselling’ ‘These are not fully developed and there is no counselling centre yet’ ‘Counsellors don’t have Conducive offices’. ‘Counsellors don’t have offices of their own as they share with other administrative staff’), table 17.*

**Table 17: Thematic analysis depicting how guidance and counselling services/activities are affected in terms of the human resources, financial resources, and material and physical facilities as perceived by administrators**

Resources involved	Code	Code description	Grounding		Quotations
			n	%	
Human resources	Personnel	Most administrators pointed out that there are limited counselling personnel	7	33.3	‘Negatively because the counsellors are not sufficient to adequately meet the needs of the students’. ‘Badly affected due to very few counsellors’. ‘Negative effect since insufficient counsellors poses a serious hindrance in providing the services’. ‘Serious negative effects because guidance counsellors are few’. ‘No counselling personnel in my faculty so no work is done’.
	No idea	Some administrators stated that they have no idea	13	61.9	‘No idea’. ‘Rien’. ‘Aucune’.
Financial resources	Running budget	Some administrators indicated that there is no budgetary line for guidance and counselling services	6	28.6	‘Negatively because the finances are less to adequately handle the problem’. ‘Budget needs and requests take a long time to have them supplied’.
	No knowledge of the financial situation	Some administrators indicated their ignorance of the financial situation of the guidance and counselling services.	11	52.4	‘No idea’. ‘Aucune idée’.
Material and physical facilities.	Equipped counselling centers	Many administrators indicated that there were no counselling centers in their institution	13	61.9	‘Negatively because there are no equipped counselling centers with counselling laboratories to enable counsellors to do effective counselling’ ‘These are not fully developed and there is no counselling center yet’. ‘Negatively because of no equipped counselling centers.’
	Offices, counselling rooms and halls.	Some administrators have indicated that there are no equipped offices, counselling rooms and halls	4	19.0	‘Counsellors don’t have Conducive offices’. ‘Counsellors don’t have offices of their own as they share with other administrative staff’. ‘They lack sophisticated information systems like modern communication gadgets’. ‘Counsellors don’t have service vehicles to move out and gather information from companies about employment for students’.



**Satisfaction with services**

**Figure 4: Students' satisfaction of guidance and counselor service**

Almost half of the students refused to state their stance 50.9% (27), 18.9% (10) were fairly satisfied, 15.1% (8) not satisfied and the same weight was satisfied. This poor performance is corollary of the glaring inadequacy of resources and physical facilities (figure 4).

### Discussion

The main items under this research question were designed to find out how students and guidance counselors perceived the effects of human and financial resources as well as material and physical facilities on the effectiveness of GCSs. For human resources, respondents were to indicate how they perceive satisfaction (satisfied, marginally satisfied and not satisfied) in the following aspects: Number of guidance counselors, counselor-student ratio, available time for guidance counselors and support staff for guidance and counseling center. The findings emerging from this dimension revealed that both students and counselors were not really satisfied with the human resources for guidance and counseling services in Cameroon state universities. The findings also revealed that the proportions of counselors who were satisfied were significantly lower than that of students for all the indicators. It also revealed that counselors were the most satisfied with the available time for guidance counselors. It further revealed that students were more satisfied with the number of counselors in their institutions. This perception by students might probably have been the ease at which they access the counselors since only very few students went to them. Both counselors and students were not satisfied with counselor-student ratio. These concur with research literature which intimate that large counselor-student ratio impacts negatively on the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services (Reynolds and Cheek, 2002).

This finding confirms earlier findings carried out in Zimbabwe (Benza and Ndenga, 1990; Ndoro, 1994) who lamented on the shortage of human resources in Zimbabwean schools. Insufficient human resources for GCSs negatively impact the effective implementation of the services.

