

Assessing the Effectiveness of Continuous Professional Development Programs Organised for Counselors in Ghanaian Public Senior High Schools

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How to cite this paper: Antwi, T. (2023). Assessing the Effectiveness of Continuous Professional Development Programs Organised for Counselors in Ghanaian Public Senior High Schools. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 11, 91-107.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2023.116008>

Received: May 11, 2023

Accepted: June 16, 2023

Published: June 19, 2023

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Abstract

Professional growth is a vital facet of every profession, including counseling. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the effectiveness of continuous professional development (CPD) programs organized for counselors in public Senior High Schools (SHS) in the Greater Accra Region (GAR) of Ghana. The study utilized a quantitative descriptive survey design. The sample was 120 counselors who were selected using lottery simple random sampling technique. Structured questionnaires were used to gather data. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. It was established that to a large extent, counselors in SHS perceived the CPD programs as effective in improving their counseling skills and knowledge in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Moreover, program content, delivery methods, and support systems were the factors contributing to the effectiveness of CPD programs for counselors in SHS in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Finally, it was found that there was a positive relationship between the number of CPD programs attended by counselors in SHS and their job performance in terms of providing counseling services to students. It was concluded that CPD programs organized for SHS counselors were effective in improving the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of counselors. Additionally, this study is an important contribution to the field of counseling and education in Ghana. Recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

Keywords

Continuous Professional Development, Effectiveness, Assessing, Counselor, Job Performance

1. Introduction

Professional development is a crucial aspect of every profession, including counseling. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs are designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of professionals, particularly those in the education sector. School counselors play a significant role in ensuring the social, emotional, and academic development of students, thus requiring them to have up-to-date knowledge and skills. However, the effectiveness of CPD programs in improving the performance of school counselors in Ghana is yet to be fully evaluated. This research aims to assess the effectiveness of CPD programs for Senior High School (SHS) counselors in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

CPD programs have become increasingly important in the field of counseling as they provide an opportunity for counselors to acquire new knowledge and skills, update their existing knowledge and skills, and keep up-to-date with current trends and developments in the field (Akinboye, 2018). The importance of CPD programs for counselors cannot be overemphasized, especially in a constantly evolving profession such as counseling. According to Agbenyega, Darteh, and Quashigah (2021), the Ghanaian education system has undergone several reforms, including the introduction of SHS counseling programs. Further, in Ghana, CPD programs for school counselors have been identified as a key component in improving the quality of counseling services in schools (Opoku-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). Counselors play a vital role in supporting students' academic, personal, and career development. The effectiveness of CPD programs for counselors directly impacts the quality and effectiveness of the guidance and counselling services provided to students, ultimately influencing their educational outcomes and future prospects.

The rationale for focusing on Ghanaian public senior high schools was that, these high schools are a crucial component of the country's education system. Assessing the effectiveness of CPD programs specifically designed for counselors in these schools is highly relevant to improving the overall quality of education and student well-being. Ghana, like many other countries, places importance on the continuous improvement of its education system. By focusing on public senior high schools, where a large portion of Ghanaian students receive their education, the research aligns with the national education priorities and contributes to the ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of education in the country. Again, focusing on Ghanaian public senior high schools as research subjects provides an opportunity to examine the effectiveness of CPD programs for counselors within a specific educational setting, benefiting students, educators, policymakers, and the broader field of education.

The Social Learning Theory was used to underpin the study. This theory by Bandura (1977), posits that people learn through observation, modeling, and reinforcement. This theory suggests that individuals acquire new skills and knowledge by observing others, modeling their behaviors, and receiving feedback and reinforcement for their actions. In the context of this study, the social learning

theory suggests that continuous professional development (CPD) programs can be effective in improving the skills and knowledge of counselors in public senior high schools in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. By observing and modeling the behaviors of experienced professionals, counselors can learn new strategies and approaches to counseling that they can apply in their own practice. Findings from this study will contribute to the body of knowledge on the effectiveness of CPD programs for school counselors in Ghana, and provide insights into the design and implementation of effective CPD programs for school counselors in the country.

