PERSONAL NEEDS AS CORRELATES OF LIFE SKILLS NEEDS OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS AT COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

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ABSTRACT: *The study investigated personal and life skills needs of first year students of College of Technology Education, Kumasi. The study established relationship between personal and life skills needs. Descriptive survey design was employed for the study. The population involved first year students. Purposive sampling was used to select 263 students. One set of questionnaire was used to gather data from students. The reliability estimate of the questionnaire was 0.82. Data were analyzed using means and standard deviation, percentages, Pearson Correlation and simple regression. The study found that developing confidence was the common personal need of students. Learning to make decision was found to be the most perceived life skills needs. Significant and positive relationship was established between life skills and personal needs. It was recommended that guidance coordinators should provide counselling services to students periodically to equip them with life skills and decision making skills to solve problems.*

INTRODUCTION

Life at university for freshmen and women can be exciting and challenging. Fresh students face multiples of transitions, including changes in their living arrangements, friendship networks, academic environments, while adapting to greater independence and responsibility in their personal and academic lives (Mapfumo and Nkoma, 2013). Although some of the students successfully make this transition to university others experience long-term emotional maladjustment and depression. According to Gallagher, Golin & Keller (1992) university students have a lot of daily life difficulties such as self-confidence issues, relationships with the opposite sex, and time management. A study conducted by Malaysian university students found that the students' encountered health, financial and academic challenges

The university environment is drastically different from that of the Senior High School. Students experience anxiety as they adjust to academic, social, personal and life style challenges (Abdullah, Elias, Mahyuddin, & Uli, 2009). Adjustment in the first year of study at university has increasingly become vital to the overall success of students (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007). Burgess, Crocombe, Kelly and Seet (2009) reported that failure to meet the wider challenges faced by students during the transition from Senior High School to tertiary education impacts on learning outcomes. According to Knox (2005), the transition from senior high school to university is a life-changing event for a student which extends beyond academic adjustments. The shift from the generally controlled environment of school and family to an environment in which students are expected to accept personal responsibility for both academic and social aspects of their lives poses challenge to them.

Life skills needs of first year students is essential for effective provision of counseling services in the tertiary institutions, especially, university. They are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (World Health Organisation, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial for students to maximize their full potentials and personal development. This suggests that students should be exposed to the basic life skills to enable develop their potentials to the optimum.

Personal needs are innate potentials and abilities that are developed through learning to enable individuals achieve their set goals in life. The satisfaction of the personal needs of individuals leads to a fulfilled life. Life skills become tools for meeting some of the identified personal needs of people to develop self-esteem and self-actualization. Therefore, the identification of first year students' personal needs is essential in providing effective counselling service for optimum development of potentialities.

The knowledge of personal and life skills needs of first year university students is necessary for the provision of counseling services in the university. Guidance co-ordinators should make it a priority to offer the needed counseling services to enable students adjust to the new learning environment. Most of the studies on personal and life skills needs are conducted in foreign countries (Karimi, Muthaa, Bururia, Karimi, & Mburugu, 2014). There is limited studies on personal and life skills needs of students in Ghanaian universities. As a result, establishing relationship between personal and life skills needs of first year students are of great importance.

Statement of the Problem

Management of fresh students' personal and life skills needs are vital tool to ensure proper adjustment of students yet this important tool seem not to be applied effectively by students of University of Education, Winneba. Students seem to have problem with their colleague students regarding interpersonal relationship, financial management and decision making. Studies showed that first year students of university probably experience adjustment difficulties, personal, and life skills needs (Wangeri, Kimani, & Mutweleli, 2012). The holistic development of first year university students is associated with needs, challenges and problems. Hence, the present study has been designed to investigate personal and life skills needs of the first year students of the College of Technology Education of University of Education, Winneba.

Objectives of the Study

This study is undertaken to achieve the following objectives:

1. to identify the most perceived life skills needs of first year students of College of Technology Education

2. to determine the common personal needs of first year students of College of Technology Education.

3. to establish relationship between personal and life skills needs of first year students of College of Technology Education.

4. to examine whether personal needs have significant influence on life skills needs of students first year students of College of Technology Education.

Research Question

In order to attain the above set objectives, the following research question and hypotheses were postulated to guide the study:

1. What are the most perceived life skills needs of the first year university students of the College of Technology Education?

2. What are the common personal needs of first year university students of the College of Technology Education?

Hypothesis Testing

1. There is statistically significant relationship between personal and life skills needs of first year students of College of Technology Education.

