

DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN NIGERIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

Just like any new thing, the reception and development of which may face obstacles, guidance and counseling is not an exception. The problems it faces could be grouped as those caused by man, materials and money. Although the rationale for the Introduction of guidance of counseling is inserted in the National Policy of Education (2013), and would have expected the nation to embrace the discipline enthusiastically, However, the contrary is the case. Its reception is received with suspicion and a wait-and see' attitude. This paper, trace the historical development of guidance and counseling in Nigeria; its problems and prospects. Concept of guidance and counseling were examined. Need for guidance and counseling services were highlighted, The paper recommended among other things that enough funds should be allocated to each school to run its various services.

It is widely believed that education is an important tool for development of every country. In Nigeria, it is adopted as an instrument "par excellence" for affecting national development (FRISI, 2004). This is because socio-economic development involves change for better and according to Coleman (2003), education is the master determinant of all aspects of change. If the education system is to bring about meaningful change and development in Nigeria, then there should be emphasis on qualitative and functional educational services.

Educational service facilitates the implementation of educational policy, the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of education system (FRN, 2004). These educational services include Teacher's resource centres, curriculum development centres, Research institutes, Educational resource centres, language centres, science and mathematics centres, Textbooks development, Libraries, school health services, Radio and Television broadcasting centres, Guidance and counseling etc.

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), the objectives of educational service shall be to: develop, assess and improve educational programme; enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers; make learning experience

more meaningful for children; make education more cost-effective; promote in-service education; and develop and promote an effective use of innovative materials in schools. Educational services provide favourable educational climate.

Educational climate refers to the prevailing social, physical and psychological circumstances which influence people's attitude to education (Agu, 1994). On the other hand, Brown, Brown, Kittering and McKenna (2001), saw a favourable or conducive educational climate as one characterized by adequate infrastructural facilities and equipment, teaching aids, high curriculum, extracurricular activities and good staff-students relationships.

Guidance and counseling one of the important educational services, promote high morale, good discipline and good student and staff-student relationships. It also enhances teaching and extracurricular activities among learners.

Concept of Guidance

The meaning of guidance is subject to many explanations. While writers like Shertzer and Stone (1976) said guidance is to direct, pilot or guide; others like Kolo (1992) see guidance as a form of assistance that involves many activities that will help the individual understand himself or herself more and the problem. Akinade (1996) said that guidance "refers to a more directive or prescription form of assistance. This means that the assistance is based on providing information that enables you to give definite instructions to the person being helped. Looking at guidance, Idowu (1998) stated that a guidance is a "family name for all the helping services within the general educational a "family name for all the helping service within the general educational and county systems"⁷

Guidance and counseling is life changing process the outcome of which can make or mar the life of an individual. It must therefore be handled with care. There is common saying that "to be forewarned is to be forearmed", when a client is properly guided, he is not likely to make very many mistakes. For him to be guided he needs information. Such information is included in prospectus, brochures, flyers, handbooks etc to help the client plan ahead before making a wise choice.

Shertzer and Stone (1976). Therefore define guidance e.g. the process of helping a client understands himself and his environment. A client understands himself in terms of his interests, needs, fear, anxieties and general personality make up which help him to choose his subjects, careers and vacations on the basis of interest, attitude and aptitude.

Concept of Counseling

Akinade (1996). sees counseling as a "more open and less directive method of helping in which alternatives are laid open before the client and the final decision is left for him or her to take". Explains further, Olayinka (2004), sees counseling as the process whereby a person is helped in a face-to-face relationship. Makinde (2006)

explaining counseling as an enlightened process whereby people help others by encouraging their growth. Therefore, human beings are help to properly understand themselves, their environment and the problems that are causing a high rate of concern. Having read the meaning of the words, shertz and stone (1976) define counseling as a learning process in which individuals learn about themselves, their interpersonal relationship and behaviours that advance their personal development.

