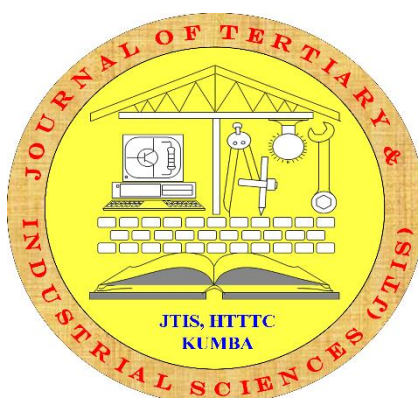


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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------------|
| HTTTC CONFERENCE 2025 PROCEEDINGS..... | 1 |
| SCIENCE OF EDUCATION..... | 2 |
| PARENTING STYLES AND ITS EFFECTS ON STUDENT MISCONDUCT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE BUEA MUNICIPALITY..... | 3 |
| AJONGAKOH Raymond BELLA, Ph.D..... | 3 |
| GUIDANCE COUNSELLING..... | 25 |
| ANALYSING THE TRAINING OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS IN CAMEROON UNIVERSITIES: THE CASE OF THE HIGHER TECHNICAL TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE (HTTTC) KUMBA..... | 26 |
| Dieudonne NEBANE (PhD) ¹ , PENANJE NKEPANG NGWING ² | 26 |
| SOCIAL ECONOMY AND FAMILY MANAGEMENT..... | 48 |
| PHYSICOCHEMICAL CHARACTERISTICS, PHYTOCHEMICAL COMPOUNDS AND SENSORY PROPERTIES OF HARD CANDIES MADE WITH PINEAPPLE (Ananas comosus L.), ORANGE (Citrus sinensis L.) AND PAPAYA (Carica papaya L.) FRUIT JUICES..... | 49 |
| Aristide Guillaume Silapeux Kamda, ^{1,2} Solange Chiakeh ¹ , Gillian Asoba ¹ , Samuel Metugue ¹ , Fidelis Ebong ¹ , Jarnette Rosine Wong Afana ¹ and, Pierre Marie Tefack ² | 49 |
| ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES..... | 67 |
| USAGES DES TIC ET MOBILISATION DES RECETTES FISCALES INTERIEURES EN AFRIQUE SUBSAHARIENNE..... | 68 |
| VANGVAIDI Albert, DAZOUE DONGUE Guy Paulin, HASSANE MAHAMAT CHOUKOU..... | 68 |
| URBANIZATION, FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS USING THE STIRPAT MODEL..... | 98 |
| Moïse DJEPANG KOUAMO..... | 98 |
| LAW..... | 137 |
| THE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST TORTURE IN CAMEROON: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEIR APPLICABILITY..... | 138 |
| Akamin Asonga Patrick, PhD,..... | 138 |
| ARTS..... | 160 |
| LES ÉCARTS DE LA PONCTUATION DANS PAUL BIYA L'APPEL DU PEUPLE- THE PEOPLE'S CALL: LES CAS DU POINT D'EXCLAMATION ET DU POINT...161 | 161 |
| Kamwo Kamdem Beatrice..... | 161 |

HTTTC CONFERENCE 2025 PROCEEDINGS

GUIDANCE COUNSELLING

ANALYSING THE TRAINING OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS IN CAMEROON UNIVERSITIES: THE CASE OF THE HIGHER TECHNICAL TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE (HTTTC) KUMBA

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Abstract

The work of guidance counsellors has been criticized by many observers over the years in many secondary and high schools in Cameroon, thus arousing some questions about their training. There have been many emerging problems like the growing phenomenon of drug abuse, poor knowledge of new forms of jobs which should be integrated into career counselling, idling guidance counsellors and many others in Cameroon schools. This paper assesses the training of guidance counsellors in Cameroon universities with the specific case of HTTTC Kumba to see if this training and practice could solve emerging problems. Hence, it is to appraise the quality of teaching; to analyse the practical training and to evaluate the quality of examination given to guidance counselling trainees in HTTTC Kumba. There has been the use of questionnaires and a significant analysis of literature to get both qualitative and quantitative data. The target population comprised the 276 recently graduating (2023) and former trainees of the department of guidance counselling of HTTTC Kumba. A sample of 120 trainees was selected for interview using snowballing. Data was analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics using the Chi-Square. The quality of teaching, practicals and the standard of examination is significantly high. However, more emphasis has to be put on job execution and attitudes towards the job in the field so as to meet emerging challenges. More rigour should also be placed on examinations so that candidates produce their optimum in knowledge and skills.

