

History and Development of Guidance and Counselling in Nigerian Educational System: The Bottlenecks

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Abstract: - This paper examined the concepts of Guidance and Counselling, History and development of Guidance and counselling in Nigeria, principles of guidance and counseling are highlighted. The bottlenecks in the growth of Guidance and Counselling in Nigeria educational system include: All schools from primary to all tertiary institutions should be equipped with adequate counsellors in order to render quality guidance and counseling services that will help the students to realize their potentials in life. Counsellors should work hand in hand with other professionals in schools to achieve success. All stakeholders of education should collaborate together in removing the bottlenecks hindering the growth of guidance and counselling in Nigeria educational system as non-clarification of counsellor's roles in a school setting; time allocation; location of counselling offices; shortage of counselling personnel; lack of recognition; confidentiality; problems inherent in counselling personnel; insufficient psychological testing; lack of fund; and lack of occupational information. It is recommended that fiscal support should be given to the establishment of guidance services by both the Federal and State government like other arms of educational support institutions. This would assist in the effective running of the programme.

Keywords: Guidance and Counselling, helping relationship; principles, guidance services and confidentiality.

I. CONCEPT OF COUNSELLING

According to Willey and Andrew (2011), counselling involves two individuals one seeking help and other a professionally trained person who helps to solve problems, orient and direct him towards a goal which leads to his maximum development and growth. Counselling services are therefore required for individuals having developmental problems because of the handicap they suffer in any area of emotional either because of hereditary factors or environment conditions.

Counselling is an integral part of an over-all programme of guidance. Counseling is a process designed to help clients understand and clarify personal views of their life space, and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and a resolution of problems of an emotional or interpersonal nature. It believes that every human individual has the potential for self-growth, self-development and self-actualization (Ndim & Onukwugha, 2013)/.

II. CONCEPT OF GUIDANCE

Busari (2005) defines guidance as the process of helping individuals discuss and develop their educational, vocational, and psychological potentiality and thereby achieve an optimal level of personal happiness and social usefulness. Akinboye (2000) opined that provision of guidance in schools is necessary to help students gain adequate knowledge and understanding about the skills, attitudes and values that they must cultivate in order to live comfortably in a constantly changing society. According to Egbo (2015), guidance is a programme of service meant to enhance the ability of clients to cope with circumstances and be of need to themselves and the society. Guidance enables clients to make choices which are intended to bring self-direction and adjustment. It is designed to help clients adjust meaningfully to the environment, develop the ability to set realistic goals and improve on total educational programmes.

According to Egbo (2015), Guidance and Counselling therefore recognizes the worth and dignity of the individual and is designed to enhance, the total development of mental, vocational, emotional, intellectual and socio personal aspects of the clients. It is purely an education service which among others:

- Develop, assess and improve educational programmes
- Enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers
- Make reasoning more meaningful to children
- Reduce educational costs
- Develop and promote an effective use of innovative materials in schools.(Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). This is consequent on the fact that Nigerian philosophy of education is based on the assimilation of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and equal educational opportunities for all her citizenry.

III. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

The development of guidance and counseling started in Nigeria for various reasons which include: expansion in the enrollment of pupils in the primary and secondary schools

after the independence in 1960, the growing need of youth in Nigeria, repeated changes in the education system and unrest in tertiary institutions and the changes in home and family life (F GN,2014 edition). According to Busari (2005), Owuamanam, (2007, Ndum and Onukwugha (2013) and Omoniyi (2016), it is generally accepted that in Nigeria the organized and formal guidance and counseling service started in 1959 at St. Theresa's College, Oke Ado Ibadan, by a group of dedicated religious ever end sisters who had the perception of the need for proper guidance in job selection for their secondary school leavers. They invited some twenty outsiders to advise them about placing sixty of their final year female students in appropriate careers. This is about eight decades after the birth of an established and functional guidance and counselling services in America. The advisers even though were not vocational guidance specialists, later formed the core of what later became the Nigerian career council.

The Federal Ministry of Education in its efforts to encourage guidance education established a guidance counselling unit in 1961 and employed an education officer named Mr C. I. Berepeki to serve as Vocational Guidance Officer in the Federal Ministry of Education. This official gesture went a long way to stimulate and promote a steady interest in professional guidance and counseling in the then Western part of Nigeria which established an Advanced Teachers' College of Education named Olunloyo College of Education. The College was staffed with a team of experts in Education and Counselling from Ohio State University, United State of America. Such group of lecturers according to records included the eminent personalities in counseling.