Need for Guidance and Counseling

➤ **Expansion in the Enrolment of Pupils/Students in Primary and Secondary School**

From 1960 to when Nigeria gained independence from Britain to present, enrolment in all stages of our educational system has been on the increase. Because of this increase, Fafunwa (1990), one time Minister of Education, after examining the enrolment trends which of course did not include actual application made for enrolment, stated that:

Mandatory students Guidance and counseling service should established in all Nigerian Institution of Higher learning and through such services, the true conditions of the Nigerian economy and its ever changing labour market situation and requirements would be exposed to students' choice of fields and skill of study and calculating in them the acceptance of the dignity and more superior option of leaving institutions of higher learning well prepared both as possible paid employees of others and creators of jobs for self and others, in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy, (p. 16)

➤ **Skilled Work Force**

To reduce this problem, it is necessary to have guidance and counseling to be able to guide people into area where jobs are available. In the technical and sub-professional sectors, there is noticeable shortage in manpower. We depended on foreigners experts to run our railways for us; our aviation sector is not spared from this manpower shortage. In the education sector, the few experts who trained Nigerians to be technologically self-sufficient have packed their bags and baggage to greener pasture, and to the safety and academic freedom of western countries. The medical sector is not spared from high rot. There shortage among senior craft-men and technicians foremen as well as level secretarial and clerical personnel in the country (Okon 2001).

➤ **Automation in the World of Work**

Gaymer (1972), suggest that counselors would have increasing impact o the lives that student will have after they leave school. She felt that the future working lives of student will differ radically from the present and the past. She concluded that automation and technological changes and breakthrough would cause people to:

- Change their jobs more often;

- Relocate more often :
- Change the type of jobs more often; and
- Update and trade in education for models to remain employable, and they will have to diversify their practical skills to remain competitive. (p. 18-24).

These changes will cause people to seek for guidance and counseling.

• **Growing Needs of Youths in this Country**

According to Okon (2001) a NEED is a condition within an individual that energizes and disposes an individual toward certain kinds of behavior. Durojaiye (2008) stated that the developmental needs of youth include:

- Attaining individuality
- Making progress towards an organized personality pattern
- Developing philosophy of life
- Developing concept of values and desirable behavior
- Achieving a place in the society
- Understanding of personal assets and liabilities ;
- Maturing of plans for future living;
- Establishing deep personal relationships with individuals of both sexes;
- Leading to live independently from their parent;
- Leading to attain adult status by vocation plan, family and social relationship plans; and
- Leading to adjust to changes resulting from physical and social relationships and citizenship plans
- All these needs of the youths call for a need of guidance and counseling.

Repeated changes in the Education system

Since after independence, Nigeria has witnessed a number of changes in the education sector. In the past, a pupil needed to spend 8 years in the primary school, 5 years in the secondary school, 2 years in the higher school, and 3 years in the university (8-2-3). Later, the 6 years of primary, 5 years of secondary, 2 years of higher school, and 3 years of university system was recommended and adopted. Currently that is vogue. Already, there are calls in various sectors to change the system to 6-3-3-3-3 to include three years at any college of Education or Polytechnics. The present 6-3-3-4 does not include training at college of Education or Polytechnics. These changes can cause confusion for the individual, which again demand the guidance services.

Unrest in Universities in the other Tertiary Institutions

Apart from repeated changes in the education system, school year has change repeatedly during the last few years. At one point, we were operating a school year from January to December; it was later changed to a school year running from September to June.

Current thinking is on moving back to January to December school calendar year. All these changes are capable of disrupting the academic planning of youths, their vocational needs and plans.

• **Problem of National Integration**

Nigeria, as judged by the 1993 census, has about 104 million inhabitants with population density of about 800 people per square kilometer. Three major linguistic groups, the Hausas, Ibos and Yoruba's are found in the three main regions- Northern, Eastern and Western parts of the country respectively. Each group and section of the country is clamoring for a share in the share in the national cake. The consequence has been political instability, religion intolerance, tribal loyalties, and all form of vices which have militated against the development of the country. Okon (2001) has observed that the survival of Nigeria as a nation depends largely on our degree of tolerance not only our ethnic or political differences but also of our religious differences. Our economic social and political stability depends, to a large extent, on the stability of every citizen to possess some measure of common understanding, attitudes, beliefs, skills and purposes. Thus, the inevitability of guidance and counseling in this respect cannot be overemphasized

Changes in home and family

We have come to learn that family climate has influence in the direction and development of interests, abilities, aptitudes, and values of children. The modern Nigerian home is characterized by a number of changes. Most parents, because of the demand of their jobs, pay very little attention to the development of their sons and daughters

Problems of Cultism

Although there have been cultic activities in Nigeria tertiary institutions since the beginning of Nigeria Independence, they are only just now assuming new dimensions. The negative tendencies in these societies and cults needs to be exposed individual through guidance activities