Keywords: *Training, Guidance counselling, quality of teaching, practical training, standard of examination, emerging problems*

1. Introduction

School guidance and counselling started in the 20th Century (McIlveen, 2014). However, a case can be made for tracing the foundations of Guidance and Counselling principles to ancient Greece and Rome with the philosophical teachings of Plato and Aristotle (Adoga, 2020). The development of guidance and counselling began in the 1890's with the Social Reform Movement in the United States of America (USA). According to Bobga (2016), the factors that contributed to this development include; societal problems involving people living together in urban slums and the widespread use of child labour; social reforms where the compulsory education movement and the vocational guidance movement in its early days were concerned with guiding people into the workforce to become productive members of society.

Since the independence of Cameroon, the role of guidance counselling in schools was implemented by various government policy documents like the ministerial order no 67/B1/1464 MINEDUC/CAB of February 2013 defining the mission of the counsellor which in its article 4 clearly spells out the role of the guidance counsellor in school. In 1961, the Institute of University Studies was created in Yaounde. It became the Federal university of Cameroon in 1962 and in 1973, it became the University of Yaounde. In 1993, this university was split and five other state universities were created and will be followed by two others. Finally in 2022, three other state universities were created making the number of state universities to eleven. Some of these universities train and award diplomas, Bachelors' degree, Masters and PhD in Guidance Counselling. Hence, the objectives of this article are to assess the training of guidance counsellors in Cameroon universities with the specific case of the Higher Technical Teachers' Training college (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea, and specifically to appraise the quality of teaching of guidance counselling trainees in HTTTC Kumba, to analyse the practical training of guidance counselling trainees in HTTTC Kumba and to evaluate the standard of examinations for guidance counselling trainees in HTTTC Kumba

The Higher Technical Teacher Training College (HTTTC) Kumba of the University of Buea was created in 2014 by Presidential Decree No. 201/090 of 7th March 2014 (Akume, 2018). The HTTTC is located in Kumba, Meme Division; South West Region. It went operational on May 4, 2015 when the first lecture was given for the start of the academic year (Lyonga, 2018). Admission into the institution is done through a public entrance examination launched by the government through the Ministry of Higher Education, which sees the successful candidates recruited for the training. HTTTC Kumba trains guidance Counsellors who are to work in secondary schools throughout Cameroon.

Guidance counsellors have a unique and specialized training that differs from that of teachers of other disciplines. They have to implement the counselling programmes, integrate themselves and the counselling programmes in schools. Counselling refers to services provided by a counsellor to an individual who has a problem and needs help to overcome the problem (Holli, 2020), hence, individual counselling. It is also offered as a service to groups (Group Counselling) Counselling is a helping relationship (Pandey, 2016). Counselling is curative, restorative, and preventative in nature (Egbo, 2015). Counselling also involves consultation; deliberation and the exchange of ideas between the counsellor and the client with the aim of assisting the clients resolve their social, emotional, vocational, educational, psychological issues. Guidance Counselling therefore recognizes the worth and dignity of the individual and is designed to enhance, the total development of mental, vocational, emotional, intellectual and socio personal aspects of the clients (Egbo, 2015).

According to Unicef (2021), school counsellors represent an important pillar in preventing and reducing school dropout and early school leaving, in supporting transitions between educational cycles and even for increasing the student outcomes, especially for the most at risk children/ students.

How efficient is the training of guidance counsellors in Cameroon universities with the specific case of HTTTC Kumba? What is the quality of teaching of guidance counselling trainees in HTTTC Kumba? How adequate is the level of practical training of the guidance counselling trainees in HTTTC Kumba? What is the standard of examination given to guidance counselling trainees in HTTTC Kumba? If the quality of teaching, level of practical training and standard of examination is acceptable, what then is the problem with practice in the field? These questions have guided the analysis in this article which go to look at the relationship between the training of guidance counsellors and their performance in the field after graduation. Training is very important in every profession because it provides a strong foundation for effective performance at the job. Trainees at HTTTC Kumba require the knowledge of guidance counselling, coupled with skills that are necessary to enable them function effectively at their work sites. However, it has been the observation of many that guidance counsellors idle around in their offices, staffrooms, and school premises, while in some other institutions where they are posted, they are often absent from school. Others are not even included by school heads when planning and taking important decisions on the running of the academic, administrative and social programmes affecting the school. Presently, Cameroonian schools are facing challenges such as increasing drug abuse, students stabbing and killing teachers and other forms of violence, unwanted pregnancies, pornographic practices, poor academic orientation, inappropriate use and management of some ICT tools and gadgets by students, practicing guidance counsellors not highly

involved in research to update with the changing times, amongst others. The capacity for guidance counsellors to handle these issues highly depends on the training they receive. There is a need to make sure that trainees are properly trained. Cameroon's vision is to become an emerging country in diversity by 2035 (Ministry of Economy, 2009). One of the objectives of higher education in Cameroon is to ensure the effective education and training of guidance counsellors, to ensure early guidance and counselling of children so that these children can become functional members of the society. Again, the application of the Competency Based Approach (CBA) in training guidance counsellors in Cameroon is seemingly still wanting because of its seeming novelty in the educational system and the guidance counsellor's indifference about the new visions and competences. Research has shown that most guidance counsellors continue to use the explanation method, display poor mastery of teaching methods and lack adequate didactic materials. This brings us to question the effectiveness of the training programs that these counsellors receive. In this light, this article focuses on the training programme of guidance counsellors, with the aim of evaluating the various aspects of the programme to determine its effectiveness to produce competent counsellors that are adapted to the challenging times of the modern-day school milieu in Cameroon.