2. There is statistically significant influence of personal needs on life skills needs of the first year students of College of Technology Education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Life Skills Needs

Life skills have been defined by World Health Organization (2014) as abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Adaptive means students being flexible in their approach and able to adjust in different circumstances. Positive behaviour implies that a person is forward-looking and even in difficult situations, can find a ray of hope and opportunities to find solutions. Life skills, therefore, include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner (Srivastava, 2017).

Adolescents require a combination of cognitive and social skills to tackle their problems and prepare for future challenges. Life skills include a wide range of knowledge and skills interactions believed to be essential for adult independent living (Santrock, 2005). Santrock (2005) further states that through life skills counselling, one is able to develop problem-solving techniques, be a critical thinker, develop effective communication skills, have good decision abilities, be aware of self, be aware of others and develop socially acceptable ways of coping with stress and emotions. The study conducted by Karimi, et. al. (2014) on students in Kenyan universities found that life skills were a major need among the students. The study suggested that university students need life skills in order to prepare them for the world of work.

Personal Needs

According to Karimi, Muthaa, Bururia, Karimi, and Mburugu(2014), personal needs involves students learning about themselves and others. It includes learning to understand, accept and respect self, developing positive attitudes through identifying , prioritising and evaluating values, understanding and making appropriate decisions students need to developing respect for cultural diversity, learning how to behave responsibly in the family, school and community at large, develop relationship skills to resolve conflicts in a safe and responsible manner.

According to Holmbeck (2011) individuals who are able to succeed handling in their independence are able to make new relationships while maintaining old relationships. Personal needs are critical in keeping relationships and maintaining friendships with other people. When the individual understands his or her personal needs he or she is able to appreciate challenges (Santrock, 2005).

Gallagher, Galvin, and Kelleher (1992) found that large numbers of students on their campus reported very significant personal concerns, including depression, as well as career and academic concerns that counseling centre should address. Studies about student characteristics that are related to counseling needs often report that gender difference exist. For example, finding satisfying career, time management and career uncertainty (Bishop, Bauer & Becker, 1998), adjustment (Kanga, 2017), problem solving techniques (Elliot, Johnson, & Jackson, 1997), and lack of self-confidence (Mutie & Ndambuki, 1999). As a result, students need assistance in order to develop effective personal and life skills. This study seeks to examine the personal needs of first-year students in the College of Technology Education, Kumasi.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed descriptive survey design. Descriptive research design involves the identification of characteristics of an observed phenomenon and the description of the situation as it is (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The design describes and interprets the relationship among variables (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The design was considered appropriate since it was convenient for eliciting the opinions of participants on a phenomenon (De Vos, & Strydom, 2011).

Population

The target population for this study was all the first year students of 2016/ 2017. The accessible population was identified as first year students who attended orientation programme organized by the University. Statistics from the Human Resource Division puts the population of first year students at 1,400. A sample size of between 10% and 30% is sufficient for a study in Social Sciences (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Sample and Sampling technique

Purposive sampling technique was used to select first year students for the study. The purposive sampling was used because the sample will provide the needed information for the students (Alonge, 2010). In all, a total of 263 students formed the sample for the study. The students formed 19% of the total population. A sample size of between 10% and 30% is sufficient for a study in Social Sciences (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Instrument

One set of questionnaire was used to collect data. Questionnaire was used because data provided are of limited interference on the part of the researcher (Sarantakos, 1998). The items on the questionnaire were mostly four-point Likert scale type. According to Sarantakos (1998), Likert scale allows responses to be ranked and it is easy to construct. The scales ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The reliability estimate of the Likert-type questionnaire

was 0.82. The content validity was also achieved by ensuring that the items on the questionnaire covered all the hypotheses and the research questions stated.

Analysis of Data

Data were analyzed using statistical product for solution (SPSS) version 20. Research questions one and two were answered using means, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies. Hypothesis one was tested using Pearson Product Movement Correlation Coefficient and hypothesis two was tested using simple regression. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The research questions were answered based on the scores on personal and life skills needs.

The answers are presented in this section.

Research Question 1

What is the most perceived life skills needs of the first year university students of College of Technology Education, Kumasi?

Table 1: Perceived Life Skills Needs of First Year Students

Items	Strongly Agree N	%	Agree N	%	Disagree N	%	Strongly Disagree N	%	Total N	%	Means	SD
Learning better use of library	99	37.6	127	48.3	22	8.4	15	5.8	263	100	3.15	0.86
Identifying strengths & abilities	140	53.3	111	42.2	5	2.0	7	2.67	263	100	3.46	0.64
Developing personal philosophy of life	140	53.23	100	38.62	13	4.94	10	3.80	263	100	3.39	0.78
Learning to manage stress	124	47.1	112	42.6	12	4.6	15	5.7	263	100	3.32	0.78
Learning to make decisions	162	61.6	84	31.9	9	3.42	8	3.0	263	100	**3.51**	**0.71**
Learning to solve personal problems	167	63.5	73	27.8	13	4.9	10	3.8	263	100	3.49	0.79
Managing time more effectively	161	61	79	30.0	11	4.12	12	4.6	263	100	3.48	0.77
Learning to budget wisely	152	57.8	85	32.3	11	4.2	15	5.7	263	100	3.43	0.78

Source: Computed from field Data, 2018.

