



IMPROVING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: IMPLICATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS IN EDUCATION

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Abstract: Guidance and counselling is a service that all human beings need at one point of their life. There is no human being that has never got a problem at one point or another. Guidance counselling is a noble profession whose importance in the educational system of Nigeria is becoming increasingly recognized by the country's educational planners and policy makers. Ideally a well-trained school counsellor should be available in each institution in the federation to deal with various aspects of students' problems and this presupposes the establishment of school guidance and counselling from the primary up to the tertiary levels. The essentials services expected of guidance counsellor in schools was highlighted and the means through which guidance programmes could be enhanced for effective service delivery in Nigerian secondary schools were expatiated. The process involves putting the prevailing situation in proper perspective by identifying the challenges and counselling is a problems solver. The role of the counsellor is to coordinate all the school guidance personnel in order to achieve effective guidance and by extension, the school objectives. The paper however, recommended that guidance service should be integrated into the primary school curriculum and be taught as a class subject and that administration of each institution provides critical leadership and conducive work environment to accommodate the kind of flexible work schedule and organizing regular workshops, seminars and conferences for stakeholders in guidance and counselling.

Keywords: Guidance and Counselling, Effectiveness, Secondary School, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

Education at all levels needs the presence of guidance and counselling services which is needed to attend to the numerous problems that students may face in either at home or in the school. These problems range from academic,

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social and personal problems which are common amongst students irrespective of their social, economic, religion, ethnic and cultural background. According to UNESCO (2010), adolescents are prone to behavioral challenges which require adequate counselling for them to overcome the challenges. In Nigeria for instance, there are contemporary problems facing students in school, particularly, secondary school students. Researches have shown that there were low counselling services in Nigerian secondary schools and it is appalling that less than 30% of Nigerian students practically seek for guidance and counselling services are activities that aid students to achieve emotional stability and excel in adjustment (Aluede, 2006; Muraina, 2018).

Guidance and counselling is a service that all human beings need at one point of their life. There is no human being that has never got a problem at one point or another. Once a problem arises, one seeks solutions, suggestions or even other people's opinions about the problem. In one way or another, one seeks for guidance and counselling services (Alutu, 2005; Garner, 2000). Guidance and counselling services are services that have been in existence as long as human beings have lived, either formally or informally. Guidance and counselling has been engraved in African traditional society since time immemorial. According to Busari (2012) and Muraina (2018) guidance and counselling was entrusted to the immediate and extended family where individuals confined in and depended upon their relatives for advice when faced with problems. As such in the African traditional society, people of all ages could seek for this service from the elderly or respected people in the society such as fortune-tellers, wizards, astrologers, palmists and future-tellers were thought to be getting information from the gods and could therefore guide and counsel others according to what the gods have counselled.

Young people could be counselled by the elderly on the norms of the society and what was expected of them in the society. All this was informal counselling. However, in the African traditions, the elders counselled the younger ones and the wiser counselled those with less experience. Likewise, the expertise and religious leaders such as Pastor and Imams counselled the whole society (Akinade, 2012; Oderinde and Muraina, 2014). Man sought comfort, help and solace from the family and close associates. Children were brought up in a neatly woven relationship of the extended family in African Traditional Societies. The society had counsellors who included aunts, uncles, and grandparents. However, the home as one avenue of instilling sex and moral education is challenged by modern constraints such as shattered cultural

basis of child upbringing, rising standards of living, economic constraints, and inadequate family guidance and counselling, child headed homes, wars, tribal clashes, cattle rustling, displacement and moral conflict (Busari, 2012; Kolo, 2012).

Guidance counselling is a noble profession whose importance in the educational system of Nigeria is becoming increasingly recognized by the country's educational planners and policy makers. Ideally a well-trained school counsellor should be available in each institution in the federation to deal with various aspects of students' problems and this presupposes the establishment of school guidance and counselling from the primary up to the tertiary levels (Adeyemo, 2014). The omission of vocational or career guidance and developmental guidance at the primary school level in Nigeria is not only incongruous but suggests some dangers, this called for the Needs for Repositioning Guidance and Counselling in Education.

In line with the above assertion, the paper has highlighted the relevant aspects of guidance and counselling in our tertiary education (Akinade, 2012). This is fundamentally regarded as a process of helping individuals to understand themselves and the world they live in (Aluede, 2006). It is an elaborate preparation, arrangement and programmes directed towards helping individual to make wise, intelligent choice and decision. Under guidance programme, individuals are led to understanding their abilities, potentials, weaknesses attitudes interests and capabilities. The long and short terms or goals are self-fulfillment and self-adjustment in society.