2. Theoretical review

2.1. Review of the main Concepts

Training: According to Barletta (2018), training is the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills to modify behaviour through learning in order to achieve effective performance in the field or activity (Barletta, 2018). Training is generally formal or informal. Training has a dominant effect in establishing a professional identity (McCarthy, 2001). Therefore the school counsellors must be properly trained to effectively counsel. All training must be aimed at perfecting the natural skills of a person or to provide new skills to a person so that he/she could perform a certain task effectively. If performance is found wanting, then the training received must be questionable. It is also a problem if training is effective but performance is poor. It is about these views that this article examines whether the quality of training offered to guidance counselling trainees of HTTTC Kumba ties with the performance they exhibit in the field. Hence, the studies carried out for this purpose were essentially on the training of the student guidance counsellors. Training here refers to the acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary for a profession. Taking up counselling as a profession requires education and training. This may be through obtaining a diploma in counselling, bachelor's degree, master's degree or doctorate in Counselling, Psychology and other related fields in higher institutions of learning or universities. Training duration will

vary with respect to the institution and the course. There is need for continuous education and self-improvement for counsellors (Bhargava & Sriram, 2016). This may be done through research, attending seminars and workshops.

Training is a multidimensional phenomenon. Training has many goals, types and dimensions. Training also follows a process depending on the profession and the skills to be acquired to successfully practice. According to Mukherjee (2017), “training is about developing employees as an individual to make them capable and confident in their jobs, and consequently in their life”. Training has the capacity to make employees in every profession competent to practice their job using the skills and abilities acquired. Training involves individuals with different characteristics and needs. Individuals may be diverse in age, tribe, educational background, socio economic background, and intelligence quotient. These differences and needs have to be taken into account because they help to define the flow and design of the training course, selection of the materials and exercises that need to be coordinated.

Training, as stated by Mohamed (2022), is an organized and planned effort to provide manpower with specific knowledge and to improve and develop its skills and capabilities. Training is also concerned with changing human behaviour and direction in a positive and constructive manner (Jawad, 2019). The aspect of the change in behaviour is an important aspect of training which must not be undermined. Human beings are also diverse in behaviour, attitude and character. Training programs should therefore promote respect for diversity and inclusiveness (Scheel et al., 2018). Every profession defines behaviours which are ethical and otherwise. This makes the aspect of behaviour indispensable. In the work life of a professionally trained individual, behaviour must be professionally acceptable. This professionally acceptable behaviour is learnt during the training process.

According to Shenge (2014), “Training is an organized approach to positively impacting individuals' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to improve individual, team, and organizational effectiveness”. Training gives organizations access to resources that will allow them to compete successfully in a changing environment, and to plan for and accomplish set goals.

Counselling: Counselling is, “the assistance given to students individually and through group techniques to help them function more effectively in their school program” (Omoniyi, 2016). Operationally, counselling is the helping relationship in which the counsellor assists people in solving their life's problems; for students, it assists in solving their academic problems, making career choices and in having emotional and psychological balance.

According to Shruti Kant Pandey (2016), counselling refers to professional services provided to an individual who has a problem and needs help to overcome the problem. He also defined counselling as a helping process that involves two people- one is the Counsellor and the other is the counselee. Counselling can be individual or group counselling. He further posits that the counsellor's role is to orient and direct the counselee towards solving the problem. Counselling is curative, restorative, and preventative. He also posits that counselling as a process involves many sessions where the counsellor and the counselee talk to each other, discuss the problem and share information to find the best possible solution to the problem. The role of the counsellor is limited to providing assistance.

Counselling is defined as a face to face interaction between a professional and a client where the client voluntarily discusses his/her problems for professional analysis and solutions (Ibrahim, 2021). According to Yogyakarta (2017), counselling prepares students' future careers to adapt the demands of the recent labour market. Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis (Fethard, 2019). Counselling may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these.

