
REPOSITIONING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS THROUGH INNOVATION

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Abstract

The work discusses on repositioning guidance and counseling in Nigerian Secondary Schools through innovation. The essence of guidance and counseling in secondary schools include making the students understand the educational, vocational and social information needed to make wise choices. In our society there are many influencing forces responsible for the gradual recognition of formal guidance to young people in various educational levels. The essence of incorporating guidance and counseling into the school system was to eliminate student's ignorance on their choices of career prospects.

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The paper discusses among other things, aims of guidance and counseling in secondary schools, Problems affecting guidance and counseling in Nigeria and Innovation in guidance and counseling. The paper found that one of the main reasons of starting guidance and counseling units in secondary schools is to enable students decide on their career choices. It recommends that government should ensure that there are qualified guidance counselors in every school.

Keywords: Counseling, Guidance, Innovation, School, Career

Introduction

Education is said to be an accumulated experience that has a determinant effect on human character and mind. As a process, through which societal values, norms, principles, ethos, and skills can adequately be conveyed. Individuals need education in order to acquire this accumulated knowledge. The educational system in Nigeria is not far from the technical aspect of education in that it is all involving as a process of transmitting the societal norms and values toward the development of the nation. An overview of the colonial educational system provided, revealed gross inadequacies to the educational ingenuity, yearnings and aspirations of the nation. Thus many scholars opined that this formal education was parochial, elitist, and irresponsive to the need and aspirations of the Nigerian society. In view of these, an effort to put quality into the Nigerian Education resulted in instituting a well-defined educational system that will be instrumental in affecting national development. It is believed that —education goals in terms of its relevance to the need of the individual as well as in terms of the kind of society desired in relation to the environment and realities of the modern world and rapid social changes should be clearly set out (National Policy on Education, 2004). The bid to meet the nation's educational goals and aspiration brought about the 6-3-3- 4 system of education. It was designed to restructure and inject functionality into the nations' school system. The 6-3-3-4 system of education was seen as a creditable programme able to bring about effective changes in the direction of technological development in a nation. The essence of incorporating guidance and counseling into the school system was to eliminate overwhelming ignorance of many young people on their choices of career prospects and personality maladjustment among school children. Based on these and more, career officers and counselors were

appointed to take the responsibilities in sensitizing students on the needs for effective career choice. Following the tremendous benefits of the first recipients of guidance and counseling in 1959, a group of untrained counselors were inaugurated in 1967 by the Reverend Sisters from St Theresa's College Oke-Ado who were the first pioneers of this body. Although these were untrained counselors but their efforts brought remarkable development in guidance and counseling in Nigeria. With more emphasis placed on guidance and counseling as far back as 1959, 1962, 1963 and 1967 respectively, the peak of getting aware of counseling profession in Nigeria was on 11th of November, 1976 following the formal launching of the body of counselors known as Counseling Association of Nigeria (CAN), with Professor OluMakinde as the first President. In 1977, the association became affiliated to the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) with Professor Ibrahim I. Kolo from Ahmadu Bello University as the current president.

The concept of Guidance and Counseling

Guidance may be broadly defined as the full range of interventions which assist pupils to make choices about their lives (National Centre for Guidance in Education, 1999). Guidance comprises a range of processes designed to enable individuals make informed choices and transitions related to their educational, vocational and personal development (Watts and Kidd, 2000). Onyilofor (2009) defined counseling as help professional counselors give to their clients on issues on education, socio-personal and occupational decisions. A counselor is any individual who is trained and can render help to another individual to discover and develop his/her educational, vocational and psychological potentialities so as to achieve optimal level of personal happiness and social usefulness (Encyclopedia Britannica, New edition, 2010).