The need for appropriate implementation of counselling services at all levels of education is very essential; this is well attested to from the academic performance of students suggesting counselor's incompetency in the discharge of their duty. The resultant effect is not farfetched, secondary school students due to ignorance, wrong information, influence of peers, mass and social media and lack of guidance, adolescents have fallen into the danger of drug use and abuse, violence, robbery, unguided sexual activities, and school dropout (Oderinde and Muraina, 2014; Hassan, 2009). In Nigeria, reports from the primary, secondary and tertiary educational level point out that the learners are indulging in pleasure and luxury. People have bad manners, contempt for authority, and disrespect for older people (Alutu, 2005; Kolo, 2012). It is not common to hear parents, teachers and church leaders blaming each other, for failing to teach the young people to be well behaved. Many parents have

abandoned the teaching of their children which people have entrusted to the counsellor (Adeyemo, 2014; Odediran, 2014). Although the Ministry of Education has ensured that each public school has a teacher-counsellor appointed by Teachers Service Commission (TSC) yet indiscipline cases persist and Nigeria is not exceptional. This then necessitates research in these perspectives. This study therefore concentrates towards improving guidance and counseling services for effective service delivery in Nigerian secondary schools and its implications for educational stakeholders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brief History of Guidance and Counselling in Nigeria

While the date of the formal start of modern guidance in USA is taken as 1908 via the vocational guidance work of Frank Parsons (Father of American Guidance Movement), 1958 can be regarded as the date of the commencement of modern guidance in Nigeria (Kolo, 2012). That year, the Catholic Reverend Sisters in St. Theresa's College, Ibadan, recognized the need to give adequate career or vocational guidance to their final year students. Therefore, in 1958, the reverend sisters, assisted by Mrs. Oruwariye, invited interested and enlightened members of the society to the school. Specialists in different areas of endeavour who had made their marks were invited to give career talks on their professions to their final year students. This effort gave insight to the students about world of work and hence assisted many of the students to select good jobs or higher institutions of learning. The result was quite encouraging and it geared some other schools in Ibadan and other big towns around to start organizing career talks for their senior students. This singular move led to emerging of career masters and mistresses while interested teachers in the school system were assigned job of collation and disseminating of career information to students (Popoola, 2015). In 1962, Ibadan Careers Council was formed.

It was composed of distinguished knowledgeable and philanthropic individuals. Their aim was to propagate vocational guidance to students or the young ones where workshops, seminars and symposia were organized. In 1967, Nigeria Careers Council grew out of the Ibadan Career Council. The members of the Ibadan Careers Council formed the nucleus and support of the Nigeria Careers Council. People continued along the line of vocational guidance (Ojo, 2015). The Council incorporated career masters and mistresses.

A journal named “Careers” was published by this body to disseminate current information about job. In a move that showed recognition of the guidance and counselling services, Dr. C. I. Berepiki, a Fellow of the Counselling Association of Nigeria, was appointed the first Vocational Guidance Officer by the Federal Ministry of Education, Lagos in 1961. He wrote an Approach to Guidance in Schools.

For a very long time after him, there were no other trained officers to work actively in this unit but with the current state of the profession, the unit is well manned by trained male and female counsellors. It now has two sections – Careers and Counselling Sections which organizes workshops and conferences and coordinate counselling activities in the country (Adeyemo, 2015). Many States Ministries of Education have similar set-ups. Another opportunity to introduce guidance and counselling in several secondary schools emerged in 1967, Mr. Rees, an American, organized a workshop at Comprehensive High School, Aiyetoro, Ogun State. The motive was to plant the seed of guidance and counselling in that area and he did it successfully. The Association, in 1992, started the same acronym with the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and the Computer Association of Nigeria (CAAN).

