

Exploring Students' Perception of Chaplaincy Services at SDA College of Education, Asokore-Koforidua, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Chaplaincy services in educational institutions, including colleges of education, play essential role in providing spiritual, emotional, social, academic and moral support to students. This study explored the perceptions of students at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua of Ghana, regarding their understanding and awareness of chaplaincy services available in the college, how these services influence their personal development, and their views on the challenges facing them in the provision of chaplaincy services in the college. The study employed the mixed methods approach for data collection and analysis. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 100 students for the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed, using frequencies and percentages, while the interview's data were analyzed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that there exists a strong awareness and understanding of chaplaincy services among students of SDA College of Education, Asokore-Koforidua. In addition, the study revealed that chaplaincy services offered in the college have positive impact on students' personal development in various aspects, including emotional well-being, spiritual growth, social skills, academic performance and moral development. Furthermore, the study revealed that though, students find chaplaincy services to be very effective and supportive, there are still significant concerns regarding confidentiality and accessibility. Based on the findings, it was concluded that, although efforts to promote chaplaincy services in the college have been successful, further improvements are recommended to enhance the overall effectiveness and accessibility of these services for students.

Keywords: Chaplaincy Services, Students' Perception, Personal Development, College of Education

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are charged with the monumental task of shaping not just the intellectual capabilities of students, but also their moral character, emotional well-being and social consciousness. While the academic curriculum focuses on intellectual growth, chaplaincy services address the spiritual, moral and emotional dimensions of a student's development. In this regard, chaplaincy services play a crucial role in nurturing well-rounded individuals who are prepared to face life's challenges with confidence and integrity. Chaplaincy services are designed to provide a safe space for students to explore and deepen their spiritual beliefs, seek moral guidance and receive emotional support. These services are particularly vital in faith-based schools, where spiritual development is intertwined with the educational mission (Gubi, 2016).

Carey (2019) and Hughes (2016) opine that while the primary focus of schools is on academic learning, chaplaincy services provide essential support that complements and enhances the educational experience, indicating that academic success is not solely determined by intellectual ability, but also influenced by

students' emotional well-being, moral development, and social support systems. Chaplaincy services address these dimensions by offering guidance and counseling that help students manage stress, cope with personal challenges and develop a strong moral compass which is crucial in creating a holistic educational environment where students can thrive both academically and personally. This assertion supports Pickford (2010) and Yapp's (2003) arguments that chaplaincy which is a vital component of educational institutions does not only focus on academic progress of students, but also provides spiritual, moral and emotional growth of students with the ultimate goal of developing well-rounded individuals who are better prepared to face the challenges of life and make positive contributions to society.

In Ghana, several research works on the role of chaplaincy appear to have been carried out in the universities (Donkor, 2022; Sofi, 2021; Quampah, 2020) more than those in the colleges of education. Meanwhile, students in the colleges of education, just as their counterparts in the universities face a range of personal, academic and emotional challenges of which chaplaincy support can play a valuable role in contributing to the overall well-being of these students by offering various support systems to address their challenges. At the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua, Ghana, chaplaincy services are integral to the institution's mission. Understanding students' perceptions of these services is crucial for evaluating their effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement. It is against this background that this study is carried out to explore the perception of students at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua of Ghana, regarding chaplaincy supports they receive as they pursue their academic journey in the college. Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Explore students' understanding and Awareness of chaplaincy services at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua.
2. Examine how chaplaincy services in the college influence students' personal development.
3. Elicit students' views on the challenges facing them in the provision of chaplaincy services in the college.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of students' understanding and awareness of chaplaincy services at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua?
2. How do chaplaincy services in the college influence students' personal development?
3. What are students' views on the challenges they face regarding the provision of chaplaincy services in the college?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews scholarly works related to the study, organized into themes to address the research objectives. It begins with the concept of chaplaincy, followed by chaplaincy practices in tertiary institutions in Ghana, chaplaincy and students' development, as well as the challenges of chaplaincy in tertiary institutions.