According to Akinboye in Owuamanam (2007), the first series of Nigeria Diploma Certificate in Counselling were awarded in this college and the beneficiaries of these awards were the first cream of teacher/career masters and counsellors that arose in Nigeria time. Akinboye in (Owuamanam (2007) noted that the first workshop on Vocational; Guidance Counselling and Testing in Nigeria was organized in 1964 by the Federal Ministry of Education. This brought all the career masters and all those potential guidance counsellors under various voluntary organizations together. The first indigenous Department of Guidance and Counselling was established at the University of Ibadan in 1975; and the inauguration of the Counselling Association of Nigeria in 1976 at the same University of Ibadan as an affiliation of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA). The Federal Government then inserted the need for guidance and counselling services and courses in our schools in its National Policy on Education by 1981. This then led the state governors to establish guidance and counselling units in their ministries of education, in addition to counselling units in the universities.

IV. PRINCIPLES OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Olayinka (2005) posited that in effort to help the client to develop self-understanding, self-fulfillment, self-clarification and self-determination, the school counsellor

needs to base his/her guidance and counseling practice on certain principles some of which are

1. Guidance services are for all people. A programme of guidance services is potentially intended for all people, and not only those who have problems. Students, staff, the community and other agencies may benefit directly from a programme of guidance services. Even, if an individual is not experiencing educational, vocational or personal-social problems, such a person may need some help or to be motivated to plan his/her life more meaningfully.
2. Guidance services are voluntary and not by force or coercion. The student may be persuaded but not forced to participate in a counseling encounter. Shy and reluctant clients may be referred to the counsellor by their parents, teachers, friends or other significant persons, but the counsellor has no right to force a client to come for counseling.
3. Guidance services are for all school levels. Appropriate types of counseling techniques should be fashioned to suit the needs of counsellees at primary school, junior secondary, senior secondary school and post secondary institutions of Nigerian educational system. Counsellors should realize that the types of problems and concerns of the client differ from one age to the other.
4. Guidance services are aimed primarily at preventing problems than solving them. The primary goal of counseling is to prevent major problems from occurring. In life situations, however, problems still occur which the school counsellor should deal with to assist his/her client.
5. Guidance services do not provide solution to all human problems. Counsellors should assist clients to resolve as many problems as possible; but some problems definitely fall out of their competence. Unresolved problems can be referred to more competent agencies for possible solution. The counsellor should recognize his limitations and promptly refer clients to other agencies whose services will better meet the needs of the clients which the counsellor has identified.
6. Guidance services must ensure the security and confidentiality of all personal information revealed either directly by the client during the counseling interview or through data collection process. Confidential information should only be shared with others with the consent of the client or if to do so will serve the interest of the client and the law of the land. If a client confides in the counsellor that he /she has committed one type of crime, the counsellor should strongly persuade him/her to stop such a criminal act; he should not report the confidential information to the law enforcement agencies or the principal. A counsellor should not betray trust and confidentiality which the counsellee has in him/her.

7. Guidance services should be rendered on a continuous basis. As a person grows up, his/her needs, interests, goals, aspirations and plans may also change. Guidance services should not be a once – and for- all affair, but should follow up the developmental pattern of an individual as much as it is feasible.
8. Guidance services should recognize the worth and dignity of the individual client. Counsellors should accept their clients with empathic understanding, congruence and unconditional positive regard as postulated by Carl Rogers. Other school personnel such as members of the school disciplinary committee may be inclined to summarily dismiss a student due to shortcomings or violation of school regulations. Guidance services focus on the reformation of the offender and the need to plan for alternative behaviour for the client to adopt. Thus, the counsellor holds a positive and patient view that most individuals with maladaptive behaviours could be changed through adequate learning processes.
9. Guidance services are based on the total development of mental, vocational, emotional and personal-social aspects of an individual. Intellectual development alone is limiting. The cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the individual are all important and should be emphasized.
10. Guidance services may manipulate the environment to help the client. A counsellor may look for employment opportunities for his her client’s consideration. The counsellor may intervene on behalf of his/her client to seek for scholarship or prevent other persons from frustrating him/her.