According to Oluremi (2020), counselling is a process designed to help clients understand and clarify personal views of their life space, and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and a resolution of problems of an emotional or interpersonal nature. The counsellor acts as an advisor (Banerjee, 2020). A comprehensive guidance and counselling program is designed in schools to assist the personal, social, educational and career development of students. It is a total school program that requires a professionally qualified guidance counsellor for full implementation (Janice Graham Migel, 2002)

Guidance: Guidance in this study refers to giving direction to students in decision making to make them wholesome people thus attain satisfaction in their lives. Guidance is any organized activity, be it formal or informal, which is designed to help the overall development of the individual as a useful member of his/her society, and these involve his social, economic, emotional and psychological development (Ibrahim, 2021). Anyi (2017) stated that guidance examines individual students based on the need of each student in understanding of their immediate environmental factors and the influences of such factors on them. Again, It is aimed at helping each student adjust to their environment, develop the ability to set realistic goals for themselves and to improve on their total educational programmes while in school and post school life. Guidance will help students live a well-

balanced life in all aspects. Guidance may be personal, educational or vocational (Shruti Kant Pandey, 2016).

Guidance counselling: Guidance counselling is a profession done by a well-trained counsellor who helps students handle their educational, psychological, emotional and emotional problems. These well trained counsellors also assist students in career choice and sound decision making. According to Shruti Kant Pandey (2016), guidance counselling is an enlightened process whereby people help people by facilitating growth and positive adjustment through self-understanding (Govind Singh, 2018). In other words, counselling is a transformative process of helping people to learn all that are to be learnt both in and outside the school.

Training and the quality of teaching: Quality means standard of something if compared to other things of similar magnitude. It denotes how good or poor/bad a thing is (Besong, 2016). In other words, it shows something of higher or lower quality. The Quality of teaching is closely related to the qualification of the teacher and their training background. A qualified teacher will hardly teach poorly as well as a teacher who is not qualified will not teach properly. Training will boost the quality of teaching if the trainee takes the training lesson session seriously. According to Izumi et al. (2002) there are two different indications of teacher quality: Good teachers are ones who get large gains in student achievement for their classes; bad teachers are just the opposite. According to Hollins (2011), the quality of teaching is the key to improved schools. He further posits that teacher quality cannot be readily linked to teacher characteristics; therefore, new and more extensive certification and training standards are unlikely to be effective.

Jeyaraj (2019) concluded that there is a perfect correlation between effective learning, training and the quality of teaching. During training, learning takes place. Also, he defined effective learning as a process in which learners relate new experience to present experience and assimilate new ideas.

Training and quality of examination: Examinations have their unique importance in every domain of human life, especially in education. Without their presence and use, the worth of any person in particular field cannot be determined. Examination system is an integral part of education system. Training is part of education and so examination is also involved. It triggers healthy competition among the students. Effectiveness and authenticity of the education system cannot be ascertained without valid and reliable examinations. Human need to judge the knowledge and learning of many persons at the same time and grade them accordingly gave birth to the system of examinations (Kiani, 2011). Also, with the technological and cultural advancement examination is inevitable.

Training Guidance Counsellors at HTTTC Kumba

HTTTC Kumba has as main objective to train teachers for teaching and guidance counsellors to guide and counsel students in technical colleges and high schools in Cameroon. The institution trains guidance counsellors for about two years who upon graduation are posted by the Cameroon government and other private organizations to different Secondary schools in Cameroon to assist in guidance counselling services. These services are a very important factor in the success life of secondary school students because they help them to meet students' academic, psychological, and emotional needs. These services equally assist students in making realistic and relevant choices about life and future careers. To discuss the problematic, this article focuses on three components of effective training in the Cameroon system of education including the quality of teaching, practical training and the quality of examination.

Emerging Problems: An emerging problem is a new or developing issue that could potentially have a significant impact on people, community, public policy, or the environment. According to United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) an "Emerging Issue" involves the following:

- An environmental or environmental-related issue that is not yet generally recognized but could have major impact on human wellbeing and the environment.
- An issue that is recognized as very important by the scientific community, but are not yet receiving adequate attention from the policy community.
- Recognized as 'emerging' based on 'newness', but not necessarily issues that are unheard of or that comes as a surprise

Emerging issues in counselling are those that are developing as society evolves. Some of them for instance are connected to artificial intelligence (AI) and other new information and communication technologies (ICTs), while others include drug abuse and serious violence which are growing very fast in the school milieu in Cameroon. Such issues are a challenge to counselling and guidance counsellors who are finding it increasingly difficult to handle the situation without a concerted effort.

2.2. Theoretical Review

Theoretically, there are several theories which emphasize the importance of training and counselling. The constructivist learning theory of Lev Vygotsky and Theresa Tchombe states that learners construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through

experiencing things and reflecting on them (Baume, 2017). According to Theresa Tchombe (2019), the child takes the lead in the learning process, determines and influences the whole process. Constructivism is significant here in that, training is part of the learning process. Also, educators use it to help their trainees learn by making them easily share ideas after critical thinking, analysis, evaluation and the creation of knowledge after training. Guidance counselling trainees can gain and identify intermediary skills social skills and communication skills based on the needs as potential guidance counsellors through participation and practice. Constructivism equally emphasizes pedagogical practices where trainees must provide a variety of activities to challenge trainees to accept individual differences, increase their readiness to learn, discover new ideas and construct their own knowledge in and out of the classroom.