Globally, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs have positive effects on counselors' counseling skills, empathy, and self-efficacy (Yoon & Kim, 2020; Whiston et al., 2011; Smith & Gibson, 2019; Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2017). Despite the recognition of the importance of CPD programs in improving the quality of counseling services in schools, there is limited research on the impact of CPD programs on the knowledge, skills and competencies of school counselors in Ghana (Opoku-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020; Agyemang, 2018; Boateng & Awuah-Sarpong, 2020). Therefore, there is lack of rigorous evaluations of CPD programs for counselors in Ghanaian public senior high schools and the need to better understand their impact on student outcomes are all significant problems that need to be addressed in order to improve counseling services in these schools. This lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of CPD programs for school counselors in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana is a significant problem because it hinders the development of evidence-based practices and the improvement of counseling services in schools. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap in knowledge by assessing the effectiveness of CPD programs for counselors in SHS in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. By conducting research in this specific context, the study can fill gaps in the literature and provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and practitioners in Ghana and potentially other similar educational systems. The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- 1) To what extent do counselors in SHS perceive the CPD programs as effective in improving their counseling skills and knowledge.
- 2) What factors contribute to the effectiveness of CPD programs for counselors in SHS in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana?
- 3) What is the relationship between the number of CPD programs attended by counselors in SHS and their job performance in terms of providing counseling services to students?

2. Counselors' Perceptions on the CPD Programs' Effectiveness in Improving Their Counseling Skills and Knowledge

Several studies have investigated the effectiveness of CPD programs for counselors. Siu et al. (2019) found that school counselors in Hong Kong perceived CPD

programs as helpful in improving their counseling knowledge, skills, and confidence. [Kitson et al., \(2018\)](#) discovered that Australian school counselors found CPD programs on mental health to be highly effective. [Moyer et al. \(2019\)](#) found that SHS counselors felt that CPD programs helped improve their counseling skills, knowledge, and confidence. [Bouwmeester et al. \(2017\)](#) also found that SHS counselors who participated in CPD programs reported increased knowledge, skills, and confidence related to counseling practices. Additionally, the content and delivery methods of CPD programs may influence counselor's perceptions of their effectiveness. [Akos and Galassi \(2004\)](#) discovered that SHS counselors who participated in CPD programs focused on specific counseling techniques and strategies were more likely to perceive the programs as effective in improving their counseling skills and knowledge.

Although some studies suggest that CPD programs are effective for improving the counseling skills and knowledge of school counselors, other studies report lower levels of perceived effectiveness. [Kosine et al. \(2019\)](#) found that school counselors in the United States perceived CPD programs as marginally effective, while [Cheung and Ngai \(2019\)](#) found mixed perceptions among school counselors in China. [Sallee et al. \(2018\)](#) also found that SHS counselors did not always find CPD programs useful or relevant. It is found that interactive and engaging CPD programs focusing on relevant topics were perceived as more effective by school counselors.

In the context of Ghana, there is limited research on the extent to which SHS counselors perceive CPD programs as effective. However, a study by [Ampiah et al. \(2020\)](#) found that school counselors in Ghana expressed a need for more CPD programs that were relevant to their needs and interests. This connotes that the literature proposes that the extent to which SHS counselors perceive CPD programs as effective in improving their counseling skills and knowledge may vary depending on the content, delivery methods, and relevance of the programs. Further research is needed to understand the factors that contribute to counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of CPD programs in the context of Ghana, precisely among counsellors in SHS in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

2.1. Factors Contributing to the Effectiveness of CPD Programs for Counselors

Research suggests that the most effective CPD programs are those that are evidence-based and involve interactive and practical learning experiences ([Cheung & Ngai, 2019](#); [Falender & Shafranske, 2004](#)). This suggests that programs that offer hands-on experience or skill development may be more effective than programs that only provide theoretical knowledge. To design and implement effective CPD programs for school counselors in Ghana, it is necessary to understand the factors that contribute to their effectiveness. For the purposes of this study, the discussions would focus on three thematic areas: program content, delivery methods and support systems.