The Concept of Chaplaincy

The term "chaplaincy" refers to a chapel, a facility, or a department where one or more chaplains carry out their responsibilities. It represents a unique point of interaction between religious traditions and the contemporary world (Caperon, 2012). According to Paddison (2009), chaplaincy is a department headed by a chaplain or a layperson whose role is to evangelize parishioners in military camps, schools, prisons, colleges, or hospitals to make disciples of all nations (Mat. 28:19-20a).

According to Yapp (2003), chaplaincy is a department that does not only promote the spiritual and moral

life of students to prepare them for adulthood, but it also uses biblical verses to support students who are experiencing feelings of abandonment, guilt, shame, anger, or bereavement.

A chaplaincy leader may be a minister, priest, pastor, rabbi, imam, or a lay representative of a religious tradition. These chaplains are associated with secular institutions such as hospitals, prisons, military units, intelligence agencies, embassies, schools, labor unions, businesses, police departments, fire departments, universities, sports clubs, or private chapels. Though the term chaplain originally referred to the representatives of the Christian faith, Legood (1999) argues that it is also applied to people of other religions or philosophical traditions, as in the case of chaplains serving with military forces and chaplaincies in the universities. In recent times, Norman (2004) observes that many lay people have received professional training in chaplaincy and are now appointed as chaplains in schools, hospitals, companies, prisons and universities.

According to Caperon (2015), one of the distinctive spiritual activities which is central to the theology of school chaplaincy is pastoral care. Feheny (1999) has elaborated on this by defining pastoral care as the integration of academic, social, emotional, and religious education to foster an atmosphere of care within the school community, which is built upon the ethos, communal life, curriculum, and chaplaincy services of the school.

According to Anne (2007), a chaplain serves as the public face of God in educational institutions, providing spiritual leadership and pastoral care to the entire school community. Otieno (2018) further emphasizes that chaplaincy leaders are called to focus on individuals within the school community, supporting them in their faith journey and times of difficulty, while also engaging the community in fellowship, prayer, and worship.

It can be concluded from the foregoing that chaplaincy plays a vital role in bridging religious traditions with contemporary society by providing spiritual leadership, pastoral care, and moral guidance across diverse secular institutions. Whether led by ordained clergy or professionally trained laypeople, chaplaincy fosters an environment of care, support, and spiritual growth, highlighting its importance in various settings, including educational institutions, military units, hospitals, and beyond.

Chaplaincy Practices in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana

Tertiary institutions in Ghana have chaplaincy boards that oversee chaplaincy activities on campus. These chaplaincies play a vital role in nurturing the religious, intellectual, social, moral, and cultural development of students. Dwarko and Kwarteng (2004) have argued that tertiary institutions have various chaplaincies which belong to various religious groups on campus. For instance, at the University of Cape Coast, the Catholic chaplaincy is responsible for promoting fellowship among its members. Apart from Catholic chaplaincy on campus, Dwarko and Kwarteng (2004) mention Protestant chaplaincy which is made up of Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Seventh Day Adventist and the A.M.E Zion churches whose duties are to promote spiritual growth among its members through midweek prayer meetings, Bible studies.

Pentecost University College of Ghana places significant emphasis on its chaplaincy. Through the Chaplaincy department, the university aims to offer holistic education, shaping scholars who are well-prepared to serve their generation, and drive societal change. This holistic approach, known as the “3H’s” (training the Head, Heart, and Hand), equips students with academic knowledge, moral integrity and practical skills. The chaplaincy ensures that both students and staff receive moral training for their future endeavours. Additionally, the chaplaincy collaborates with the university’s counselling unit to provide comprehensive support services on academic, social, psychological and spiritual matters. Furthermore, the chaplaincy organizes entrepreneurial forums, where students can engage with successful entrepreneurs from various fields to gain valuable insights and experiences. This initiative provides a platform for students to learn from professionals and develop essential skills for their future careers (Retrieved June 11, 2024 from

<https://pentvars.edu.gh/chaplaincy/>).

