

# Guidance Needs of Junior High School Students in the Yendi Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana

Abdul-Somed Tanko<sup>1,4</sup>, Ibrahim Seidu<sup>2,4</sup>, Mohammed Habib Dawuda<sup>3,4</sup> and Akure-Yine Gomez Amoro<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>SDA Junior High School, Yendi - Ghana

<sup>2</sup>Dimabi D/A JHS, Tolon - Ghana

<sup>3</sup>Tolon D/A Primary School - Ghana

<sup>4</sup>Undergraduate Student (Final Year), University of Cape Coast - Ghana

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**Abstract** – The major purpose of the study was to identify the most important guidance needs of junior high school students in the Yendi Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana. The research sample involved JHS 1, 2 and 3 students; teachers including guidance coordinators. A total of 150 respondents were used in the study, of which the students were made up of 71 males and 54 females; and 25 teachers including eight (8) guidance coordinators. The tool used for the research was questionnaire set for students and teachers. A non-probability sampling method was used in choosing the students and the teachers. The results were presented in the form of frequency tables and descriptive statistics. It was revealed that career needs, employment needs, financial, and spiritual information needs were the most important concern to students than interpersonal relationships, educational information, self-understanding and study habits. The findings also established that lack of qualified guidance coordinators; and lack of funds for guidance and counselling programmes among others were the central causes preventing guidance needs of students to be sufficiently met. It was concluded that career needs, employment needs, financial, and spiritual information needs were the most prioritise needs to students of junior high schools. It was recommended that the government and other stakeholders such as the Ghana Education Service and the Ghana Education Trust Fund should make available the needed resources for guidance and counselling in junior high schools. Further research needs to be carried out at all levels of the academic ladder to properly obtain the guidance needs of pupils and students alike.

**Keywords:** guidance, guidance needs, junior high school, prevalent

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Guidance started in 1955 in Ghana when a Youth Department was set by the Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare and Education. The establishment was formed to take care of the middle school graduates who were without a job and under the age of twenty [1].

The Ghana Government emerged with a guiding principle in 1976 via an ordinance set by the Ghana Education Service (GES) to setup guidance and counselling in secondary schools. GES then relayed to all secondary schools to follow the set ordinance [2].

According to [3], students are usually anxious regarding being independent, being employed, getting married, and helping others. In order to support the Ghanaian youth whom these issues influence, guidance programmes are important Ghanaian junior high school students today. Even though there may be a general set of students needs, precedence for some students differs and changes in agreement with age, sex, an understanding and geographical setting [4].

From the researchers' search for literature, there has been no single study on the needs of junior high school students ever since guidance and counselling came into being in Ghanaian schools. However, similar studies were carried out by Awabil [5] and Amaning [6] in Balsa and Kassena-Nankana districts in the Upper East Region and in the Wassa Amenfi West and East districts of the Western Region of Ghana respectively.

School children from this area of the region are habitually observed wandering around in the streets. According to [4], when making a choice concerning their livelihoods, students have at all times have some worries and lack adequate awareness concerning themselves. It is against this backdrop that this study be carried out to discover the most prevalent guidance needs of students of junior high schools in the northern region to put in place helpful guidance programmes. The main reason of this research was to discover the most essential guidance needs of students of junior high school in the Yendi Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana.

The study was conducted out in the Yendi Municipality. The Municipality is strategically sited at the hub of the Eastern corridor of the Northern Region and has a landmass of 1,446.3 sq. km. [7]. Yendi, the capital of the Municipality is about 90 km from the Northern Regional capital, Tamale. There are 38 junior high schools in the Yendi municipality.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Prevalent Guidance Needs of Junior High School Students*

Guidance needs originate from the piece of evidence that families have gone through considerable transformations that had led to the fall of unity among families and high divorce rate [8]. To this effect, researchers have worked on the following guidance needs of students:

#### *Study Habits*

A lot of countries employ guidance to support school children to study comfortably and also conquer every predicament which make studies complicated [9]. According to [10], several African countries implementing fresh learning structures, when it develops into totally effective, a lot of children may not succeed in their educational career and would call for assistance with their study habits.

Study habit is one of the major worries of school children [5] and they wish to get their hands on useful study habits [11]. According to [12], there is the call for guidance in schools, particularly the call for appropriate studying skills and styles. Additionally, study habit is a key worry of adolescent students [13].

#### *Educational Information*

As a professional on matters on the subject of a child and adolescent growth, the counsellor's responsibility is to be a leader for a transformation in the school setting [14]. In a survey carried out by [15] revealed that 89% of students in Lebanon's secondary schools required to be familiar with educational information.

