

REINVENTING COUNSELLING SERVICES IN NIGERIA EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract

It has been perceived that school counselling service is an integral part of the school education program that is aimed at supporting the process and educational goals of the students in planning their future. It is designed to facilitate self-understanding and development through dyadic or small-group relationships. This paper advocates that as a determine nation like Nigeria that is no enthusiastic about her educational remodeling far global competitiveness, there is an enormous needs to install and update the various counselling service centers in our schools, hospital, among others for global competition. The major counselling service centers were reviewed as well as the need for counselling service in Nigeria's education for global competitiveness. This paper therefore concluded that all stakeholders of education should explore ways and means of mitigating the prerequisite of reinventing our Nigeria's education for global competitiveness discussed here in this paper.

Keyword: Counselling, Services, Need and Global competition

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, ethics, 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 inadequacy and unsatisfactory to the educational ingenuity, yearnings and aspirations of the nation. Thus many scholars opined that this formal educations was parochial, elitist, regurgitate and irresponsible to the need and aspirations of the Nigerian society (Uwaifo& Uddin 2009.) In view of these, an effort to put quality into 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 tenns 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 president.

Counselling

Counselling is an integral part of an over-all programme of guidance. It is a specific process of assistance extended by an expert in an individual situation to a needy person. This means the counselling situation arises when a needy person is face to face with an expert who makes available his assistance to the needy individual to fulfill his/her needs. It is the process of help given to an individual person to develop and accept an integrated picture of his aptitude interest and personal needs so that he will be able to understand and achieve maximum adjustment to the environment. It is also a collaborative, intimate relationship that permits the counsellors and the client to freely express and explain themselves in a mutual manner (Arewah and Obiyan, 2019). Counselling must have existed in one form or another since the very beginning of human civilization. Man must have sought comfort help and solace from the family and close associates.

In Tony (2005) opinion, the term counselling was earlier associated with serious personal problems such as alcohol dependency and marital breakdown. In recent years however, the term has been widely used in different spheres of life including education management, vocation and many others. Counselling is the act of assisting a client to have a positive perception about the surrounding circumstances. It aims to assist the client to possibly perceive things from a different point of view from what he initially perceive it, to enable the client function effectively. Tamhawal (2007) stated that counselling is concerned with the feelings, attitudes and emotional dispositions of an individual about himself and situations facing himself and the world around him to be able to utilize his/her potentials to the fullest and live a normal and well-adjusted life.

School Counselling Service

School Counselling Service is an important part of guidance and counselling and it is required at all levels of education (Idowu, 2014). For instance, provision of career guidance and counselling services is essential to university education, particularly in the production of qualitative and competitive graduates. According to the National Universities Commission (NUC; 2013), in order to validate the acquired knowledge and experiences of graduates, adequate skills and opportunities need to be provided in all universities for students to develop competencies for future careers and gainful employment for global competitiveness. This, in essence, has created the need to establish and develop functional Counselling and Human Development Centres (CHDCs) that would provide quality services and programmes relevant to the world-of-work (NUC, 2013).

School counselling service is an integral part of the school education program that is aimed at supporting the process and educational goals of the students in planning their future. However in reality, school counseling service position is still negligible compared to other educational services. It reveals that school counseling service is still in a low bargaining position. This situation is caused by the service activities of school counseling services that are still very distinctive and intangible, so that the impact can be felt directly by all units. It is in contrast with the results of instructional and administrative service activities that is instantaneously perceived by all communities in the world of education. If this position of school counseling services keeps being neglected, the school counseling services will continue to fall. On the hand, the existence of school counseling services is legally and formally recognized because the students need school counseling services for their own future planning, but on the other hand, the significant acknowledgement of school counselling by students have not been services for their own future planning, but on the other hand the significant acknowledgement of school students have not been appropriately executed. Guidance and Counselling in the school was implemented as merely administrative work; there were gaps between Student's aspiration or expectations and service provided by school counselor (Kartadinata, 1999).