The role being played by chaplaincy in the tertiary institutions are multi-faceted. This includes, but not limited to religious, moral, social and psychological. Regarding its religious role, Quampah (2020) argues that chaplaincy through its activities such as joint services, counseling, crusades, healing and deliverance services positively affects the spiritual lives of students on campus. In relation to morality, Quampah (2020) emphasizes that chaplaincies in the tertiary institutions have been helpful in promoting morality among students through workshops and seminars on topics like ethics, leadership and community service. These events encourage students to reflect on their values and apply them in their daily lives. Also, the chaplaincy provides mentorship programmes where students receive guidance from experienced mentors who exemplify strong moral values. Again, moral education programmes are integrated into the chaplaincy's activities to teach and discuss moral principles and ethical behaviour related issues to students.

In its social contributions, Quampah (2020) asserts that chaplaincy activities on campus impact the social lives of the students. This is evident in how joint services organized by chaplaincy help students to get in contact with their colleagues, friends, lecturers and other categories of university staff from other denominations. He emphasized that chaplaincy activities on campus help to connect one to religious leaders, chaplains, patrons, counselors and people who could affect one's life positively. Quampah's (2020) assertion appears to support Adedapo's (2012) claim that the chaplaincy ministry can serve as a bridge between individuals and God, especially when they are separated from traditional sources of pastoral care to perform essential pastoral functions such as guiding, leading, helping, reconciling, sustaining, and healing individuals in their respective endeavors, acting as a faithful witness to God.

In terms of psychological role of chaplaincy in the tertiary institutions in Ghana, Adedapo's (2012) argues that chaplaincy activities usually motivate students to take informed decisions which enable them to grow towards expected maturity. This is evident in programmes organized on campus to change the mentalities and perceptions of students as they become more conscious by evaluating ideas that come their ways before they execute them. This corroborates Hunt's (2012) assertion that chaplaincies have repositioned themselves to provide services to cater for the challenging demands of multi-faith students' body in this contemporary times.

In conclusion, chaplaincies in tertiary institutions in Ghana play a crucial role in fostering the holistic development of students. By addressing spiritual, moral, social and psychological needs, chaplaincies in the tertiary institutions help shape well-rounded individuals who are equipped to contribute positively to their communities and beyond.

Chaplaincy and Students' Personal Development

Research on chaplaincy services in schools worldwide confirm that chaplaincy plays important role on academic achievements (Waithira, Kiarie, & Murage, 2019). This supports Sheila's (2012) argument that any effective academic learning within a school context cannot be separated from the implementation of effective chaplaincy services. The National Association of Chaplains (2014) has noted that the frequency of religious activities in schools is directly related to academic outcomes. According to Christian (2003), students who are actively involved in religious activities are more likely to spend more time on their homework, put more effort into their schoolwork, and achieve higher academic success. Therefore, the religious activities provided by school chaplaincy enables students to engage constructively with their peers and superiors, ultimately leading to improved academic performance.

Nyamai (2009) recognizes the important role played by chaplains in helping students to realize their potentials and in molding their personality. According to Rao (2009), effective chaplaincy within the school requires that students become competent and confident to discuss and make decisions based on their home

life and what is learned at school. This is important because students who complete school are expected to be all round, including academic performance, self-discipline and acquisition of positive attitude.

Astin et al. (2011) conducted a multi-year study involving approximately 100,000 students and faculty members at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to examine spirituality in higher education. The study showed that students who were actively involved in faith-based campus communities have higher retention rates, better graduation rates, greater student satisfaction and less mental and emotional issues than those who were not involved in such activities. This finding underscores the need for universities to allocate resources not only for academic success, but also to the socio-spiritual well-being of students, because such programmes can help reduce the dropout rate of students and produce well-rounded graduates who are capable of taking informed decisions in life.