#### *Spiritual Information*

Research conducted on 5000 students in Nigeria established that merely 12% showed the call for spiritual concern, which for that reason stated that spiritual needs happened not to be a prevailing worry for students [16].

#### *Career Information*

Out of the first five needs, three concerned career needs as indicated in a survey on 344 students in Calgary which established the need for information concerning career decision making [17]. In another survey carried out in Lebanon by [15] indicated that 90% required further information on careers as well as career information being positioned as the first guidance need [18].

#### *Interpersonal Relationship*

A study in Nigeria established that interpersonal relationship was a prevailing need among adolescent students [19]. Another study showed that over 70% of students in South Africa articulated they have to relate with their colleagues [3].

#### *Self-Understanding*

Studies have made known that self-understanding is precedence for students. According to [18], self-understanding as a guidance need was positioned second in China among students. Also, it was established by [3] that 72% of students in secondary schools in South Africa required to know themselves.

#### *Employment Information*

Students require assistance in searching for appropriate and rewarding employment [11]. A research finding in Kuwait showed that finding job was one of the utmost worries among secondary school students [20]. In another study by [3], [21] revealed that students of secondary schools positioned employment as the topmost guidance need.

#### *Financial Information*

The most important apprehension for young folk is to make money for the payment of school fees and fulfilling other needs as established in a research carried out among West African countries [22].

### *The Extent the Guidance Needs of Students Are Met*

Researchers have talked concerning adolescents and their needs and the various means of handling them [23]. However, the guidance needs of the youth are not met satisfactorily. For that reason, it was challenged that the matter of properly meeting the needs of the youth ought to develop into a matter of immense concern [23]. It was established in a study finding that 60% of students having their career guidance needs not met satisfactorily, hence, they articulated a desire for further assistance with realising their careers [3].

### *Reasons Why Students Not Having Their Guidance Needs Adequately Met*

Research findings indicated that deficient in competent guidance officers, lack of funds, non availability of guidance offices and high workload on coordinators were the most important issues getting in the way of useful delivery of guidance works [24].

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

The researchers adopted a cross-sectional design to determine the guidance needs of junior high school students in the Yendi Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana using a quantitative approach.

### Sample Size

A total of 150 respondents comprising 125 students and 25 teachers including guidance coordinators were selected conveniently from 38 schools in the municipality.

### Target Population

The population of the study comprised junior high school students in forms 1, 2 and 3; and teachers including guidance coordinators from the various schools in the Yendi Municipality.

### Sampling Technique

A convenient sampling method was used to select respondents. This type of method was used because it is relatively cheaper to use and is it easy to carry out. Data collection using this technique can also be done within a short period of time.

### Data Gathering Procedure

Self-administered questionnaire was the key instrument used in obtaining data from the students and teachers. The questions were related to the objectives of the study and were independently responded to by the respondents. The topic was explored using multiple questions format.

The questionnaire was adopted from Amaning [6]. The questionnaire for the students was in two columns: column 'A' and column 'B'. Column 'A' consisted of 40 items on 4 point-scale to which students were required to indicate the extent to which the needs are important to them. Column 'B' also consisted of 40 items on 3 point-scale, where students indicated the extent to which the needs are being met. The needs were grouped under 8 scales, these are study habit, educational information, career information, spiritual needs, financial needs, employment information, interpersonal relationship and self-understanding. The questionnaire for the teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators was in two sections. The first section was on personal records. The other sections sought information on the issues students mostly brought to the teachers. It also asked why students' needs are not being met. Some of the questions are solely meant for the guidance coordinators.

The researchers visited the selected schools to administer the questionnaires. With the help of the teachers selected from the various schools, the students were gathered in their classrooms and the questionnaire was given to them.

They were briefed on how to respond to the items and they were given the opportunity to ask questions to get clarification to difficulties they came across in the course of responding to the items.

The questionnaire for the teachers and the guidance coordinators were also hand-delivered in each of the schools. In order to encourage the respondents' quick

response to the questionnaire, they were given explanations on the purpose of the study and the importance of the study to the guidance programmes and educational policy formation and why their cooperation is solicited.

### Data Analysis

The gathered data were analysed and presented using frequency tables and diagrams. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used for the data analysis. The completed questionnaire was assessed for mistakes, completeness and legibility and missing or unclear data retrieved from the participant. Questions with more than one response were treated as a separate question.

## 4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results from the analysis of the data gathered. The data were analysed to address the objectives of the study. The results have been presented in the form of frequency tables and descriptive statistics. The study utilised 150 respondents recruited from different schools among students and teachers.