Counselling services are offered to person that is undergoing a problem and deserves professional assistance to enable him overcome such problem. She maintained that such a problem could keep the individual disturbed and under tension; unless resolved, the development of this individual will continue to be hampered (Roy, 2011). Counselling therefore, is a specialized service carried out by professionals or trained personnel in personality development and in the act of handling exceptional individuals or groups. Adegoke (2004) opined that counselling is the heart of the body of structure known as guidance while Adebawale&Popoola (2011), sees counselling service as a programme aimed towards making the client understand himself better by providing solutions to the client's immediate problem(s) so as to maintain personal stability in educational, vocational, personal and social aspects. Counselling involves a lot of time for the client to unfold the problem. gain an insight to the complex situation. Some counselling techniques arc involve when counselling such as; active listening, emphatic understanding releasing the pent up feelings and confronting the client.

One of the strategic efforts that can be done to improve the quality of school counseling services in schools is by analyzing students' satisfaction (as service users) for services received by them. The understanding of the voice of the customer is a prerequisite for continuous quality improvement in order to achieve total customer's satisfaction (Gaspersz, 1997). The voice of the customer appears in the needs, desires, expectations, and level of customer's satisfaction of one service. Referring to the ideas and condition, because the products of school counseling services are in the form of services, then the students' satisfaction is a way to analyze the quality of school counseling services. This is due to the fact that students are the stakeholders of school counseling services. The satisfaction analysis is the significant part of paying attention to students as service uses. In relation to that, customer loyalty occurs when service users are taken care adequately (Meurer, Marcon& Alberton 2007).

Reinventing the Counselling Services in Nigeria for Global Competitiveness

The role of counseling has evolved into a broader scope since the last few years. It now, encompasses a systematic helping process based on the principle of psychology used by the professional counselor to help clients in handling their development, challenges in moderm living and mental disorders. Counseling has an interdisciplinary base and interlinked with psychometrics, psychology, and sociology (See, 2009). As a determine nation like Nigeria that is so enthusiastic about her educational remodeling for global competitiveness, there is an enormous need to install and update the various counselling service centers in our schools, hospital, among others for global competition. The major counselling service centers included but not limited to crisis intervention counseling service center, marriage and family counselling service center, relationship counselling service center, career counselling service center, rehabilitation counselling service center, mental health counselling service center, sexual trauma counselling service center, AIDS counselling service center, grief and bereavement counselling service center, substance abuse counselling service center, among others.

Crisis Intervention Counselling Service Center: Crisis intervention counseling provides education, guidance and support. It also involves outreach work with the community. The process in crisis intervention include education, observation and awareness, discovering and using ones potential, understanding ones problem, creating necessary structure, challenging irrational beliefs and unrealistic expectations, breaking vicious cycles and addictive behavior, creating temporary dependencies and facing fear as well as emotional pain.

Marriage and Family Counselling Service Center: Marriage counseling brings the two parties in a marriage together to discuss what problems each has with the other, solve their differences and work towards a better understanding. The counselor provides an environment and act as mediator for each of them to feel validated and safe. Family counseling helps family members resolve issues among each other. It also helps them adopt ways to help another family member who is unwell or dying. Family members learn how actions and ways of communicating can help or worsen problems.

Relationship Counselling Service Center: Relationship counseling helps two or more persons in a family, couples, employees or employers in a workplace or between a professional and a client on the relationship in an effort to recognize and to better manage or reconcile troublesome differences and repeating patterns of distress. The counselors help (a) provide a confidential dialogue which normalizes feelings; (b) enable each person to be heard and to hear themselves; (c) provide a mirror to reflect the relationship's difficulties and the potential and

direction for change; (d) empower the individual to take control of its own destiny and make vital decisions about the relationship; and (e) deliver relevant and appropriate information

Career Counselling Service Center: Career counseling deal with people who are seeking vocational, academic and career advice. The counselors help evaluate students' abilities, aptitude, interests and personalities to develop realistic academic, vocational and career goals. They also operate career information centers, career day events and career education programs. These counselors also work with younger students who have academic and 3 social developmental problems or other special needs. The counselors assist them in finding special education programs, agencies or organization, who can help prepare them for a future career despite their disabilities.

Rehabilitation Counselling Service Center: Rehabilitation counseling helps individuals with physical, mental (developmental delay and brain injuries), and psychiatric disorders, achieve productive and independent lives. It is a relationship where counselors help mentally, emotionally, and physically disabled persons appraise their strengths and weaknesses in relation to their own particular needs so that they may function occupationally and socially in a more adequate manner.