The social cognitive learning theory of Albert Bandura (1986) suggests that learners learn by watching what others do, and the human thought processes are a central part of learning and understanding personality (Nabavi, 2014). It also deals with thinking, decision making, remembering, creating, and problem-solving (Hoy et al., 2013). During the training process, trainees who are equally learners, learn through observation, imitation and modelling. It is observed that trainees, who take time to observe, imitate and model good behaviour and necessary skills facilitate the training process. Also, some learners may learn better through interaction, sharing ideas and observation of experts. Social learning can empower trainees to recognize and trace the roots of their limitations, identify patterns that may not be professionally acceptable, break habits and behaviours that may harm them as future counsellors.

The theory of human capital of Becker (1962) is concerned with the fact that individual workers have a set of skills or abilities which they can improve or learn through training and education. The human capital theory is therefore significant here in that it emphasizes how training increases productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing and shaping their cognitive, economical and innate potentials. As counsellor trainees, it is important as it accounts for the increase in innovative capacity, improves social wellbeing, improve the rate of productivity and participation.

Hence, guidance counselling trainees must first understand and make sense of the material they learn (constructivist); then they must remember what they have observed and understood (social cognitivism); and then they must practice and apply their new skills and understanding to make them more automatic, and a permanent part of their professional life (behavioural).

3. Methodology

The studies adopted the survey research design as questionnaires were developed and administered to respondents. The population of study is constituted of Guidance counselling students. The target population is made up of former students of the department of guidance counselling of HTTTC Kumba who are 276 in total, distributed as follows:

Table 1: Population of study

| Year of Training | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Total |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Total number | 40 | 41 | 35 | 48 | 59 | 31 | 22 | 276 |

Source: *Department of Guidance Counselling, HTTTC Kumba (2025).*

Out of this total population, a sample of 120 students were selected through snowball sampling technique from graduates between 2015 and 2023 as summarized on the following table:

Table 2: Distribution of Samples

| Years of training | Sample size |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 2014-2016 | 12 |
| 2017-2019 | 27 |
| 2020-2022 | 41 |
| 2022/2023 | 20 |
| Total | 120 |

Source: *Authors (2023)*

The sample size was calculated using the formula (Odhiambo, 2015):

$$\text{Sample size} = (n) = \frac{(1.96^2 \times \delta^2)}{E^2}$$

$$E^2$$

Where: **Z- score** is 1.96 because a **confidence limit** of 95% was used

δ = standard deviation of 25.

E^2 = **margin of error** is 4% indicating that results will be accurate within a plus or minus range of 4%.

We will therefore get our study sample:

$$(n) = \frac{(1.96*25)}{4}^2 = 120 \text{ respondents.}$$

In selecting the respondents, the snowball sampling technique was used where research participants were asked to assist researchers in identifying other potential respondents. Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire which was divided into two three sections using the modified Likert scale arranged from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). This questionnaire had 3 open ended and 60 closed ended questions. Data collection was done approximately in one month. The data collected from respondents was analysed using descriptive statistical methods (percentages, means and standard deviation) to assess the training of guidance counsellors from trainees' perspectives. Hypotheses were verified inferentially using the Chi-Square. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level ($p=0.05$). Ethically, aspects of informed consent and confidentiality were taken into consideration.

4. Research Findings

The findings are presented according to the three specific research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study as follows:

- What is the quality of teaching of guidance counselling trainees in HTTTC Kumba?
- How adequate is the level of practical training of the guidance counselling trainees in HTTTC Kumba?
- What is the quality of examination given to guidance counselling trainees in HTTTC Kumba?

4.1. Means and standard deviations of all variables in the study

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of all variables in the study

| Training of Guidance Counsellors | No. of respondents | No of items | Mean | Standard. Deviation |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|------|---------------------|
| Quality of Teaching | 120 | 25 | 3.23 | 0.54 |
| Practical Training | 120 | 17 | 3.08 | 0.71 |
| Quality of Examinations | 120 | 19 | 3.01 | 0.66 |
| Effectiveness of Training | 120 | - | - | - |

Critical Mean 2.5

Source: Researchers (2025)

The results above reveal that each of the variables has a potential influence on the effectiveness of training received by trainees of HTTTC Kumba in Guidance Counselling. The scores obtained and presented on the table were analysed, presented and interpreted to accept or reject each of the three null hypotheses guiding this study.