### Prevalent Guidance Needs of Junior High School Students

**Table 1: Prevalent Guidance Needs of Students**

Rank	Guidance Needs	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Career Information	2.21	0.836
2	Employment Needs	2.19	.912
3	Financial Information	2.14	0.983
4	Spiritual Information	2.08	1.087
5	Interpersonal Relationships	1.97	.822
6	Educational Information	1.69	0.796
7	Self-Understanding	1.67	.771
8	Study Habits	1.31	.524

*Source: Field Survey, 2019*

**Table 2: Prevalent Guidance Needs of Students as Articulated by Teachers and Guidance Coordinators.**

Guidance Needs	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Study Habits	23	2	92.0	8.0
Educational Information	14	11	56.0	44.0
Interpersonal Relationship	11	14	44.0	56.0
Financial Information	10	15	40.0	60.0
Career Information	10	15	40.0	60.0
Self-Understanding	6	19	24.0	76.0
Employment Needs	2	23	8.0	92.0
Spiritual Information	0	25	0.0	100.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2019*

As depicted in table 1, career information was ranked first with regards to students' most common guidance

needs. This was followed by employment needs, financial, and spiritual information. However, interpersonal relationships, educational information, self-understanding and study habits ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively.

Study habits, educational information, interpersonal relationships, financial information and career information were seen as the most common needs of students by teachers and guidance coordinators. This was followed by self-understanding, and employment needs. However, teachers do not spiritual information as a common need for students. This is shown in table 2.

The findings from the study revealed that career information was a most important need among junior high school students. This revelation is in line with the finding of [15], [17], [18]. The rationale for students seeing career needs as the most prevalent may possibly be credited to the reality that the students of junior high school needed it which will facilitate them to decide the career that meet their interests, capacity and ambitions.

The study revealed that employment needs was ranked next to career needs as the most prevalent need among students of junior high school. This is supported by the findings of [3], [20], [21]. This finding could be as a result of the wish of young people to get employed after completion of school so as to make some income to meet their personal needs and also help their families financially.

The study also showed that financial information was one of the essential needs of junior high school students. This is in line with the findings of [22]. Students prioritising to know about financial needs may be as a result of wanting to get the required learning materials for their study and also pay for extra tuition in school.

The findings from the study also established that, spiritual needs were important to students of junior high school. This revelation could be as a result of some students who in a way do not have their needs being met, wants to seek divine intervention if God will listen or care for them.

From the study, it is revealed that interpersonal relationships were of least concerns of junior high school students. This current study does not support the studies conducted by [3], [19]. The basis for the present result may be that, students in the Yendi Municipality are not conscious of the importance of interpersonal relationships in their lives. Interpersonal relationships will help students to feel valuable to themselves and their colleagues.

The study exposed that students of junior high school in the Yendi Municipality did not regard educational information needs as a main concern. However, [15] argued that about 89% of students in Lebanon required

to be acquainted with educational information. The reason for this finding could be that, students in the Yendi Municipality are already fulfilled with the knowledge concerning educational information and hence, do not need to prioritise it.

Self-understanding was not a main concern for students of junior high school in the Yendi Municipality. This finding goes contrary to that of [3, 18]. Students do not prioritise self-understanding may be that they do not know its significance. Self-understanding is very essential in guidance and counselling. This will enable students to put together sensible professional and educational choices.

Furthermore, it was revealed from findings that study habits were not important to students' needs. This finding is not in agreement with [5, 13]. It is a major and essential need to students but those in the Yendi Municipality may possibly not deem it as a most important need. The explanation of this could have emanated from the reality that the researchers emphasised on students in the Yendi township during their survey and did not cater for those in the rural areas.

### *The Extent the Guidance Needs of Students Are Met*

**Table 3: The Extent of Students' Needs Being Met**

Rank	Guidance Needs	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Educational Information	2.29	.608
2	Interpersonal Relationships	2.20	.631
3	Study Habits	2.13	.692
4	Financial Information	2.13	.640
5	Career Information	2.04	.651
6	Employment Needs	1.99	.630
7	Self-Understanding	1.99	.663
8	Spiritual Information	1.96	.711

*Source: Field Survey, 2019*

**Table 4: The Extent of Students' Needs Being Met as Articulated by Teachers and Guidance Coordinators.**

Guidance Needs	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Interpersonal Relationship	1	24	4.0	96.0
Self-Understanding	3	22	12.0	88.0
Employment Needs	6	19	24.0	76.0
Educational Information	6	19	24.0	76.0
Career Information	6	19	24.0	76.0
Study Habits	16	9	64.0	36.0
Financial Information	16	9	64.0	36.0
Spiritual Information	16	9	64.0	36.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2019*

From table 3 above, educational needs was the most common need which was effectively met by students. This was followed by interpersonal relationships, study habits, financial information and career information. However, employment needs, self-understanding and spiritual information ranked 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively.