History and Development of Guidance and Counseling in Nigeria

While the date of the formal start of modern guidance in USA is taken at 1908 via the vocational guidance work of Fran Parsons (Father of American Guidance Movement), 1958 can be regarded as the date of the commencement of modern guidance in Nigeria. That year, the Catholic Reverend Sisters in St. Theresa⁷ College, Ibadan, recognized the need to give adequate career or vocational guidance to their final year students. So in 1958, the sisters, assisted by Mrs. Oruwariye, invited interested and enlightened members of the society to the school. They invited specialists who had made their marks to give career talks on their professions to their final year students. At the end of exercise, most of the students (54 out of 60) were able to select

good jobs or higher institutions of learning. The result was quite encouraging. This motivated other similar schools in other big towns and Ibadan, in particular, to start organizing career talks for their senior students. Soon, there was a crop of "career masters and mistresses" and interested teachers who were assigned job of collation and disseminating career information to students. December 1, 1976 marked the birth of Counselling Association of Nigeria at the University of Ibadan. The first president of the Association was Prof. Olu Akinde, (1976-1980). He was succeeded by Prof. Ss. A. Gesinde, (1980-1984), Para Mallam, (1984-1980), Dr. (Mrs.) Achebe C C. (1989-1990) Carew, Prof A. I. Idowu, (2002-2004) and Prof. Okobia (2004). The Association is a body of trained Guidance Counsellors mainly, but it encourages interested individuals in the helping professions to join it.

Problems Militating Against the Development of the Guidance and Counseling Programme in Nigeria.

Paucity of Trained Counsellors

APGA recommended that there should be a ratio 1 to 250 (counselors-students/clients). Denga (1985) says the ratio, as at 1980 was 1:800. The situation could be worse, This is because the limited members of trained counselors are moving out of school settings into non-school settings. A typical school with a population of 1,000 students is expected to have four counselors, but such a school either has none or at best, only one. This poor counselors-student ratio does not encourage the growth of guidance and counseling in such schools. However, special schools such as the Federal Government Colleges, Military Secondary Schools, University-based Secondary Schools as well as standard/elitist private schools have adequate number of guidance counselors. The percentage of such schools compared that more guidance counselors should be trained with the total population of Secondary Schools in Nigeria is very small.

- **Relative Newness of Guidance and Counselling in Nigeria**

While Western education was introduced into the country about 1842, guidance and counseling was formally introduced in 1958. That is after more than a century. Educational instruction and administration had been entrenched in the educational system long before it. Some educational practitioners tend to view it as an intruder.

Doubt About the Efficacy of Guidance Counselling

Some people such as uninitiated colleagues, teachers, principals or administrators doubt the efficacy of counseling. Psychology has really not attained the degree of precision found in the physical sciences. People, especially adults are therefore skeptical about reliance on its use. Such people think it is more application to children who are not yet ripe enough to make vital decisions for themselves. They believe adults do not need it. One wonders who needs Marital, Rehabilitative Parent-Child counseling if not the grown-Child counseling if not the grown-ups (Akinade 1990),

Blurred Role of the Guidance Counsellor

Several people in the society do not know the specific roles of the counselor. Even in the school settings, where awareness is expected to be high, school personnel such as teacher and principals do not understand or they misconstrue the functions of the counseling. For instance, Makinde (2001) wrote that head teachers see them as rivals instead of helpers

Resistance by Colleagues and Principals

It has been observed by many guidance counselors that they often experience resistance from institutional heads, influential and significant members of staff of their establishments. Such officers often act in ways, which prevent the spread of counsellings. Olaosebikan (2006) reported that counselors face resistance, which might be stiff and persistent from principals and colleagues.

Feeling of Suspicion of the Role/Integrity of Counselors

Some school personnel still see the counselors as having a 'hidden agenda' or something to hide when a client goes into the counseling room (where this is available). Some give counselors negatives or derogatory labels. This is more so where the other workers doubt the moral integrity of councilors who give individual counseling to young ones. This feeling becomes more serious when a male counselor treat females student and gives the interaction high confidentiality, yet consoling demands reasonable privacy.

Confidentiality

The issue of confidentiality is pertinent in counseling. Clients expect their secrets of privilege information to keep secret or confidential and not exposed to others, However a referral agent such as teacher, peers, parents, and principals expects counselors to divulge such information of suspicion of his activities. Revealing the secrets leads to loss of faith in counseling. Counselors on one part, will lose clients and friends of such clients and counseling will be the loser on the long run. Yet, all these are happening

Lack of Commitment of Government Officers

Although, the federal Government entrenched the guidance and counseling programme in the NPE, (2004), there is still to do when it comes to practical support and it implementation. More committed action will help the growth of the profession. For instance, there should be adequate planning that would map out both short and long term goals as well as strategies of evaluating the progress being made.