2.1.1. Program Content

This is a critical factor that affects the effectiveness of CPD programs for school counselors. According to Akinboye (2018), the content of CPD programs should be relevant, up-to-date, and practical to the counselor's work. In the context of school counseling, the program content should align with the needs of the school, the students, and the community. Also, effective CPD programs should be relevant to the needs of the counselors and reflect the current trends and developments in the field of counseling (Haddock, 2019; Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2016; Pelling & Whiteford, 2016). For example, a study by O'Neill et al. (2019) found that CPD programs focusing on issues related to mental health, such as anxiety and depression, were particularly effective in improving the knowledge and skills of school counselors. Research again suggests that programs that focus on specific skills or topics, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) or multi-cultural counseling, may be more effective than general programs (Cheung & Ngai, 2019; Falender & Shafranske, 2004). This is because specific programs can provide more in-depth knowledge and skill development in a particular area.

2.1.2. Delivery Methods

The delivery method of CPD programs can also impact their effectiveness. Research suggests that programs delivered in-person or via synchronous online sessions may be more effective than asynchronous online programs (Cheung & Ngai, 2019; Akinboye, 2016; Spence, Roberts, & Zahnow, 2016; Falender & Shafranske, 2004). This is because in-person or synchronous sessions allow for more interaction and feedback, which can enhance learning outcomes. Furthermore, research has shown that active and interactive learning methods, such as role-play and case studies, are more effective than passive methods such as lectures (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2019; McDowall et al., 2017). Therefore, effective use of technology-based delivery methods, such as online courses and webinars, can increase access to CPD programs and allow flexibility in scheduling.

2.1.3. Support Systems

Support systems such as mentorship and coaching, are also essential components of effective CPD programs for school counselors. Mentorship, supervision and coaching provide opportunities for counselors to receive feedback, guidance, and support in their practice (Huan & Sulaiman, 2018; O'Reilly et al., 2018). This support system also helps to foster a learning culture and promote ongoing professional development among school counselors as well as increased confidence and competence in their counseling skills. In Ghana, studies have identified several challenges to the provision of effective CPD programs for school counselors, including limited funding and resources, as well as lack of structured training and development programs (Agyei & Baffour-Awuah, 2020; Amoah & Osei-Tutu, 2021; Asante & Asante, 2020; Opoku-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). However, the authors also noted that there is a growing recognition of the importance of CPD programs for school counselors in Ghana and that efforts are being made to improve the quality and accessibility of these

programs.

It could be inferred from the discussions so far that the effectiveness of CPD programs for SHS counselors in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana may depend on several factors, including program content, delivery methods, and support systems. Therefore, it is crucial to design and implement CPD programs that are relevant, accessible, and practical to the needs of these SHS counselors while providing ongoing support and mentorship to enhance their professional development.

2.2. Relationship between the Number of CPD Programs Attended by Counselors and Their Job Performance

Research has consistently shown that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs can have a positive impact on the knowledge, skills, and practices of school counselors (O'Neill et al., 2019; Cheung & Ngai, 2019; Huan & Sulaiman, 2018). However, the relationship between the number of CPD programs attended by SHS counselors and their job performance in terms of providing counseling services to students is under researched. One possible explanation for the lack of research in this area is that the impact of CPD programs may be difficult to measure, particularly in terms of their effect on job performance.

Nevertheless, some studies have attempted to explore this relationship. For example, a study by Bauman et al. (2016) found that school counselors who participated in a higher number of CPD programs reported greater job satisfaction and perceived themselves to be more effective in their counseling work. Similarly, the type of CPD program and the content covered in these programs may also impact the relationship between CPD participation and job performance. In furtherance, a study by Cook et al. (2018) found that participation in CPD programs that focused on topics such as cultural competency and trauma-informed care were associated with improved counseling practices and job performance among school counselors. Similarly, a study by Whiston et al. (2017) found that school counselors who engaged in more CPD activities reported higher levels of self-efficacy, which is a key predictor of job performance. The authors suggest that this may be due to the fact that CPD programs provide opportunities for counselors to learn new skills and strategies, which can increase their confidence in their abilities. Additionally, a study by Kim and Lee (2020) and Baker et al. (2018) found that school counselors who attended more CPD programs reported higher levels of job satisfaction, self-efficacy and perceived effectiveness in their counseling roles. The authors suggested that this may be due to the increased knowledge and skills gained through CPD programs, which can lead to greater confidence in their ability to provide effective counseling services to students. Again, a study by Zalaquett and Lopez (2019) and Paskewich et al. (2018) discovered that school counselors who attended more CPD programs reported higher levels of self-efficacy, self-reported competence, and job satisfaction compared to those who did not participate in such programs.