As illustrated in table 4, it was established that 4.0% (n=1) of the respondents pointed out that interpersonal relationships were effectively met while 96.0% (n=24) pointed out that they were not met. Self-understanding needs were met as noted by 12.0% (n=3) while 88.0% (n=22) noted that they were not met. Also, 24.0% (n=6) representing employment needs, educational information and career information needs each were met while 76.0% each showed that they were not met. Furthermore, 64.0% of the respondents attested that study habits, financial information and spiritual needs each were of the view that those needs were met while 36.0% stated otherwise.

It was established from the findings that educational needs and interpersonal relationships were seen by students and teachers alike to be met more than career and spiritual needs. This finding supports that of [3] which revealed that career and employment needs of students were not effectively met.

The study also discovered that spiritual needs were not a main concern for students in the Yendi Municipality. This result is supported by the study of [16] which established that spiritual needs happened not to be a prevailing worry for students. This could be as result of the Yendi town being dominated by religious people; hence, students do not find it necessary to seek that information in school.

Career, employment and self-understanding needs should be given attention in the junior high schools to enhance the career and professional growth of students.

#### ***Reasons Why Students Not Having Their Guidance Needs Adequately Met***

Majority of the respondents indicated that lack of qualified guidance coordinators and inadequate knowledge of students' guidance needs representing 76.0% each are the most reasons why students' guidance needs are not properly met. 56.0% indicated that lack of funds for guidance and counselling programmes causes students not to have their needs being met. Also, 44.0% and 24.0% noted that lack of guidance office and heavy workloads on guidance coordinators respectively hinders students' guidance needs to be met while 20.0% and 8.0% attested that negative attitude of students towards guidance and counselling and negative attitude of headmaster/mistress towards guidance and counselling

respectively are some of the reasons why students' guidance needs are not met. This is shown in table 5.

**Table 5: Reasons of Students' Guidance Needs Not Met**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of qualified guidance coordinators	19	76.0
Inadequate knowledge of students' guidance needs	19	76.0
Lack of funds for guidance and counselling programmes	14	56.0
Lack of guidance office	11	44.0
Heavy workloads on guidance coordinators	6	24.0
Negative attitude of students towards guidance and counselling	5	20.0
Negative attitude of headmaster/mistress towards guidance and counselling	2	8.0

*Source: Field Survey, 2019*

Lack of qualified guidance coordinators; inadequate knowledge of students' guidance needs; lack of funds for guidance and counselling programmes; and lack of guidance office were the major reasons why the guidance needs of students are not effectively met. This result is in line with the findings of [24].

## **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *Summary*

The major purpose of the study was to identify the most important guidance needs of junior high school students in the Yendi Municipality of the Northern Region of Ghana.

The research sample involved JHS 1, 2 and 3 students; teachers including guidance coordinators. A total of 150 respondents were used in the study, of which the students were made up of 71 males and 54 females; and 25 teachers including eight (8) guidance coordinators. The tool used for the research was questionnaire set for students and teachers. A non-probability technique was used in choosing the students and the teachers. The results were presented in the form of frequency tables and descriptive statistics.

The major findings of the research revealed that career needs, employment needs, financial, and spiritual information needs were the most important concern to students than interpersonal relationships, educational information, self-understanding and study habits.

The findings also established that lack of qualified guidance coordinators; inadequate knowledge of students' guidance needs; lack of funds for guidance and counselling programmes; and lack of guidance office were the central causes preventing guidance needs of students to be sufficiently met.

### Conclusion

It can be concluded from the study that career needs, employment needs, financial, and spiritual information needs were the most prioritised needs to students of junior high schools. Also, age, sex and class are not essential determinants of the guidance needs of students. It is finally concluded that the guidance needs of students and teachers vary in terms of priority.

### Recommendations

The following suggestions are made based on the findings and conclusion of the study:

1. The government and other stakeholders such as the Ghana Education Service and the Ghana Education Trust Fund should make available the needed resources for guidance and counselling in junior high schools.
2. It is also suggested that study skills plans should be drawn to facilitate students to obtain sufficient study habits.
3. It is further suggested that guidance and counselling coordinators should train students on the significance of the programme to help them have encouraging feelings towards it.
4. Lastly, it is recommended that the observation of students of their own needs should be looked at when developing the guidance and counselling programmes in schools.

### Suggestion for Future Research

Further research needs to be carried out at all levels of the academic ladder to properly obtain the guidance needs of pupils and students alike.

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