Aims of School Guidance and Counseling Services in Schools

Guidance and counseling services has become an integral and essential component of Nigerian educational process for all students as they progress through the educational system. According to Egbochukwu(2008), the aims of school guidance and counseling services, which are based on a developmental hierarchy, are to provide students with opportunities to: (i). Develop knowledge and appreciation of themselves and others. (ii). Develop relationship skills, ethical standards and a sense of responsibilities.(iii). Acquire skills and attitude necessary to develop

educational goals which are suited to their needs, interest and abilities, and (iv). Acquire information that would enable them to make decisions about life and career opportunities Today, the services has gained prominence in the Nigerian educational system and many are becoming interested in counseling the youths especially students in making wise educational, vocational and social decisions. Counseling Service is one of the recent disciplines introduced into Nigerian Educational system. With the current trends in technological development and globalization, it has become imperative to refocus counseling and widen its scope to meet with the challenges of the modern society especially in Nigerian secondary schools. To ensure that this discipline, counseling wears a national outlook, the National Policy on Education (2004) made it clear that counseling services should be rendered to students in schools. The aforementioned policy document noted that —in view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counselors will be appointed in post primary institutions (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981, p43). The above citation gives an idea that all students in the school system should benefit from counseling services. The counseling services became widely recognized as an important aspect of educational services. It was to fulfill the Nigeria government policy and as a way of implementing the policy statement, professional counselors are posted to virtually all the post–primary schools in Nigeria. The policy provision has been encouraging but appears to run short of many processes as well as the problem of implementation. The guidance counsellors are expected to render counseling services which according to Afia (2005) include counseling, orientation, information appraisal, placement, referral, fellowship and evaluation. The services are not only to ensure quality in education, but also to help individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to identify opinions, explore alternatives and succeed in life. No doubt Nwaokolo (2006) noted that when counselors perform their expected duties in the school setting, then the students will be satisfied as their different academic, vocational, social and personal life aspirations are fulfilled.

Career counseling

Career counseling is very fundamental to students' successful and meaningful living. Every student desires to be identified with a good profession, but this could only be achieved through effective counseling on the choices of career to maximize their potential. Career, though crucial to mankind, occupies almost all entire human life. This is due to the fact that career contributes enormously to all human activities, building individuals high self-esteem, satisfaction and adjusting to healthy life. It equally assists students to discover their innate potentials and acquire the needed knowledge for building lifelong profession. The word —career|| refers to the activities and position involved in vocation, occupation, and jobs as well as to related activities associated with an individual's life time of work Zunker (2002). In view of this, adequate utilization of career counseling is required in public secondary schools in Nigeria if the nation's goals are to be attained. Furthermore, counseling task also involve giving the client an opportunity to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more satisfying and resourcefully as cited in Macleod (2003). Case of maladaptive behaviors like violation of school rule and regulation, bullying, truancy, drug abuse, alcohol addition, sexual abuse, rape is on the increase among our school adolescents. Ofordile (2002) noted that managing and modifying adolescent maladaptive behavior is still a big challenge facing teachers, student caregivers and the society at large. Students have variety of interest and abilities. This makes it difficult for them to choose a career. In vocational counseling, students should be provided with detailed up- to-date useful information about different careers. The information should be centered on careful planning for a career, getting and retaining the career and adjusting effectively to it. The reason for all these is to let the students consider the various areas in harmony with their potentials and consequently choose the best career Arua (2006).

Problems affecting Guidance and Counseling in Nigerian Secondary Schools

One begins to question if counseling services are really planned and implemented properly in Nigeria Secondary schools. The great importance and significance attached to guidance and counseling programme in our educational system makes it necessary for an effective guidance and counseling services in our present secondary schools. This notwithstanding however, is likely to face a lot of problems in term of implementation or providing the guidance and counseling masters opportunity to function