In order to avoid confusion, at the Kano Conference in 1992, the Association dropped CAN and took up CASSON i.e. (Counselling Association of Nigeria). The Association has also encouraged the formation of State Branches. This is to encourage ‘grassroots’ spread of the Association. Some state branches are quite active with various activities, workshops, seminars and handle some counselling cases. This aspect is done on individual basis or, in some cases; ‘team approach’ is used. Some state branches have journals e.g. Imo State has Counselling Spectrum (Popoola, 2015; Hassan, 2009). December 1, 2006 marked the birth of Counselling Association of Nigeria at the University of Ibadan. The first president of the Association was Prof. Olu Makinde (1976–1980) he was succeeded by Prof. S. A. Gesinde (1980–1984), Prof. Para Mallum (1984–1988), Dr. (Mrs.) Achebe C. C. (1989–1990); and Prof. C. G. M. Bakare (1990–1994); Dr. Nsa A. Nsa (1994–1996) and 1996–2002 Prof. 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 (Okon,

2009). The Association produces, through its senior members in the Universities and some Colleges of Education and other counsellors for both the private and public sectors of the Nigerian economy. The journal of the Association is called “The Counsellor”. Through it, research findings of members, which are discussed at the annual conferences, are disseminated. Conference proceedings are also published. In 1975, the first Department of guidance and counselling in Nigeria was established in the University of Ibadan. The second full-fledged department was established at the University of Ilorin in 1981. Ever since then, several universities and some colleges of education have been producing well-trained counsellors. As at now, several counsellors have had postgraduate training with Master and Ph.D degrees. There are some professors already in the discipline.

The Federal Government has inserted the need for guidance and counselling in our schools in its National Policy on Education (2013). This has helped to make all the State Governments to establish guidance and counselling units in their Ministries of Education. In addition to counselling units in the Universities, there are some private clinics in the big cities such as Lagos, Ibadan and Owerri. Suffice to say that although guidance and counselling is a relatively new comer to the Nigerian educational scene, it is gradually making its impact (Ojo, 2015; Okon, 2009). It is still evolving. Guidance counsellors are playing their part in the implementation of the ongoing 6-3-3-4 educational systems.

Essential Guidance Services in School

Guidance and counselling in secondary education should focus on suggested counselling procedure by Busari (2012) as enumerated bellow:

Appraisal Service: Involves the use of psychometric instruments to gather data on individuals to enable both the counsellor and the individuals concerned to understand themselves. Using the appropriate appraisal procedure using the test or non-test techniques, the individual can be opened-up to him. He is thus in a better position to understand his strengths and weaknesses, and consequently can make more realistic and effective choices

Placement Service: Refers to assistance given to an individual to make adjustment to the next stage of life development (Olayinka, 2012). In secondary school, student’s placement may means secondary adjustment in further education or adjustment in a job after secondary education. Placement therefore refers to the next steps, either in educational pursuit or in pursuit or

in vocational pursuit. Individuals need to be placed in educational or vocational field that relate to their interests, abilities and personalities.

Referral Service: This is the act of transferring an individual to another person or agency providing different kind of assistance. Referral is made for the purpose of specialized assistance. Many referrals occur simply because the problem is beyond the scope of the services provided.

Orientation Service: This is provided to help students adjust better in any new environment. Many new students feel lost socially and psychologically because they no longer enjoy the psychological support of parents, friend and former teachers. Orientation service helps students to adjust during his critical transition period. The students are introduced to the physical plants, administrative setup, rules and regulations governing student conduct use of school facilities, teaching staff, and how the school guidance programme can serve their needs.

Evaluation Service: The entire guidance programme in the school is evaluated in order to see how far the stated objectives and goals have been realized and whether the programme meets the developmental needs of the students. Unlike the other guidance services, evaluation is not a direct service to the student but to the entire guidance programme.

Counselling Service: Is a personalize dialogue or interview between the counsellor and counselee or client during which the client seeks expert assistance from the counsellor regarding the resolution of his problem. The Counselling service is personalized in the sense that usually, the client has a personal problem which requires privacy and confidentiality for discussion with a help expert. Such concerns may include emotional problems, family problems, sexual difficulties, marriage issues and other psychological problems (Hammed and Muraina, 2016). The Counselling service is the heart of guidance service and the most important central service of guidance.

Information Service: This aims at providing students with better knowledge of educational decisions. Such decision might include whether to go for further education or not, what institution to attend, what courses to offer, what elective to take, which social association to belong etc. The sources of information service include the local community, the national sources as well as source from outside the country.