As indicated in Table 1, majority of the participants 167(63.49%) strongly agreed that learning to solve personal problems was perceived as need, while only13 (3.8%) disagreed. This was followed by learning to make decisions 162 (61.59%), managing time more effectively; 161(61.21%), and learning to budget wisely 152 (57.79%). Learning to better use the library affirmed positively by 127(48.28%) respondents, however, it was the least life skills need of students. The highest mean average of 3.51 indicated that learning to make decisions is the most perceived life skills need of students.

Research Question 2

What are the common personal needs of the first year university students of the College of Technology Education, Kumasi?

Table 2:   Perceived Personal Needs of First Year Students.

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total		Means	Standard Deviation
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Developing confidence	155	59	91	35	10	4	7	2	263	100	3.48	0.72
Becoming more self-reliant	140	53	103	39	8	3	12	5	263	100	3.42	0.71
Learning to make more friends	63	24	116	44	45	17	38	15	263	100	2.74	0.01
Making my family interested in my studies	124	47	115	44	10	4	14	5	263	100	3.34	0.75
Learning to work with others	147	56	100	38	8	3	8	3	263	100	3.46	0.71
Dealing with community problems	107	40	128	49	13	5	15	6	263	100	3.26	0.75

Source: Computed from field Data, 2018.

Information in Table 2 showed that majority of the students (59%) agreed that 'developing confidence' is the most perceived personal need. This item recorded the highest mean of 3.48 and standard deviation of 0.72. Learning to work with others had the second highest mean of 3.46 and standard deviation of 0.71. Participants agreed that becoming more self-reliant was a personal need. This item obtained a mean score of 3.42 and standard deviation of 0.71. Making my family interested in my studies scored a mean of 3.34 and standard deviation of 0.75 while learning to deal effectively with community problems had 3.26 mean score and standard deviation of 0.75.The least personal needs 'learning to make more friends' had 2.74 mean and

standard deviation of 0.01. The results means that 'developing confidence' was the most perceived personal needs of the students.

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 1: There is statistically significant relationship between personal and life skills needs of first year students.

This hypothesis was to investigate whether personal needs have statistical significant relationship with life skills needs. To test the hypothesis, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis was conducted. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation analysis of personal and life skills needs.

	Life skills needs	Personal needs
Life skills needs Pearson	1	.477
Correlation Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
N	263	263
Personal needs Pearson	.477	1
Correlation Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
N	263	263

Source: Computed from field Data, 2018.   *P< .001*

 **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As indicated in Table 3, there was statistically significant and positive relationship between personal and life skills needs. The computed correlation coefficient was r =.477. The p-value of .000 was less than .01 alpha level. The relationship was found to be positive (r=.477, N=263, $p \leq .01$). The relationship between the personal and life skills was found to be moderate. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

H_0: There is statistically significant influence of personal needs on life skills needs

 Hypothesis investigated whether personal needs have statistical significant influence on life skills needs. To test the hypothesis, simple regression was analysis was performed. Results are shown in Table 3.

As to how much of the variance in the life skills needs (y) is explained by the scores of

 personal needs (x), simple regression equation was performed. The dependent and

independent variables were put into the equation. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Model Summary

Mode	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. of Error	R 2 Change	F Change	Df1	Df2	Sig. F Change
1	.477a	.228	.225	2.78679	.228	76.631	1	260	.000

Source: Computed from field Data, 2018.

  a) Predictor: Personal needs

  b) Dependent variable : Life skills

From Table 4 in the model summary, R has a value of .477 and this value represents simple correlation between personal needs and life skills needs. The value of R^2 is .228, which indicates that 22.8% of the variance in life skills needs is explained by personal needs. A unit change in personal needs will improve life skills needs of student by the average of 22.8%.

Table 5: ANOVA Results of personal needs and life skills needs

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	595.131	1	595.131	76.631	.000a
Residual	2019.205	260	7.766		
Total	2614.336	261			

Source: Computed from field Data, 2018.
  a. predictor : (constant), Personal needs
  b. Dependent Variable : Life skills

The ANOVA test in Table 5 showed that the model was significant. The F-ratio value of 76.631 was significant at p≤ .01. The significant value (.000) was relatively smaller than .001. This means that there is more than 0.1% chance that an F-ratio would happen if the null hypothesis was true. It could be concluded that the regression model resulted in significantly better prediction of life skills need than using mean value. That is, the regression model overall predicted life skills needs significantly well at $F_{(1,261)}$ =76.631, p≤ .01. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis is accepted at a=.01.