Donkor and Kyeremeh (2022) opine that the fundamental principle of Total Personality Development (TPD) is that students who emotionally and spiritually develop through chaplaincy services approach academic life differently than their peers who do not. In a study conducted by Mabeya et al. (2009), they argue that religiously sponsored activities affect students' academic performance. This could be more reasons why religious schools help students abstain from behaviours that are often regarded as unruly and harmful to academic achievement. Jeynes (2008) carried out a meta-analysis study on the effects of Catholic and Protestant schools on academic performance, and the findings of the study revealed that both Catholic and Protestant schools perform better than what their counterparts in the public schools do. Further analysis indicated that Protestant Christian schools excel in developing their students' spiritual formation, while Catholic Christian schools excel in enhancing their students' intellectual development.

Challenges of Chaplaincy in Tertiary Institutions

According to Masika and Simatwa (2010), many students have negative attitudes towards guidance and counselling services provided by chaplaincy departments in the tertiary institutions. A study conducted in Bungoma revealed that majority of the students perceived that the guidance and counselling was doing little to change students' behaviour. Again, most students facing problems that needed to be counselled were afraid to seek guidance and counselling services due to the unfriendly nature of the counsellors. Similarly, majority of the teachers held the opinion that the counselling department is just a place of getting confidential information regarding teachers by the school administration. Therefore, many teachers and students viewed guidance and counselling to be ineffective in helping students to cope with moral, spiritual and academic problems.

Hughes and Sims (2010) argue that the school's chaplaincy plays a vital role in guiding and counseling students, because it helps them to open up and discuss their problems without fear of victimization. However, research by Braskamp (2007) found that most schools lack policy guidelines on chaplaincy, which is an indication that there is no legal framework upon which chaplaincy can be monitored to ensure that quality services are given to the school communities.

Research conducted by Otieno (2010) revealed that most schools lack dedicated rooms for chaplains, forcing them to operate from guidance and counseling rooms intended for teacher-counselors or even under trees. This lack of privacy discourages students from seeking spiritual guidance and counseling. Furthermore, many students avoid counseling due to poorly located counseling rooms and the unfriendly demeanor of counselors, which is often due to their lack of professional training.

In conclusion, the literature review offers a holistic perspective on the practices, contributions, and challenges of chaplaincy in tertiary institutions, highlighting its significance for both students' development and institutional support.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodology of the study, which includes the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, instruments used, and data analysis. The sub-headings of the methodology are discussed below.

Research Design

The study used the mixed methods approach, which according to Creswell and Plano (2011) aims to collect and analyze data from multiple sources in a single study to understand the research problem. In this regard, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used to obtain answers to address the research objectives. The quantitative approach helped the researcher to collect data from the respondents to generalize the results from a sample group to an entire group of people, while the qualitative approach provided the researcher with a deeper knowledge and understanding of the issue being investigated from the voices of the respondents.

Population

The study population comprised students from level 200 to level 400 with a total population of 1,815, made up of 270 level 200 students, 705 level 300 students and 840 level 400 students. Level 100 students were excluded from the study because they had just been admitted to the college at the time of the study, and had not yet received sufficient chaplaincy services from the college.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

A simple random sampling procedure was employed to select a sample size of 100 students for the study. This procedure was used to select 20 level 200 students, 30 level 300 students and 50 level 400 students. The selection of these 100 students was justified by the homogenous nature of the population. According to Atindanbila (2013), smaller sample sizes are adequate when the population is homogenous because the members or subjects within that population share similar or identical characteristics, traits, or attributes relevant to the study.