Follow-up Service: This service is designed to assess the extent to which the guidance programme is meeting the needs for which it was

established. This service is concerned essentially with successes, failures, problems and feedbacks from those who have benefited from the programme. The ultimate goal of follow-up and evaluation is to improve the programme or make those adjustments that have been indicated by the beneficiaries of the programme as necessary. Individuals need to understand what is required in the situation they are placed. In order to determine the effectiveness of planning and placement, there is need to find out how the individuals are developing in their own place of work, and school, how they are adjusting into their new environment. Follow-up service helps the staff to better understand and improve their curriculum and methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problems Confronting Guidance and Counselling Programmes in Nigerian Schools

Although, the rationale for the introduction of Guidance and Counselling is inserted in the National Policy on Education (2013), the problems confronting the development of guidance and counselling programme could be grouped as those caused by men, materials and money. Its reception is received with suspicion and a 'wait and see' attitude. This is due to the following according to Idowu (2008) and Ipaye (2005):

Paucity of trained counsellors: APGA recommended that there should be a ratio of 1 to 250 (counsellors-students/clients). Tucker, Hamayan, and Genesse (2006) and Umoh (2008) say the ratio, as at 1980 was 1:800. The situation could be worse. This is because the limited members of trained counsellors 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 counsellors; now such a school either has none or at best only one. This poor counsellor-student ratio does not encourage the growth of guidance counselling 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 counsellors. The percentage of such schools compared with the total population of secondary schools in Nigeria is very small. It is suggested that more guidance counsellors should be trained and encouraged.

Inadequate funding: Guidance and Counselling 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 fund is available, very little is earmarked for counselling purposes. It seems the various levels of government (Federal, State and Local) do not want to stretch their budgets with extra demands from an emerging unit such as guidance and counselling (Idowu, 2008; Ipaye, 2005). Yet, it is known that effective counselling demands adequate funding to purchase items such as psychological tests, journals 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 a counsellor's office.

Lack of Counselling Office/Room: Because of several factors such as explosion of students' population and inadequate number of classrooms, problem of space or office accommodation is common in the typical secondary school. This is particularly so in the urban centers (where counsellors may be found). This results into a situation in which there is hardly any spare room that can be released for counselling as 'counsellor's office'. Guidance may be given anywhere but counselling needs privacy if it is to be effective (Adeyemo, 2014). One may see a counsellor 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 counselling office is guidance or educational/vocational counselling, not socio-personal counselling.

Relative newness of Guidance and Counselling in Nigeria: While western education was introduced into the country about 1842, Guidance and Counselling 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.

Blurred Role of the Guidance Counsellor: Several people in the society do not know the specific roles of the counsellor. Even in the school settings, where awareness is expected to be high, school personnel such as teacher and principals do not understand or people misconstrue the functions of the counsellors. For instance, Makinde (2013) wrote that head teachers see them as rivals-instead of helpers.

Resistance by colleagues and principals: It has been observed by many guidance counsellors that people 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 counselling. Odediran (2014) reported that counsellors face resistance, which might be stiff and persistent from principals and colleagues. Most times, counsellors tend to be viewed with suspicion by them. Some institutional heads might be apprehensive that the 'new comer' counsellor does not erode their prestige or popularity and power among students, parents and members of the public (Olayinka, 2012). Resistance of institutional heads may be reflected in their lukewarm, poor or reluctant attitude in supporting the programme or refusal to formally introduce the counsellor to other members of school staff.

Role/integrity of Counsellors: Some school personnel still see the counsellors as having a 'hidden agenda' or something to hide when a client goes into the counselling room (where this is available). Some give counsellors negative or derogatory labels (Kolo, 2012). This is more so where the other workers doubt the moral integrity of counsellors who give individual counselling to young ones. This feeling becomes more serious when a male counsellor treats female students and gives the interaction high confidentiality, yet, counselling demand reasonable privacy.

Confidentiality: The issue of confidentiality is pertinent in counselling. Clients expect their secrets or privileged information to be kept secret or confidential and not exposed to others. However, referral agents such as teachers, peers, parents, and principals expect counsellors to divulge such information to them. Failure of the counsellor to reveal the 'secret' may raise the degree of suspicion of his activities. Revealing the secrets lead to loss of faith in counselling and counsellors on one part, will lose clients and friends of such clients and counselling will be the big loser on the long run. Yet, all these are happening.

Lack of commitment: Although, the Federal Government entrenched the guidance and counselling programme in the NPE (2013), there is still much to do when it comes to practical support and its 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.