Table 5: Influence of personal needs on life skills needs

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient			
	Std. Error	B	Beta	T-value	Sig.	
Personal needs	13.555		.447	11.584	.000	
	1.170.040					
	.348	8.754			.000	

Source: *Computed from field Data, 2018.*
  a. Predictor : Personal needs
  b. Dependent variable : Life skills needs

The predictor was determined by using simple regression analysis with significance level of .000. It is shown in Table 5 that coefficient of personal needs (.477) was significant. This means that personal need was found to contribute significantly to the regression equation.

The regression equation is given as: Y = C+B+X,   Y=13.555 +.477.

The equation means that personal needs could be used to predict life skills needs. The't-value from the data (11.584) was significant at .000. That is, the coefficient of "x" has influence on the regression model.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first question investigated perceived life skills needs of first year students. The findings of the study revealed that learning to make decisions was the most perceived life skills need. This means that students are battling with decision making skills. It could be inferred from the analysis that students have inadequate knowledge and skills in making meaningful decisions affecting their lives in the university. The implication is that students will experience difficulty in making good decisions concerning their academic and professional careers.

Other aspects of life skills needs emerged included learning to solve personal problems, managing time effectively, and learning to budget wisely are the life skills needs of students. This implies that students lack other life skills as well. This finding is consistent with Gallagher, Golin and Keller (1992) finding that university students have a lot of daily life difficulties such as lack of motivation, self-confidence issues, and time management. This finding confirms the assertion of Srivastava (2017) that students need life skills such as psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills to help them make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner.

The findings also are consistent with Bishop, Bauer & Becker (1998) finding that students were concerned with time management, while Kanga (2017)'s study identified problem solving techniques as a challenge to students.

On common personal needs, the study found that developing confidence was common among students. This means that students are in readiness to learn and practice skills to build self-confidence to enable them deal with new challenges. This is not surprising because the students are uncertain about the demands of the university in terms of academic skills and social skills that are prerequisite for positive transfer and better adjustment in the university. This implies that the provision of personal-social counselling to students will enable them develop self-confidence to achieve personal and life goals.

On hypothesis one, the study revealed that personal needs of first year students have moderate, positive and significant relationship with their life skills needs.. The P-value of .000 was less than .01, therefore, the alternate hypothesis was accepted because there was sufficient evidence to accept the claim that personal needs have significant relationship with life skills needs of students. This means that when the personal needs are adequately provided, there will be positive improvement in the life skills needs of the students. Thus, students who possess essential life skills are able to meet their personal needs in all aspects of life. This finding supported the claim of Danish, Forneris, Hodge and Heke (2004) that life skills enable students

to develop cognitively, positive behaviour, and healthy interpersonal relationships that help them to succeed in different environment such as university.

Hypothesis two found statistically significant influence of personal needs on life skills needs. The P-value was small therefore, the alternate hypothesis which states that there is statistically significant influence of personal needs on life skills needs of the first year university students was accepted because there was sufficient evidence to support the claim that personal need has significant influence on life skills needs of students.

CONCLUSIONS

The study examined personal and life skills needs of first-year students of College of Technology Education, Kumasi. The study revealed that learning to make decisions was the common life skills need. The study revealed that the most perceived personal need of students was developing confidence. It could be concluded that when students develop self-confidence, they are able to deal successfully with significant life changes and challenges. The finding had shown that students really have personal needs that are bothering them which may affect their academic life.

The study revealed that positive and significant relationship existed between personal and life skills needs of first year students. It could be concluded that personal needs of students are related to their life skills needs. The study found significant influence of personal needs on life skills needs of students. Personal needs accounted for 22.8% of the variance in life skills needs. It could be said that life skills needs depend on personal needs of students for effective development of positive and healthy relationships with others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The university should organize seminars and workshops on development of self-confidence and decision making to enable students develop and demonstrate self-confidence.

2. Guidance and Counseling coordinators of the university should provide group and individual counselling services periodically to students to help them acquire effective life skills such as decision making and problem solving skills that will enable them deal effectively with personal and interpersonal needs.

3. Academic counsellors in the university should help to identify personal needs of students since personal needs have significant influence on life skills of students and vice-versa. There is the need for the co-ordinator or guidance counsellor to co-operate with lecturers to render referral services to counselors or co-ordinators as lecturers interact more with students so they will be able to identify some of the problems of students and make appropriate referral.

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