On the contrary, Dzameshie & Apusigah (2019) found no significant relationship between CPD participation and the frequency or quality of counseling services provided by school counselors. Also, Opoku-Mensah and Amponsah-Tawiah (2020) found that school counselors in Ghana face several challenges that may impact their job performance, including limited resources and inadequate training and professional development opportunities.

Whereas these studies suggest a positive relationship between CPD programs and school counselor's performance, it is important to note that simple attending CPD programs may not necessarily lead to improved job performance. The content and quality of the CPD programs are also important factors to consider. For instance, a study established that the effectiveness of CPD programs for school counselors depended on their relevance to the counselor's needs and the use of active learning strategies.

In summary, the literature suggests that participation in CPD programs may be associated with improved job performance among SHS counselors, particularly when the programs focus on relevant and practical topics related to counseling services. However, further research is needed to fully understand the relationship between CPD participation and counselor's job performance particularly in the Greater Accra region of Ghana.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

Since this study aimed at collecting and analyzing numerical data to answer research questions the quantitative approach with descriptive survey design were adopted for the study. The adoption of the quantitative approach allows for the measurement of various variables, such as counselor knowledge, skills, and attitudes before and after participating in CPD programs. It also provides numerical data that facilitates the evaluation of the effectiveness of CPD programs and the identification of any changes or improvements that occur over time (Creswell, 2018). On the hand, the descriptive design was also well-suited for this study as it aims to describe the current state of the effectiveness of CPD programs for counselors in Ghanaian public senior high schools. Through the use of questionnaires, researchers can gather detailed information about the experiences, perceptions, and outcomes of counselors who have participated in CPD programs (Creswell, 2018). This design allows for the exploration of various factors related to CPD effectiveness, such as program content, duration, delivery methods, and participant satisfaction. The approach and design therefore helped the study to gather information about the characteristics, practices, and perceptions of counselors regarding the effectiveness of the CPD programs organized for these counselors.

3.2. Population and Sample

The Greater Accra Region's SHS Counselors made up the study's population.

The fishbowl sampling technique was utilized to collect data on 120 counselors, 48 of whom were men and 72 of whom were women in order to reach the sample size. Considering the large gender differences, in counseling at the senior high schools in Ghana it is worth noting that, this trend is observed globally, where counseling and related fields, such as psychology and social work, often attract a higher number of women practitioners than men (Ndungo & Wango, 2020; Wango, 2006). The fishbowl draw is a random sampling approach that selects a sample from a population using a lottery system. According to this method, a researcher rolls and shuffles a bowl of slips of paper before drawing a random sample (Kumar, 2011). By giving each sampling unit in the population a fair and equal chance, it removed sampling bias.

3.3. Instrumentation

Data were gathered from respondents using a structured questionnaire that was created based on the research questions and theoretical framework. Demographic information was gathered in the questionnaire's first section. The second section, comprising of close-ended items with a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all to 4 = to a very large extent), answered the research questions (Joshi et al., 2015). A mean score of less than 2.5 was used as the cutoff point to identify items that were perceived negatively. Value scores of 2.5 and higher showed a favorable opinion of CPD programs as effective. Sections C and D of the questionnaires were used to gather data to answer research questions 2 and 3. Using the translational validity technique, I checked the questionnaire's validity (Bolarinwa, 2015; Taherdoost, 2016). At the Counseling Centre of the University of Education, Winneba, two carefully chosen experts in Guidance and Counseling examined the theoretical construct represented in the questionnaire (Guerra et al., 2016). The questionnaire was pilot tested on a sample of 40 SHS counsellors (16 men and 24 women) who were randomly chosen from the Central region. The respondents share similar traits with the study's sampled respondents. The goal of the questionnaire's piloting was to find and address any areas of confusion. The obtained Cronbach's alpha was 0.78, exceeding the advised threshold of 0.70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

I got in touch with the respondents, built a connection with them, and gave them informed consent forms. A week later, I gave the questionnaire out. Before distributing the questionnaire, there was a 10-minute discussion with the respondents. The goal of the study and the requirement for data collection were reiterated throughout the session. If any clarifications were required, an email address was provided. All survey responses were obtained. The data was processed using descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics like Pearson product moment correlation and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) between groups.