Repositioning Guidance and Counselling Services for Effective Service Delivery in Nigerian Secondary Schools

The process involves putting the prevailing situation in proper perspective by identifying the challenges and counselling is a problems solver. The role of the counsellor is to coordinate all the school guidance personnel in order to achieve effective guidance and by extension, the school objectives. Coordination in school guidance may be defined as the harmonious combination of the functions of all other adults or school personnel involved with the school child for the purpose of helping him/her to become a more productive member of society. Eyo, Crocker, Luhtanen, Baine and Broadnax (2010) maintained that school counselor's direct service alone cannot make for counselor-effectiveness. The counselor needs to depend on other professionals both within the school and the community to assist in the provision of certain specialized services for students.

It was for this reason that Miller and Labovitz (2003) suggested formation of guidance committees and Olayinka (2012), Tucker, Hamayan, and Genesse (2006) and Umoh (2008) also proposed models of offering guidance and counselling services in Nigerian schools. Also the counselor conducts needs assessment survey in conjunction with formulating the guidance policy and objectives for each year. These objectives are evaluated through questionnaires, interviews; checklist etc. from staff and students, and the result is used in formulating fresh guidance objectives. The counselor therefore initiates the programmes and motivates and trains other professionals in the school for an effective guidance and counselling service delivery. If the techniques of control suggested and summarized by Hassan (2009) are applied therefore, the challenges confronting our secondary education will be minimized:

1. **Leadership Style:** The style of school leadership and the resultant social climate affect the behaviours of student in school. Students and teachers alike respect positive leadership and when they get it; there is seldom a problem of discipline. School principals and head masters cannot expect discipline in their school unless they are able to discipline themselves. Firmness together with honesty and a sympathetic attitude towards students' problem will secure more readily than attempting to please everybody.
2. **Team Work:** Teamwork means gaining the cooperation of the teachers. If

there is sharing of responsibilities in the school, the leaders cannot enforce discipline alone.

3. **Morale of Teachers:** Teachers' morale is likely to fall in the absence of adequate materials inducement. Students tend to identify themselves with particular teacher(s) and are resentful if the teachers, in their view are being maltreated.
4. **Good Teaching:** Generally, students misbehave in school due to incompetent of teacher who are unable to give them an efficient service. Students want to be sure of good results at the end and are unhappy if the results of their school do not compare favourably with those of neighboring schools.
5. **Social Climate:** Students respond negatively to an unpleasant and undemocratic atmosphere. They will do everything to avoid the fear and anxiety caused by such an atmosphere. It is reported that ritualized school activities such as promotion, repetition, policies are the major sources of fear and anxiety. Social and recreational activities engage the energy of the students and contribute to the pleasantness of the school climate. They provide outlets for the release of tension with a resultant improvement of mental health of students.
6. **Boarding facilities:** Dilapidated buildings and poor accommodations as well as meals and poor service breed bad behaviours.
7. **Guidance and Counselling:** Bad behaviours is reduced if teachers adopt the policy of using every school situation to assist students to solve their problems. Rules must be clear and not too numerous, and students should be told what the desire standard of behaviours is, but on self-discipline and willingness to cooperate with and respect others. However, the principal must realize that the blame will be his when some things went wrong in his school. Likewise, he will have the credit if his school achieves satisfactory results (Eyo, et al., 2010). Consequently, he/she must be vigilant and alert in dealing with the problems relating to his staff and students. Some of the problems with regard to the students relate to the admission, classification, and grouping of the students for instruction, boarding, recording, and reporting of the students' progress to parent, and the maintenance of order.

CONCLUSIONS

It is very essential to note that guidance and counselling programme cannot be haphazardly introduced. For the programme to enjoy credibility, popularity patronage and continuity within the school system, they must not be super imposed, they should be developed in a gradual sequential manner. The services should suit local condition/ local language and rhyme with the philosophical frame work of the school. It also crystal clear that challenges of providing guidance services are enormous and require urgent attention with the school population vis-à-vis the number of available qualified guidance counselors must be considered in initiating and developing guidance programmes. Consequently, it is recommended that:

1. Efforts should be made by government to train more qualified counsellors at degree and diploma levels in all our conventional universities in Nigeria.
2. Guidance service should be integrated into the primary school curriculum and be taught as a class subject. This kind of teaching will enrich their value system and open their minds to the basic facts of live.
3. It will also be very important that administration of each institution provides critical leadership and conducive work environment to accommodate the kind of flexible work schedule and organizing regular workshops, seminars and conferences for stakeholders in guidance and counselling.
4. Government to accord guidance and counselling its rightful place in the U.B.E programme and specify counsellors' functions in clear terms.
5. Principals and other management officers in the school should make budgetary allocation for the smooth running of guidance programmes in schools.

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