An analysis of the demographic information about the respondents (Guidance Counsellors trained in HTTTC Kumba) revealed the following:

4.2. Gender, Academic Qualification, Experience, and training of respondents

Table 4: Demographic Information

| Gender | Male | | Female | | Total |
|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Frequency (f) | 24 | | 96 | | 120 |
| Percentage (%) | 20.0% | | 80.0% | | 100 |
| Level of Education | Bachelor Degree | | Post Graduate | | Total |
| Frequency (f) | 66 | | 54 | | 120 |
| Percentage (%) | 55.0% | | 45.0% | | 100 |
| Second Language | English | | French | Both | Total |
| Frequency (f) | 90 | | 18 | 12 | 120 |
| Percentage (%) | 75.0% | | 15.0% | 10.0% | 100 |
| Age Range (yrs) | 20-25 | 26-30 | 31-35 | 36+ | Total |
| Frequency (f) | 6 | 42 | 54 | 18 | 120 |
| Percentage (%) | 5.0% | 35.0% | 45.0% | 15.0% | 100 |
| Year(s) of Training | 2014-2016 | 2015-2017 | 201-2018 | 20- | Total |
| Frequency (f) | 12 | 27 | 41 | 20 | 120 |
| Percentage (%) | 10.0% | 22.5% | 31.2% | 16.7% | 100 |

Source: Researchers (2025)

The results above show the following: That 80.0% of the respondents sampled for the study were females while 20.0% of them were male. There are more females than males in each of the badges of graduates sampled.

Regarding the level of education of respondents, 55.0% of the respondents hold a Bachelor degree while 45.0% of them are holders of the postgraduate degree or are enrolled in a post graduate program.

Relative to respondents' second language of respondents, 75.0% of them has English as second language while 15.0% of them are French Second speakers. A further 10.0% of the respondents sampled indicated that they had both languages as the second language meaning that they are equally fluent in both Cameroon's official languages.

Pertaining to the ages of the respondents, 5.0% of them are aged between 20 and 25 years; 35.0% of them fall between the age range of 26-30 years; 45.0% of them are aged between 31 and 35 years with 15.0% of them being 36 years or above. Concerning the different batches sampled, 10.0% of the respondents were from the batches of 2014-2016, 22.5% of them from the 2017 to the 2019 batches, 31.2% of them from the 2020-2022 batches while 16.7% of them sampled from the current batch of graduating students admitted for the 2021/2023 school year.

The hypotheses for this study were classified into the alternate and null and applied in the analysis of all the three specific questions. The analysis of the data obtained using the questionnaire is presented in this section according to the different specific research questions as follows:

4.3. Specific Research Question One

The first specific research question addressed the quality of teaching offered to Guidance Counsellors at HTTTC Kumba in the course of training. This question was investigated using twenty six questionnaire items whose frequencies and mean opinions were calculated and tallied to assess the quality of teaching in HTTTC Kumba.

The alternative hypothesis was accepted (and the null rejected). Hence, it can be concluded that the teaching received by trainees in Guidance Counselling in HTTTC Kumba is of very significant quality. While 71.5% agree that teaching is qualitative, 28.5% say it is not. This observation was significant at 0.05% level of confidence because the critical value of the chi-square statistic (12.95) was less than the calculated value of 20.210. The quality of teaching in the training in Guidance Counsellors in HTTTC Kumba is significantly high and contributes to the quality of graduates produced by the institution.

Specific Research Question Two:

The second specific research question was aimed at assessing the extent of the practical training offered to Guidance Counsellors in HTTTC Kumba. This question was investigated using seventeen questionnaire items whose frequencies and mean opinions were calculated and tallied to determine the extent of practical training received by counsellors.

Since the alternative hypothesis was retained (and the null rejected), it can be concluded that the training offered to trainees of Guidance Counselling in HTTTC Kumba is significant for 71.8% as against 28.2%. This conclusion is significant at 0.05% level of confidence because the critical value of the chi-square statistic (12.95) is less than the calculated value of 28.21. The practical training of counsellors in HTTTC Kumba has a significant practical base as attested to by more than 70% of the respondents.

4.4. Specific Research Question Three

The third specific research question assessed the quality of examinations taken by trainees in Guidance Counselling in HTTTC Kumba. This question was investigated using eight questionnaire items whose frequencies and mean opinions were calculated and tallied to measure the standard of examinations written by guidance counsellors in training.

Results showed that the alternative hypothesis was retained (and the null rejected), indicating that trainees of Guidance Counselling in HTTTC Kumba write significantly high standard examinations showing a score of 71.6% as against 28.4%. This conclusion is significant at 0.05% level of confidence because the critical value of the chi-square statistic (12.95) is less than the calculated value of 138.630. Trainees of Guidance Counselling in HTTTC Kumba write exams of significantly high quality.