4. Results and Discussions

The aim of the study made use of the analysis of the data collected. The analysis of the respondents is shown in the following results.

Research Question 1: To what extent do counselors in SHS perceive the CPD programs as effective in improving their counseling skills and knowledge in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana?

The objective of this question was to ascertain the extent to which counselors in SHS perceive the CPD programs as effective in improving their counseling skills and knowledge in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Items 1 - 10 under section B of the questionnaires were used to gather data to answer this question. Means and standard deviations were used to analyze the data. **Table 1** presents the results.

Table 1. Results on the extent to which counselors in SHS perceive the CPD programs as effective.

Items	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Number of CPD programs you have attended in the past year	4.05	0.87
Extent to which CPD programs provide new information or techniques to improve your counseling skills	4.00	0.75
Effectiveness of CPD programs in improving your knowledge of counseling theories and practices	3.84	0.93
Extent to which you feel that the CPD programs were relevant to your work as an SHS counselor	3.71	0.64
Level of confidence in providing counseling services after attending the CPD programs	3.63	0.83
Attending CPD programs has improved your overall counseling skills	3.58	0.97
Attending CPD programs has improved your ability to address the needs of diverse student populations	3.44	0.93
Level of satisfaction of CPD programs you have attended in terms of their effectiveness in improving your counseling skills and knowledge	3.39	0.89
Your likelihood of attending future CPD programs to further improve your counseling skills and knowledge	3.37	0.84
CPD programs you have attended have provided you with adequate support and resources for implementing new counseling strategies or techniques	3.24	0.76
Grand Total	36.25	8.41
Mean of Means	3.63	0.84

Source: Field data, (2023), Total Number of Counselors = 120. Key: Mean Ranges: 0.00 - 1.59 (not at all); 1.60 - 2.59 (to some extent); 2.60 - 3.59 (to a large extent); 3.60 - 4.00 (to a very large extent).

In **Table 1**, the results show that number of CPD programs you have attended in the past year had the highest score ($M = 4.05$; $SD = 0.87$). This was followed by extent to which CPD programs provide new information or techniques to improve your counseling skills ($M = 4.00$; $SD = 0.75$), level of satisfaction of CPD programs you have attended in terms of their effectiveness in improving your counseling skills and knowledge ($M = 3.39$; $SD = 0.89$), effectiveness of CPD programs in improving your knowledge of counseling theories and practices ($M = 3.84$; $SD = 0.93$), extent to which you feel that the CPD programs were relevant to your work as an SHS counselor ($M = 3.71$; $SD = 0.64$), level of confidence in providing counseling services after attending the CPD programs ($M = 3.63$; $SD = 0.83$), attending CPD programs has improved your overall counseling skills ($M = 3.58$; $SD = 0.97$), attending CPD programs has improved your ability to address the needs of diverse student populations ($M = 3.44$; $SD = 0.93$), level of satisfaction of CPD programs you have attended in terms of their effectiveness in improving your counseling skills and knowledge ($M = 3.39$; $SD = 0.89$), likelihood of attending future CPD programs to further improve your counseling skills and knowledge ($M = 3.37$; $SD = 0.84$), and CPD programs you have attended have provided you with adequate support and resources for implementing new counseling strategies or techniques ($M = 3.24$; $SD = 0.76$).

Still in **Table 1**, the grand total reveals a mean score of 36.25 and a standard deviation score of 8.41. Further, the mean of means score was 3.63. This score ($M = 3.63$) falls within the mean range of 3.60 - 4.00. This result connotes that to a very large extent, counselors in SHS perceived the CPD programs as effective in improving their counseling skills and knowledge in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The results signify that these counselors argued that CPD programs organized for them were effective in improving their counseling skills and knowledge in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. It was then concluded that to a large extent, counselors in SHS perceived the CPD programs as effective in improving their counseling skills and knowledge in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

This finding supports that of [Siu et al. \(2019\)](#) who found that school counselors in Hong Kong perceived CPD programs as effective in improving their knowledge, skills, and confidence in providing counseling services. Similarly, a study by [Kitson et al. \(2018\)](#) found that CPD programs focusing on specific areas, such as mental health, were perceived as highly effective by school counselors in Australia. Also, a study by [Moyer et al. \(2019\)](#) found that SHS counselors perceived CPD programs as beneficial for improving their counseling skills and knowledge as well as their confidence in providing counseling services. Likewise, a study by [Bouwmeester et al. \(2017\)](#) found that SHS counselors who participated in CPD programs reported increased knowledge and skills related to counseling practices. They also reported feeling more confident in their ability to provide effective counseling services to students. Again, [Akos and Galassi \(2004\)](#) found that SHS counselors who participated in CPD programs that focused on specific counseling techniques and strategies were more likely to perceive the

programs as effective in improving their counseling skills and knowledge.