V. BOTTLENECKS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN THE NIGERIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

Omoniyi (2016) asserts that in the Nigeria school system today, cursory observations reveal that guidance and counselling have not been accepted and given its appropriate position in the various levels of schools. This is despite the fact that it has been categorically stated in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2014 revised), that guidance and counselling was the cinderella of the 6-3-3-4 system of education. The guidance and counselling services are an indispensable part of any school administration in the primary, secondary and higher levels of education. They are important to achieving the national set educational goals at these levels. Although there are stated guidance counselling goals and objectives in the National policy of Education for primary schools, there are neither established counselling units nor counsellors at this level of education. Where else shall a good and enduring foundation be laid if not in the primary schools? In the secondary schools, even though the government is paying lip service to the existence of guidance and counselling services, they are non-functional. The major challenges in the implementation of guidance and counselling programmes

according to Busari, (2005),and Omoniyi (2016) are as follows:

Non-clarification of Counselor’s Role in a School Setting:

In successful organization of guidance and counseling programme, attempt should be made to clarify the role of the counsellor. This lack of clarity of role has led to some unpleasant experiences. Some principals and teachers are not clear about the role of guidance professionals while some vice-principals have even viewed counsellors as rivals(Busari, 2005 & Omoniyi, (2016). They are regarded with suspicion even by other teachers. Some advocate that since counsellors are in the educational setting and staffing problems are being experienced, the counsellor should also perform teaching role. So in many cases the counsellor because of the burden of adding counselling to normal teaching, makes the guidance programme tedious. There is also the likelihood that when the counsellor becomes a classroom teacher, the transference of behaviour as a teacher - as an authority figure of students, hinders the counseling relationship. The counsellor is also expected sometimes to perform the role of disciplinarian which of course negates the relationship between him and the students who are supposed to be free to interact with him as the counsellor.

Time Allocation

Many school authorities refuse to give definite time to school counsellor to perform the guidance and counselling programme. Instead, they are engaged in teaching some other subjects or in doing other administrative jobs. Scheduling time for counselling has met with problems. cursory observations and practical experience shows that most principals do not want counselling during school hours because no time has been provided for it on the school time table. According to them, it would probably disturb the school activities. However for the counsellor in the school who at the same time has to keep up with the teaching function, it may not be easy for him to wait after school hours for group or individual counseling. Students too are not patient enough and parents may also frown at their staying behind after school hours. Others advocate for the break time and sometimes library period. However, the counsellor may have classes at these periods and in most cases these times are too short for any meaningful guidance programme to take place (Omoniyi,2016).

Unstable Government Policy

Unstable government policies affect to a large extent a number of things to our school. The school guidance programme is not an exception. Some policies are on paper only and never practiced or given the necessary follow-up if properly implemented. This sometimes poses a number of problems for the counsellor and the school guidance programme.

VI. LOCATION OF COUNSELLING OFFICES

In places where the authority manage to give accommodation, the location of the room or counseling office are too open and this affects the attitude students have towards it. counsellor was given a room directly opposite to staff-room and students who were seen going in were later questioned by other members of staff who want to know what their problems were. Many schools do not provide an adequately prepared room for the guidance services. Some use rooms in the administrative block while others are left to look for shades, neither of which are acceptable. Records in the guidance services are very important especially for reference purposes; however, because of inadequate arrangement of rooms, the necessary clerical staff and even successful keeping of records had been a problem in schools where guidance and counseling services are offered. It is very tedious for the guidance counsellor to combine counselling services with the clerical duties of record keeping.

VII. SHORTAGE OF COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

Professionally trained counsellors are in short supply in our schools. Not all post primary institutions in Nigeria can boast of having full-time counsellor to cope with the large number of youths who require help in the various areas of their development. Many Universities do not train counselors with specialized training; hence most schools make use of teachers as counsellors and career masters who do not have deep knowledge of counselling programme.

Lack of Recognition

Guidance and counselling programme in Nigeria as at today is not being giving its due recognition to have the necessary impact. The Luke-warm attitude of parents, government officials, school authorities, class teachers constitute serious problems to the effective discharge of guidance and counseling services in our schools as many people still fail to recognize the guidance and services as being necessary in schools.

Confidentiality

In the African culture, there is the tendency for individuals to keep their needs, worries and problems secrets until, in many cases they get out of hands. These hinder counselling activities and the smooth discharge of the work of the counsellor. Many of the clients may refuse to discharge their minds in the presence of others for fear of being found by others. Some who are interested in discussing in the presence of others are often shy, not wanting others to know that they have problems. There is also the interference and conflict of cultural belief and professional ethics. Students need the assurance that their secrets will be kept in confidence. However, some principals and teachers expect counsellors to divulge this information when they require it. This is against the ethics of the profession and the counsellor finds himself between two opinions. If he insists on keeping

such information secret, the relationship between him and other members of staff is further strained.