properly in the school system. The 6-3-3-4 system is generally geared towards harmonizing the society with its technological needs as it attempt to develop the society as the need arises. The problem of inferiority complex, personal confidence, self-motivation and inter-personal relationship lead to building of fellow students, this at times leads to truancy in the school. Also some students' do not have self confidence in terms of keeping themselves and do not want help from other people. The problems which manifest themselves in the social and emotional needs of the students which affect students learning conditions are as follows: (1) Drug Addiction: This is a major problem where teachers, parents, school administrations and counselors find it hard to cope with and resolving it, for it is usually not easy to get rid of this habit formation when students deviate from counselor's advice. The Parent Teachers Association (PTA): This association provides room for dialogue between the teachers and the parents. This can be used as a yardstick that measures the progress of guidance and counseling programme in the state, but lack of such association has been posing threat to the guidance and counseling programme in schools in places where the association is established, parents tend to neglect the attendance of such meeting whenever they are invited, as such they cannot understand the problems of their children as well as their achievements in schools. (2) The influence of peer groups: The influence of peer groups may hinder the progress of guidance and counseling programme among students where the child has been influenced by his friends to make choices of subjects and career selection based on the interest of his peers. Being his/her friends they may decide to choose the same subject not necessarily considering their interest and capabilities. (3) Inadequacy of Guidance Counselor in Secondary Schools: In some schools one may find that there is only one or no counselor handling the guidance and counseling programme and one person cannot effectively perform these functions satisfactorily due to the work load, while in other schools career masters are asked to carry them out.

Innovation in Guidance and Counseling

Innovation, by definition, is the introduction of something new which could be a new idea, method, project, and so on. Nahikian in Hutch (2010) stresses that innovation results when a new approach is applied to an old problem that makes a lasting and far reaching changes in behavior. Guidance and counseling innovation simply means improving on the existing method in order to accommodate the present needs of the society.. Without innovation,

there isn't anything new, and without anything new, there will be no progress. If an organization isn't making any progress, it simply cannot stay relevant in the competitive market. Innovation has been and continues to be an important topic of study for a number of different disciplines, including economics, business, sociology, guidance and counseling, among others. Innovation is the act of introducing something new, which could be a new idea, method, project, and so on. Nahikian in Hutch (2010) stresses that innovation results when a new approach is applied to an old problem that makes a lasting and far reaching changes in behavior.

Innovation in Guidance and Counseling simply means improving on the existing system in order to accommodate the present needs of the society. Guidance and counseling innovation is crucial to the continuing success of any educational reform. When we refer to guidance and counseling innovation, we are referring to the ways in which many factors may contribute to transformation in guidance and counseling process. Here it could be stated that guidance and counselling leads to available human and material resources as well as innovation in the quality of educational delivery in secondary education in Nigeria. Here innovation and repositioning are the same. Any developed guidance and counseling curriculum should not be static; it should regularly be improved upon so as to accommodate changes that occur overtime in the 21st century global society.

It is noteworthy that school curricula have been repositioned at all levels of education particularly higher education in Nigeria, from 2005 to date through the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) and other agencies of government. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) document further instituted six goals for repositioning curricula with detailed "Key strategies", which include ensuring and sustaining unfettered access to education for the total development of the individual; improving the quality of education at all levels; Using education as a tool for improving the quality of life through skill acquisition and job creation for poverty reduction; ensuring periodic review and effective implementation of the curriculum at the secondary level to meet the requirements of higher education and the world of work; mobilizing and developing partnerships with the private sector and local communities to

support and fund education; Promoting information and communication technology capability at all levels (Balarabe, 2012).

Conclusion

Counseling is a form of education, which the students receive from their counselors. In the new national policy of education (6-3-3-4) the demand for guidance and counseling is apparently made clear. There was agreement also, with a very negligible deviation that the school time-table does not make provisions for guidance and counseling activities. The essence of incorporating guidance and counseling into the school system was to eliminate overwhelming ignorance of many young people on their choices of career prospects and personality maladjustment among school children. The role of innovation in repositioning guidance and counseling can be seen as one of change or improvement on the normal trend. The importance of guidance and counseling programme in secondary schools, include bringing to the students an increased understanding of the educational, vocational and social information needed to make wise choices. In our society there are many influencing force responsible for the gradual recognition of formal guidance to young people in various educational levels. The paper found out that principals have false impression that a school can function effectively and profitably without a guidance counselor. The paper recommends that government should ensure that there should be qualified guidance counselors in every school.

Recommendation

The following recommendation was made

- 1 Nigerian education system should respond to the need and aspirations of the Nigerian society in other to meet the manpower needs of the nation.
- 2 The school time-table should make make provisions for guidance and counseling activities.
- 3 There should be enough guidance counselors in all the schools in the state at all levels of education.
- 4 There should be training and retraining of guidance and counseling teachers at all levels of education

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