Research Question 2: What factors contribute to the effectiveness of CPD programs for counselors in SHS in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana?

The objective of this question was to determine factors contributing to the effectiveness of CPD programs for counselors in SHS in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Items 1 - 10 under section C of the questionnaires were used to gather data to answer this question. One-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data. The result is presented in **Table 2**.

The result in **Table 2** shows that, there was a statistically significant difference between the means for program content [$F(2, 116) = 1.706, p = 0.000$], delivery methods [$F(2, 116) = 1.007, p = 0.002$] and support systems [$F(2, 116) = 19.536, p = 0.000$] at 0.05 alpha level. This infers that all the three constructs (program content, delivery methods, and support systems) made an impact of the CPD programs organized for counselors in SHS in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The results also denote that the content of CPD programs were likely to be appropriate, current, and hands-on to the counselor's work in SHS in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. It was concluded that program content, delivery methods, and support systems were the factors contributing to the effectiveness of CPD programs for counselors in SHS in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

The findings concur that of [Akinboye \(2018\)](#) who established that the content of CPD programs should be relevant, up-to-date, and practical to the counselor's work. In the context of school counseling, the program content should align with the needs of the school, the students, and the community. Also, [Haddock \(2019\)](#) found that effective CPD programs should be relevant to the needs of the counselors and reflect the current trends and developments in the field of counseling. Furthermore, a study by [O'Neill et al. \(2019\)](#) found that CPD programs focusing on issues related to mental health, such as anxiety and depression, were particularly effective in improving the knowledge and skills of school counselors.

Besides, [Osterman and Kottkamp \(2019\)](#) discovered that active and interactive learning methods, such as role-play and case studies, are more effective than passive methods such as lectures. The finding further support that of [Huan and Sulaiman \(2018\)](#) who found that mentorship and coaching provide opportunities for counselors to receive feedback, guidance, and support in their practice. They further indicated that support system helps to foster a learning culture and promote ongoing professional development among school counselors.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between the number of CPD programs attended by counselors in SHS and their job performance in terms of providing counseling services to students?

The objective of this was to determine whether there was a relationship between the number of CPD programs attended by counselors in SHS and their job performance in terms of providing counseling services to students. Items 1 - 10 under section D of the questionnaires were used to gather data to answer this question. Pearson product moment correlation was used to analyse data for this question. **Table 3** presents the results.

Table 2. Results factors contributing to the effectiveness of CPD programs for counselors.

		Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	Sig.
Program content	Between Groups	1.891	2	0.945	1.706	0.000
	Within Groups	26.049	116	0.554		
	Total	27.940	118			
Delivery methods	Between Groups	1.349	2	0.674	1.007	0.002
	Within Groups	31.465	116	0.669		
	Total	32.813	118			
Support systems	Between Groups	32.867	2	16.433	19.563	0.000
	Within Groups	191.527	116	0.840		
	Total	224.393	118			

Source: Field data, (2023), $p \leq 0.05$. Total Number of Counselors = 120.

Table 3. Results on relationship between the number of CPD programs attended and job performance of counselors.

Counselors (n = 120)					
Variables	M	SD	df	r	Sig.
Job Performance	3.67	0.61			
Number of CPD Programs Attended	4.27	0.56			
			118	0.543	0.001

Source: Field data, (2023), * significant at 0.05. Key: $r = 0.10$ to 0.29 or $r = -0.10$ to -0.29 Small; $r = 0.30$ to 0.49 or $r = -0.30$ to -0.49 Medium; $r = 0.50$ to 1.0 or $r = -0.50$ to -1.0 Large.