4.5. The Analyses: Bridging the gap between Training and Practice

Many people over the past few years have been questioning the effective role of the guidance counsellors in schools. This is because they have been seen to be inadequate in fulfilling their professional roles appropriately. Hence, many are those who describe guidance counsellors as absentee workers, lazy and idling workers, who lack the capacity and innovative techniques to deal with issues like drug abuse, violence, unwanted pregnancies, pornography, promiscuity and many others amongst students. Practicing guidance counsellors have a poor knowledge of new forms of jobs in the job market including jobs related to new Information and communication Technologies (ICTs) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). They lack techniques of adapting these technologies to their practice and also guiding students to choose innovative careers especially in the fields of ICTs. Yet, they have been properly trained while in training schools. If the quality of training of guidance counsellors is very high as shown in the results above, how can it be explained that they have a negative image from their colleague teachers of other disciplines and some administrative authorities who even ask them to teach academic subjects in schools? How is it that they are not very involved in tackling emerging problems in the school milieu? These questions demand a thorough diagnosis and analysis so that appropriate solutions could be

provided. It is ethical that a guidance counsellor should be properly trained before he/she practices the profession and the guidance counsellor has to combine ethics and passion to exercise the profession. This is because guidance counsellors have to be very patient in their job practices given that they are dealing with humans whose characters are dynamic. This therefore requires that their training has to be special with emphasis on aiming at transforming ailing humans or encouraging humans to continue to be positive in their thoughts and actions. Dealing with human beings thoughts and actions need absolute care, for what is done to that human being could shape or reshape him/her to carry out positive actions that could impact his/her personal life and that of the community. Similarly, poor actions towards a human being could as well exacerbate or mitigate any preconceived negative actions that could impact his/her personal life negatively and that of the community.

4.6. Discussion

There was enough evidence to support the fact that the training process of guidance counsellors at HTTTC Kumba is effective as reported by research findings. The quality of teaching in the training of Guidance Counsellors in HTTTC Kumba is significantly high and contributes to the quality of graduates produced by the institution. This finding is consistent with the findings of Ching, (2014) who conducted a study exploring the need for guidance and counselling training for teachers carried out and found that respondents unanimously indicate a clear need for training. Also they indicated that training included not only knowledge and skills related to guidance and counselling, but also life skills. They demanded training in communication skills, interpersonal skills and ways to deal with their own issues. This information is important because if training programmes are to be a satisfying experience, the training contents should match trainees' needs. In like manner, Ching (2014) concluded that training approaches which are experiential, reflective and interactive are recommended to match teachers' training needs and enhance trainees' motivation and interest in training. From a theoretical standpoint, cognitive and social constructivism advocate that learners be given the opportunities to interact with the learning environment. This is a process which will allow them to develop their own knowledge and skills thereby unveiling their curiosity and potentials. In the training process of guidance counsellors, the importance of such learning experiences cannot be over emphasized.

The training of counsellors in HTTTC Kumba has a significant practical base as attested to by more than 70% of the respondents. This finding is also in agreement with Sree (2020), who in a study discussed on the job practical training, off the job practical training and their pros and cons. The objective of this study was to define on the job and off the job training,

to define advantages of both types of training, defining Pros and Cons of on the job and off the job training, relating employer benefits to on the job and off the job training. The study concluded that practical training is very essential for all professions. Investment on the practical training of trainees will be fruitful and satisfactory returns will be there. Both on the job and off the job practical training are having their own benefits. Effective on the job practical training enhances the technical practical skills of the employees and the off the job practical training makes the employees to learn theoretical knowledge. Aini et al (2013) in their study also concluded after a study involving students and academicians that, the students who are still in their studies performed very well in their practical training. Practical training may serve as the first period of involvement in industry for them.

Trainees of Guidance Counselling in HTTTC Kumba write exams of significantly high quality. This finding aligns with that of Mogapi (2016) who carried out a study titled, "Examinations Wash Back Effects: Challenges to the Criterion Referenced Assessment Model". His study concluded that grading of learners will revert to using normative interpretation of scores rather content mastery standards as demanded. There is need to develop an assessment practice that will compel teachers and learners to concentrate on the subject matter as presented in the prescribed syllabus so that the major benefits as stated usually in evaluation reports can benefit the system more.

From a theoretical standpoint, the Human Capital theory is essential in the development of a worthwhile workforce such as Counsellors. The characteristics emphasized in this theory include, experience, education, training and health and hence the emphasis on the need for holistic training cannot be overemphasized. As Becker (1993) suggests, 'schooling raises earnings and productivity mainly by providing knowledge, skills and a way of analyzing problems'. Moreover, Becker's ideas play an important role in contemporary employee development and learning literature, as the human capital theory fuels the idea that employees' knowledge and skills can be developed through investment in education or training.