Research Instruments

Data for the study was collected using structured questionnaire and in-depth interview. The questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data that could be easily tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis. On the other hand, the interview aimed to give the respondents the opportunity to answer questions asked in an unrestricted manner to enable the researcher to obtain in-depth data needed to answer the research questions. Both questionnaire and interview were designed to align with the research questions to achieve the study's objectives. In addition to the primary data collected through questionnaire and interview, a secondary data was also used to explore scholarly works related to the study. This secondary data provided a broader context and supported the analysis by integrating findings from existing literature on the topic.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire sought to gather information on chaplaincy services available to the respondents, how these chaplaincy services influence their personal development, and their views on the challenges faced in providing chaplaincy services at the college. For the interview, all prefects and class representatives from level 200 to level 400 of the college were interviewed one-on-one to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, thoughts and feelings as they personally shared their stories in relation to issues under

investigated. Throughout the administration of both the questionnaire and the interview, strict ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously observed.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire was analysed with the help of descriptive statistics using frequencies and percentages. On the other hand, thematic analysis was employed to analyze data collected from the interview. In this regard, the data collected were transcribed, translated and analyzed thematically in accordance with the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section analyses the data collected from both questionnaire and interview to address the research objectives. The themes analysed include: Students’ understanding and awareness of chaplaincy services at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua, influence of chaplaincy services on students’ personal development, and the challenges in the provision of chaplaincy services in the college.

Students’ Understanding and Awareness of Chaplaincy Services

This section analyses students’ understanding and awareness of chaplaincy services at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua which is presented in table 1.

Table 1 Students’ Understanding and Awareness of Chaplaincy Services

Question	Response	Number	Percentage
Are you aware of the chaplaincy services available in the college?	Yes	100	100%
	No	–	–
Which of the following chaplaincy services are available in your college?	Mid-week service	100	100%
	Sabbath worship	100	100%
	Morning devotion	100	100%
	Spiritual emphasis	100	100%
	Counseling service	100	100%
The college offers chaplaincy services frequently within the semester.	Agree	88	88%
	Disagree	12	12%
Overall, how satisfied are you with the chaplaincy services at the college?	Highly Satisfied	80	80%
	Highly dissatisfied	20	20%

Source: Field Study (2024)

From table 1, all the 100 students representing 100% indicated that they are fully aware about the chaplaincy services available at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua. However, there were no respondents who indicated that they are unaware of the chaplaincy services, indicating full awareness among the student population of chaplaincy services in the college. The data suggests that chaplaincy services are being practiced in the college, ensuring that every student is aware of their availability.

Regarding the availability of chaplaincy services in the college, all the 100 students representing 100% reported that the various chaplaincy services available in the college include mid-week services, Sabbath worship, Sabbath school, morning devotion, spiritual emphasis, and counseling services. The uniformity in responses suggests that these services are prominent and integral part of the college’s spiritual and emotional support structure for students.

Concerning the frequency at which the college offers chaplaincy services within the semester, 88 students representing 88% agreed that the college offers chaplaincy services frequently within the semester. However, 12% of the students disagreed with this assertion, indicating that the frequency of chaplaincy services in the college is insufficient.

To ascertain students’ level of satisfaction about chaplaincy services at the college, all the 80 students representing 80% expressed that they are highly satisfied with the chaplaincy services in the college. However, only 20% of the students expressed their dissatisfaction of chaplaincy services in the college.

The analysis shows that there is a high level of awareness and understanding of chaplaincy services, which are widely embraced by the entire students of SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua. This finding supports Quampah’s (2020) assertion that in tertiary institutions in Ghana, students are well informed about chaplaincy services such as joint services, counseling, crusades, healing and deliverance services.

Influence of Chaplaincy Services on Students’ Personal Development

Table 2 analyses the influence of chaplaincy services on students’ personal development at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua.