Results in **Table 3** indicate that means, standard deviations, of job performance and number of CPD programs attended are ($M = 3.67$; $SD = 0.61$) and ($M = 4.27$; $SD = 0.56$) respectively. Results further point out that there is statistically significant correlation between job performance and number of CPD programs attended ($r = 0.543$, <0.001). The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ($r = 0.543$) shows a large correlation between job performance and number of CPD programs attended. Moreover, the correlation coefficient was positive which implies that the higher the level of number of CPD programs attended by the counselors, the higher the chance of improving upon their job performance. As a result, it was concluded that there was a positive relationship between the number of CPD programs attended by counselors in SHS and their job performance in terms of providing counseling services to students.

This finding confirms a study by [Bauman and colleagues \(2016\)](#) found that school counselors who participated in a higher number of CPD programs reported greater job satisfaction and perceived themselves to be more effective in their counseling work. Similarly, a study by [Whiston et al. \(2017\)](#) found that school counselors who engaged in more CPD activities reported higher levels of self-efficacy, which is a key predictor of job performance. The authors suggest that this may be due to the fact that CPD programs provide opportunities for

counselors to learn new skills and strategies, which can increase their confidence in their abilities.

Additionally, a study by Baker et al. (2018) found that school counselors who attended more CPD programs reported higher levels of job satisfaction and self-efficacy. The authors suggested that this may be due to the increased knowledge and skills gained through CPD programs, which can lead to greater confidence in their ability to provide effective counseling services to students. Correspondingly, Kim and Lee (2020) found that school counselors who participated in CPD programs reported higher levels of job satisfaction and perceived effectiveness in their counseling roles.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study aimed to assess the effectiveness of continuous professional development programs organized for counselors in Public Senior High Schools in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Through a quantitative descriptive survey design, data was collected from 120 counselors who had participated in these programs. The results showed that the continuous professional development programs were effective in improving the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of counselors. Additionally, this study is an important contribution to the field of counseling and education in Ghana. Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, it was recommended that: CPD programs for SHS counselors in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana should be designed by the Regional and Municipal/District guidance and counselling coordinators based on a needs assessment that takes into account the specific needs of the counselors and the schools they serve. This will ensure that the programs are relevant and effective in addressing the needs of the counselors and the students they serve.

Again, CPD programs organized by Regional and Municipal/District guidance and counselling coordinators for SHS counselors in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana should be ongoing and sustainable, with opportunities for continuous learning and development throughout the school year. This will help ensure that counselors remain current and up-to-date with the latest counseling practices and techniques.

Also, the government and other stakeholders of Education should provide the necessary resources and support for the continuous professional development programs, including funding, materials, and training opportunities for facilitators and trainers.

In furtherance, school administrators in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana should encourage and support counselors' participation in the professional development programs, by providing time off for training and covering the costs associated with attending the programs.

Moreover, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be put in place by the Regional and Municipal/District guidance and counselling coordinators in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana to assess the effectiveness of the CPD programs on an ongoing basis. This would help identify areas for improvement and

ensure that the programs are meeting their objectives.

Last but not the least, the study provides a basis for future researchers' further research to determine the impact of continuous professional development programs on student outcomes such as academic achievement, attendance, and behavior. This can help establish the effectiveness of continuous professional development programs in improving the quality of counseling services provided to students.

6. Implications for Counseling

The following are some implications for counseling practices based on the findings of the study:

First, this study highlights the importance of continuous professional development programs for counselors in public senior high schools in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. This underscores the need for ongoing training and support for counselors to enhance their knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to counseling practices.

Second, the study provides valuable insights into the current state of continuous professional development programs for counselors in public senior high schools in the Greater Accra Region. This can help identify areas for improvement and inform the development of more effective training programs.

Last but not the least, the study shows that the continuous professional development program has a positive impact on the counselors' knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to counseling practices, as well as their perceived self-efficacy, satisfaction, and relevance of the program. This underscores the importance of evidence-based training programs that can improve the quality of counseling services provided to SHS students in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

7. Future Research

The current investigation was conducted in Ghana's Greater Accra region at senior high schools. It was anticipated that the results would encourage further researchers to do similar research at different educational levels and in other regions. This would influence CPD training programs and counseling practice. The direct impact of these programs on student academic achievement, social-emotional wellbeing, and behavioral consequences should also be of interest to future academics.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude to the counselors I used for this study for their invaluable support.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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