This research has proven that the training of guidance counsellors in Cameroon's states universities and especially at HTTTC Kumba of the University of Buea is not really a problem. The problem lies in the field of practice. Guidance counsellors in the field must be innovative, get involved into high level research on human issues, adapt to the fast changing world where technology and especially AI seem to be dictating the movement of human activities. Guidance counsellors have to do all of these so as to be far ahead of students who are fast adapting and using AI and other ICTs to discover and do many things. Guidance

counsellors who fail to do this during practice in their schools will always be criticized and mocked by their colleague teachers, school administrators and even students.

5. Conclusion

The world is growing very fast technologically especially with the introduction of new ICT tools and gadgets in world economies and social interactions. These are influencing behaviours, economic and financial dealings. Counsellors must take this into consideration so as to match with the changing times. From the findings, it can be seen that there is a standard set in the training of counsellors in HTTTC Kumba. These standards even though observed to have some lapses have made the graduates in the field more comfortable in the discharge of their duties as data affirmed. This study from findings concludes that the teaching received by trainees of guidance counselling in HTTTC Kumba is of significantly high quality attested by both former and current graduating trainees of the institution. This view was held by 71.8% of the respondents sampled for this study. Again, the study was interested in assessing the extent to which practical training is offered to the trainees of counselling in HTTTC Kumba as attested to by 71.5% of them. Pertaining to this, the study concludes that there are significant practical activities included in the training package for counsellors in HTTTC Kumba intended to make the trainees more suited for the field. Similarly, the quality of examinations written by trainees is considered a vital tool in measuring the effectiveness of the training process. This study concludes that the examinations written by trainees of guidance counselling are of significantly high quality because trainees sampled generally agreed that examination procedures are followed to ensure that trainees' performance reflect their learning.

5.1. Implications

Implication for theory and research: Any scientific endeavour brings the first benefits to science itself. Hence, the findings in this research would be of significance to the academic community as it makes available more literature about the training of guidance counsellors in universities. This work highlights the notion that theory aids practice and practice fuels research. Hence, this study will be an important reference material for theory on further studies on training and guidance counselling. Though other researchers may have worked in a related area, this study will just enhance theory and practice in this field.

Implications for practice: Practically, this study is significant to the following stakeholders:

- *To guidance counselling trainees:* The study findings may influence the attitudes and mindsets of the trainees toward the training programmes, thus causing them to self-assess their knowledge, attitudes, and skills acquired necessary to perform the range of school guidance counsellor responsibilities when they will practice in the field.
- *To practicing counsellors:* This study will help practicing counsellors to fully include further research and knowledge seeking of new phenomena that can help them adapt to the changing times such that they can face current and emerging challenges with little difficulties.
- *To guidance counselling trainers:* This can help Guidance counselling trainers to regularly review the loopholes in their training skills and courses so as to improve on the training quality. This will ensure that trainees are well equipped with necessary skills, abilities, moral and educational values to make them apt in practice in the field.
- *To the Ministry of Higher Education:* The government of Cameroon through the Ministry of Higher Education should facilitate research in guidance counselling through more research financing, organization of conferences and workshops for further training.

5.2. Contributions

Little or almost no research has been done before on the training of guidance counsellors in HTTTC Kumba. From the findings, training is efficient while practice in the field is problematic. The novelty about this work is therefore the eye opener that there is still an imbalance between the training and the new challenges faced by practising guidance counsellors and human societies. This work contributes in exposing this problem that might not have caught the attention of stakeholders in the domain of guidance counselling.

5.3. Recommendations

Human character is very dynamic. It changes according to many conditions when faced with them. According to Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection published in his 'On the Origin of Species' in 1859, species select natural conditions which permit them to adapt and

survive for as long as possible permitting them to also have their offspring that can also adapt and survive in the evolution chain. This also explains that guidance and counselling can also develop conditions that will make it to adapt and survive in the evolution chain of society and knowledge acquisition. Guidance counselling programmes and curricula need to be constantly modified so as to match with the times and the sociocultural conditions of students and other members of the society. By this, there would be a constant solution production that would continue to enhance a better life and a better society of moral rectitude for all human beings irrespective of the conditions. Training in schools and a constant on the job formation and research must be balanced and upgraded to make this possible.

The findings arrived at here were all in agreement with some past research works, which is prove that the problem under investigation had been of interest to other researchers. As such, more innovative training methods need to be created, formalized and implemented so that trainees can match with the current trends of facing and challenging emerging problems in the school milieu. Guidance counsellors in the field must be innovative in their practice so as to meet up with the changing times and the dynamic behaviours manifested by students and other people around them.

5.4. Suggestions for further Studies

As new problems continue to emerge in human life and relationships, more research will be needed so as to ascertain its exactitudes and consequently find more improved solutions as the world evolves. There is the need for further research on emerging problems especially in schools which calls for constant reflections on how to improve on school counselling curricula that matches with changing times.

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