Table 2 Influence of Chaplaincy Services on Students’ Personal Development

Area of Personal Development	Influence Level	Percentage
Emotional Well-being	A lot	58
	A little	26
	Not at all	16
Spiritual Growth	A lot	74
	A little	18
	Not at all	8
Socialization Skills	A lot	60
	A little	28
	Not at all	12
Academic Performance	A lot	72
	A little	20
	Not at all	8
Moral Development	A lot	76
	A little	16
	Not at all	8

Source: Field Study (2024)

Table 2 analysed the influence of chaplaincy services on students’ emotional well-being, spiritual growth,

socialization skills, academic performance and moral development at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua. From the study, 58% of the students reported that chaplaincy services have positively influenced their emotional well-being a lot, while 26% of the students claimed that chaplaincy services have had a little influence on their emotional well-being. However, 16% of the students claimed that chaplaincy services have not influenced their emotional well-being at all. A student who was part of the 58%, who reported that chaplaincy services have positively influenced their emotional well-being a lot had this to say:

For me, the counseling sessions offered by the chaplaincy department of this college have been instrumental in helping me to manage the pressures associated with academic life on campus and, as a result, I have been able to overcome my emotional pain and distress.

Additionally, a significant majority of the students representing 74% indicated that chaplaincy services have greatly influenced their spiritual growth a lot, while 18% of them were of the view that chaplaincy services have had a little influence on their spiritual growth. However, only 8% of the students felt that chaplaincy services have not influenced their spiritual growth at all. One of the students who was among those who indicated that chaplaincy services have greatly influenced their spiritual growth a lot said that:

Group discussions during Sabbath school on Saturday's worship have greatly impacted my spiritual development and so, I now feel much connected to my religious beliefs.

Moreover, majority of the students representing 60% reported that due to chaplaincy services in the college, their socialization skills have improved a lot, while 28% of them intimated that chaplaincy services have improved their socialization skills a little. However, only a small number of the students representing 12% said that chaplaincy services have not had any impact at all on their socialization skills. One of the students who reported that their socialization skills have improved a lot due to chaplaincy services in the college said:

Chaplaincy services have played a crucial role in improving my socialization skills at the college, because through group activities such as Sabbath walk and Sabbath school, I have gained confidence in interacting with others.

Similarly, a substantial number of the students representing 72% acknowledged that chaplaincy services have influenced their academic performance a lot, followed by 20% who acknowledged that chaplaincy services have influenced their academic performance a little. On the contrary, only 8% of the students did not perceive any academic benefit from chaplaincy services in the college at all. A student who acknowledged that chaplaincy services have influenced her academic performance a lot had this to say:

The emotional and stress relief support that the college chaplaincy provides during counseling services have helped me to manage my time more effectively, and as result, I have been able to focus on my studies, leading to an improvement of my academic performance.

Meanwhile, 76% of the students indicated that chaplaincy services have had a lot of positive influence on their moral development, while 16% of them indicated that chaplaincy services have had a little influence on their moral development. However, 8% percentage of the students felt that chaplaincy services have had no influence on their moral development in the college at all. A student who felt that chaplaincy services have had a lot of positive influence on her moral development had this to say:

The messages from Sabbath school worship and the counseling services offered by the college's chaplaincy have significantly influenced my values and ethical decisions. These services have helped me to understand the importance of living a morally upright life and have made me a better person by treating others kindly and offering help when needed.

The analysis shows that chaplaincy services have positive influence on students’ personal development across emotional well-being, spiritual growth, socialization skills, academic performance and moral development. The finding supports Nyamai (2009) who asserts that chaplaincy services help students to discover their potential and shape their personalities, which enhance their competence and confidence in decision-making that integrates home and school learning, and this holistic development, as emphasized by Rao (2009), is vital for students to excel academically, uphold discipline, and cultivate positive attitudes in life.