Inadequate Funding

Guidance and counseling is not well funded. Today, the education enterprise has become a costly venture. Enough funds are not allocated to each school to run its various

services. Where funds is available, very little is embarked to each school to run it seems the various levels of government (Federal, State and Local) do not want to stretch their budget with extra demands from an emerging unit such as guidance and counseling. Yet, it is know that effective counseling demands adequate funding to purchase items such as psychological test, journal and various publications, play gadgets, cardboards and various felt pens as well as money to organize activities such as excursions, career clubs and career day/week and furnishing an counselor's office.

Lack of Counseling Office/Room

Problem of space or office accommodation is common in the typical secondary school. This is particularly so in the urban centres (where counselors may be found). This results into a situation in which there is hardly any spare room that can be referred to as 'counselor's office'. Guidance may be anywhere but counseling needs privacy if it is to be effective. One may see a counselor interacting with a client in one corner of the staff room, under a tree or a place seemingly away from people but such areas are never distraction-free. The best that occurs in schools without a counseling officers is guidance or educational/vocational counseling, not socio-personal counseling.

Paucity of Psychological Tests

There are very few 'made in Nigeria' for Nigeria's psychological test. Several test are being constructed but only a few of them have been standardized. These tests include test of Prf. C. G. M. Bakare, Prof. Akinboye, WAEC 21IB Aptitude Test and Federal Ministry of Education Battery of Aptitude Test for streaming JSS III students into course families in SSI. Using psychological test is one of the factors that make counseling scientific and more objective. However, there are relatively few counselors who can identify, use and interpret the relevant ones. The available foreign tests may not be culture-fair and hence may not be standardized.

The Prospects of Guide and Counseling in Nigeria

Basically, the prospect for guidance and counseling in Nigeria depends on the solution to the problems enumerated above. However, based on the present trends, t seems that the future is bright for guidance and counseling in Nigeria for the following reasons;

- The entire educational system in Nigeria is aware of the need of guidance and counseling service to the students. This realization has made the Federal Government to approve study programmes in guidance and counseling for most Universities in the country. Of recent,

Ahmadu Bello University was to begin a B.Ed, programme on Guidance and counseling by 1991/92 session. This is in realization of the need of such services. With many guidance counselors, we can then struggle for professionalization and condition of services. Almost all Nigerian Universities have Guidance and counseling centres to help their student. All these are indication of awareness. How effective these are now in another question to be

answered of research. Also many bodies are becoming interested in the Guidance and counseling services now. For example, in 1987 Industrial Training Fund organized a National Workshop on Guidance and counseling. Also in 1988, counseling association outside the schools. Others from different settings turned out. With this trend, it may seem in the nearest future that the use of guidance service may permeate other sectors of the economy Guidance and counseling is also proposed to be integrated into the training of Nigerian Teachers. This implies that in the nearest future, Guidance and counseling may be well established in the schools. With very teacher adequate educated on Guidance and counseling, the commonly reported rancor between counselors and teachers may be resolved. Hence, prospects for practices.

Problems of various types are emerging in our society, for example, marital problems family problems, vocational problems, relationship problems, and retirement problems. All these and others demand the attention of the counselors. As long as these problems exist in the society, guidance counselors will always have a work to do either as public or private counselor. With the factors or conditions still operational in Nigeria, then the future is bright for counselors and the prospects therein may demand on how effective the counselors use their skills and competencies to help their fellow human being to understand and resolve their problems in a more realistic way.

Conclusions

School guidance and counseling is an important educational service that enhance educational climate for the attainment of educational objectives. Despite all the efforts and achievements made so far in counseling, there are indications that the educational service needs a redirection. Thus guidance and counseling should be refocused in terms of curriculum, recruitment, training/ and practice awareness and funding. This will help to achieve the purpose for which it is established in the school system.

Recommendations

- It is suggested that more guidance counselors should be trained and encourage. Infact, in 1984, the Association of Nigerian Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools requested that guidance counselors be posted to Secondary Schools. This should be effected.
- Effective counseling demands adequate funding to purchase items such as psychological test, journal and various publications, play gadgets, cardboards and various felt pens as well as money to organize activities such as excursions, career clubs and career day/week and furnishing an counselor's office.
- Deliberate efforts should be made to construct and standardized more psychological test. Counselors should be trained in ways to use them too. They should be sold to adequate trained users at affordable prices. They should be available as well.

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