VIII. PROBLEM INHERENT IN COUNSELING PERSONNEL

Counsellors themselves have sometimes constituted great problems for themselves. Some of them are not fully committed to the profession (Makinde in Omoniyi, (2016)). Some counselors do not give enough time for the counselling interaction. Also with regards to the counsellor, some have created problems concerning his age. Some people have come to conclusion that older counsellors are better than young ones because of the experience they have passed through. This attitude on the part of some principals and teachers is passed on to the parents who would rather seek older counsellors. That notwithstanding, the present counsellors in the school systems must pull their weight to negate the ill-feeling and suspicion on them by the school authority. It should be disheartening to hear that the guidance counsellors are the architect of their own problems in the school system. If the school personnel view them as having nothing special to offer to the school system and as such try to frustrate them, it is then up to an individual counsellor to work harder to negate such feelings and attitudes. But rather than doing this, most guidance counsellors after a few trials fail to struggle to win the race hereby giving the school authorities the chance to confirm their earlier hypothesis about them. This is why Kolo (1985) observed that one of the major problem in the practice of guidance in Nigeria is that which is inherent in the counsellors themselves.

Insufficient Psychological Testing

Appropriate psychological tests are rather few in Nigeria schools. In more advanced countries, such tests take care of educational, vocational and personal interests and other problems of the youths in relation to subject and career choice. The use of imported psychological batteries which are found in our schools may cause more harm than good because their relatively difficult vocabulary and cultural differences.

Lack of Fund

In considering how the guidance and counselling service will be offered, issue such as finance cannot be overlooked. Funds for the innovative efforts of counsellor have not usually been forth coming since the school heads find it difficult to give out of the already scarce funds to counsellor. This may not exactly be their faults as provision may not have been made for this from the governmental level. Any successful service requires money. Funds are needed for the purchase of tests, collection and storing of information. The school is expected to have an annual allocation of funds sufficient to install and maintain necessary equipment, literature and teaching aids for the counselling services. Money is needed for transport fares, and career excursion, cumulative record folders, allowance and hospitality for guest speakers at careers day or career conventions.

Lack of Occupation Information

Most counsellors in Nigeria schools face serious problem of obtaining information which is very vital to counselling. Most establishments, industries and other employment agencies usually deny or refuse to make available to counsellors necessary information relating to job distributions, vacancies and other conditions service in their establishment for fear of divulging how their establishment is being managed. Societal attitudes towards the counselling programme: While some significant others seek for information to be divulged others see the counselling relationship as an invasion of the privacy of the individual. Some parents who are in support of this view attempt to frustrate rather than support the guidance programme (Makinde 1981). They sometimes accuse counsellors of instigating their children against them and intruding into their family life. These negative attitudes lead to an unsuccessful implementation of the counselling activities since these attitudes are sometimes passed on to the students. The negative attitudes of significant others that have been discussed may be traced back to the age long tendency of man of resist change.

IX. CONCLUSION

All schools from primary to all tertiary institutions should be equipped with adequate counsellors in order to render quality guidance and counseling services that will help the students to realize their potentials in life. Counsellors should work hand in hand with other professionals in schools to achieve success. All stakeholders of education should collaborate together in removing the bottlenecks hindering the growth of guidance and counselling in Nigeria educational system.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made to enhance the guidance and counselling services in Nigeria schools.

- The government should as a matter of urgency establish well functional Counselling units in schools.
- Fiscal support should be given to the establishment of guidance services by both the Federal and State government like other arms of educational support institutions. This would assist in the effective running of the programme.
- Enlightening and creating awareness in the teachers and head of the schools, concerning the aims and objectives of guidance and counselling in the school system should be carried out by the Ministry of Education at both federal and state levels. This would clarify the minds of the members of staff concerning the wrong notion they already have and enhance their support in achieving the aims and objectives of the guidance and counselling programme. This is important more so that the guidance and counselling

programmes are also meant to enhance the members of staff in the School in discharge their duties.

- Presentation of guidance and counselling programmes in such a way as to evoke favourable attitudes from the members of staff is also very important. This will enable the counsellor as well as the entire school system enjoy and benefit maximally from the counseling programmes.
- Liaising with the Community on behalf of the school on guidance counselling programmes is also recommended. The counsellors through this create community awareness of guidance and counselling programmes as well as the impact of the programmes on the Community. Liaising with students' Parents both individually and through the Parent-Teachers Association is highly important. This would ensure that parents' actions at home complement the counsellor's efforts at School.

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