Challenges in College Chaplaincy Services

Table 3 analyses the challenges facing students in the provision of chaplaincy services at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua

Table 3 Challenges in College Chaplaincy Services

Challenges students face with Chaplaincy Services	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Total (%)
Students find chaplaincy less effective in addressing their	10(10)	90(90)	100(100%)
Lack of privacy and confidentiality influences students’ decisions to seek guidance from chaplaincy	32(32)	68(68)	100(100%)
Unfriendly attitudes of chaplains influence students’	39(39)	61(61)	100(100%)

Source: Field Study (2024)

Table 3 sought to illicit students’ views on the challenges they face with chaplaincy services at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua. From the table, only 10% of the students agreed that they find chaplaincy less effective in addressing their personal problems, while as many as 90% of the students disagreed with this statement, arguing that they find chaplaincy services very effective for their personal issues. This indicates that most students at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua find the chaplaincy services effective for their personal issues. This is what a student said to support his claim:

I personally disagree with the assertion that the chaplaincy department in this college is less effective as some of our students think. In my experience, the chaplaincy has been a great support system for me, because whenever I face personal challenges, the chaplain is always available to listen to me and offers me a valuable advice, which has greatly improved my overall well-being.

In relation to privacy and confidentiality, 32% of the students agreed that lack of privacy and confidentiality influences their decision to seek guidance from the chaplaincy, arguing that their personal issues may be disclosed to their peers and faculty. Meanwhile, 68% of the students who form majority disagreed with this concern. A student argued that:

I feel comfortable sharing my personal matters with the chaplaincy because it keeps personal information confidential and handles sensitive matters with care and respect, ensuring that private discussions remain private.

On the issue of unfriendly attitudes of chaplains that influence students’ decisions to seek guidance from chaplaincy, 39% of the students were affirmative, while 61% of them disagreed with the assertion, arguing that they do not perceive chaplains’ attitudes as unfriendly and, do not see it as a barrier to seeking guidance from the chaplaincy. A student who does not perceive chaplains’ attitudes as unfriendly reiterated:

Personally, I have always found the chaplains to be approachable and supportive. I have never perceived their attitudes as unfriendly,

and I have never felt hesitant to seek their guidance. In fact, my experiences with the chaplaincy have been very positive, and I believe they genuinely care about the well-being of the students.

The analysis in Table 3 indicates that although, most students find chaplaincy services to be very effective, supportive, and confidential in handling sensitive matters, there are still significant concerns regarding privacy, confidentiality, and the attitudes of chaplains. Therefore, it is imperative to address these issues to further enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of chaplaincy services for all students.

CONCLUSIONS

The study sought to explore students' perception of chaplaincy services at SDA College of Education in Asokore-Koforidua, Ghana. The aims were to examine students' understanding and awareness of chaplaincy services available in the college, how these services influence their personal development, and their views on the challenges facing them in the provision of chaplaincy services in the college. The findings found a strong awareness and understanding of chaplaincy services among the student body in the college. Also, the study revealed that chaplaincy services have positive impact on students' personal development in various aspects, including emotional well-being, spiritual growth, social skills, academic performance, and moral development. Additionally, study revealed that though, students find chaplaincy services to be very effective, supportive, and confidential in handling sensitive matters, there are still significant concerns regarding privacy, confidentiality, and the attitudes of chaplains.

Based on the findings, it was concluded that though there is a strong awareness and understanding of chaplaincy services among students at SDA College of Education in Koforidua-Asokore, which positively influences their personal development, further improvements are needed to enhance the overall effectiveness and accessibility of these services for students and members of the entire college's community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that the college organizes training and professional development programmes for chaplains to enhance their interpersonal skills and empathy towards student' needs. Also, the college should implement regular feedback and evaluation mechanisms, such as suggestion boxes and focus groups to gather students' opinions on chaplaincy services. This will help identify areas for improvement and enable the college to make adjustments to better meet students' needs. Additionally, the principal should ensure that chaplains have enough space to interact with students. These interactions will positively affect students' academic performance, discipline and overall attitudes, which will help the college to achieve its goal of developing well-rounded individuals.

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