The finding on financial resources revealed that the proportion of students and counselors who indicated that there was a budgetary allocation for counselors to run their services was very low 3.8% (1) and 11.1% (6) for counselors and students respectively. As high as 96.2% (25) and 80.4% (41) for counselors and students respectively, indicated their disagreement for that indicator. The situation was not different for the indicator on means for counselors to go out to the community and companies to get information (job opportunities and to link the school to business world). To procure office equipment, 24(92.3%) counselors as against 6(11.7%) students indicated their agreement that there is financial allocation for this from the university. The difference here in proportion is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). This discrepancy could be attributed to the fact that students might have judged and compared (from their personal observation) the offices of counselors with those of other administrators in the universities. Most administrators were silent about the effects of financial resources on GCSs. In an open-ended question in which administrators were asked how financial resources affect GCSs, almost all of them simply responded; "No idea". This contradicts counselors' position. In response to an open-ended question in which counselors were asked the challenges that they are facing, one of them bluntly stated; "No financial allocation for guidance and counseling services, the university should have a budget for counseling activities". The analysis from this study revealed that guidance and counseling services in Cameroon state universities lack adequate financial resources. This findings confirm earlier findings carried out in Kenya (Muango, 2012), Zimbabwe (Nkala, 2014) and Nigeria (Oye et al, 2012).

Inadequacy of financial resources for GCSs contradicts research literature; Idowu (2014), intimate that GCSs must have funding sufficient to carry out its' mission. Most of the guidance and counseling facilities needed and the activities carried out in GCSs need funds for implementation.

Adana (2004), also warned that the effective and efficient implementation of guidance and counseling program will remain a mirage without a well-articulated funding policy for material and physical facilities, the findings emerging from this dimension



revealed that both counselors and students were generally not satisfied with the material and physical facilities for GCSs in their institutions. This negative view was for all the indicators. This revelation contradicts Borders and Drury (1992) who established that in the U.S schools have guidance and counseling centers that are equipped with computers, internet, career materials, newsletters, brochures and pamphlets.

Another indicator of interest under this dimension was the location and accessibility of the offices of guidance counselors. Only 1 out of 26 counselors and 9 out of 53 students indicated their satisfaction with the location of counselor's offices in their institutions. No counselor in the four state universities I visited had an office alone. The counselor is either having a table in a crowded secretariat or sharing an office with a non-counseling staff (personal observation). This situation contradicts research literature; Schmidt (1993) upheld that it is desirable that guidance and counseling offices be centrally located and readily accessible to all students. It may be important, Schmidt (1993) added for counseling offices to be physically separated from administrative offices, medical facilities, security and disciplinary units on campus. Idowu (1989b) warns that a situation where a guidance counselor shares an office with other administrative staff or share a general staffroom with the rest of the school staff should be stopped. The location of guidance counselor's offices is very important in the effectiveness of GCSs. Having counseling offices near the administration means that students would not likely visit the offices or would not feel comfortable to discuss their problems with counselors because they would associate the counselors with the administration. They might also believe that confidentiality is compromised and threatened and so would be reserved revealing their concerns.

Students may not also want to be seen visiting the counselors. Thus if counseling offices are near the administration which are always crowded with people, students may never visit them. This is the situation with most of the guidance and counseling offices in Cameroon state universities. The poor location of guidance and counseling offices scare away students thereby negatively affecting the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services.

This study sought to establish whether GCSs in Cameroon state universities have sufficient resources and facilities to enable them provide effective services to students.

Findings emerging from this research question as a whole revealed that GCs in Cameroon State

Universities do not have sufficient resources to provide effective guidance and counseling services to students. Therefore there is a significant relationship between resources and the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services in Cameroon State Universities. These findings confirm earlier findings in Kenya (Nyambura, 2014), America (Reynolds and Cheek, 2002), Finland (Lairo and Nissila, 2002) and Botswana (UNESCO, 2000).

### 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 are actually satisfied with guidance and counseling services. This could be blamed on the inadequacy of human resources, financial resources, materials and facilities. More specifically, the absence of counseling centers and conducive offices all work against the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services. The need to enhance the availability of resources and physical facilities for the effectiveness and guidance and counseling services cannot be overemphasized.

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