Mental Health Counselling Service Center: Mental health counseling uses the principles of psychotherapy, human development, learning theory, group dynamics, and the etiology of mental illness and dysfunctional behavior to individuals, couples, families and groups, for the purpose of treating psychopathology and promoting optimal mental health and wellness (MAMHCA, 2009). The practice encompasses diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders: psycho-educational techniques aimed at prevention of such disorders; consultations with individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities; and clinical research into more effective psychotherapeutic treatment modalities.

Sexual Trauma Counselling Service Center: Sexual trauma counseling provides services to child and adult victims of sexual violence and their families through community education and an advocacy model. The counselor helps the victim come to understand the emotional impact of the trauma so that she/he is no longer preoccupied or driven by negative feelings, and must grapple with the meaning of the trauma until an adaptive resolution is achieved. Adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse must begin the healing process as soon as possible because they may sometimes repress the memories of abuse that may come out later in life.

Need for Counselling Service in Nigeria's Education for Global Competitiveness

Nigeria is a developing country. It is therefore experiencing some developmental challenges, which require the service of qualified counsellors. Also, many Nigerians have concerns, which they cannot handle alone and thus, they need the services of experts in the field of counselling. Professional services are usually based on human needs; consequently, clients' challenges create a bright future for counselling practice in Nigeria. This assertion can be further justified by the following factors which stress the need for guidance and counselling in Nigerian schools:

1. Value identity is a major problem among Nigerian youths. Many youths and children have lost African values such as honesty, respect for elders, sincerity, dignity of labour and integrity (Durosaro, Yahaya & Oniye, 2009). This challenge is an off-shoot of the wrong perception of modernisation and of parental neglect. The services of qualified counsellors are therefore needed to re-orientate Nigerian youths and children toward imbibing good African values.
2. In the last few decades, Nigeria has witnessed an alarming increase in cases of deviant behaviour, among youths and adults in particular. Some of the acts that have given the nation a negative image include corruption, fraud, arson, cultism, violent reactions, child & women trafficking, kidnapping, examination malpractice, drug abuse, drug trafficking, sexual abuse and armed robbery (Ipaye, 2003). The worrisome rates of drug abuse, substance abuse and other vices among youths led to the establishment of the National Drug Law, Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC). For instance, the establishment of NDLEA by the promulgation of Decree No. 48 of 1989, now an Act of Parliament, was aimed at exterminating illicit drug trafficking and consumption in the Nigerian society (Federal Ministry of Justice, 2013). Despite these control measures, deviant behaviour has been on the

- increase. There is therefore the need to employ qualified counsellors who will assist in the prevention or reduction of the myriad of maladaptive behaviours among youths.
3. Information and Communication Technology (ICT): ICT has turned the world into a global village. Nigerians, especially the youths, can access any information through the internet with little or no stress. However, misuse of ICT has become a major source of concern. Despite the numerous benefit of information technology (e.g. easy access to information and effective social interaction) it exposes youths to sensitive and uncensored information that catalyze criminal activities. Therefore there is need to hire the services of qualified counsellors in order to guide the users of the internet, especially the children and the youths, to productive usage of the internet.
 4. In the traditional African setting, members of the extended family provide supportive services to people who are in need of moral, psychological and financial assistance (Ipaye, 2003). Nowadays, as a result of modernization, urbanization and economic recession, the extended family system is gradually being replaced by the nuclear family system. Many Nigerians now live independently with little or no contact with members of their extended families. Consequently, the support and assistance that are usually provided by members of the extended family are no longer readily available. Additionally, in modern Nigeria, many parents work from morning till evening in a bid to make ends meet.
 5. Nigeria is a multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural society. Due to its diverse nature, the country usually witnesses conflicts among the different interest groups. Examples of such are the Niger Delta crises, religious conflicts and extremism in Kaduna, Kano, Yobe and Bauchi states. Boko Haram insurgency in the North-eastern Nigeria as well as rampant cases of kidnapping and political violence in some other states. Various cases of assassination and cold-blooded murders also abound (Omoegun, 2012). These conflicts point to the need for guidance and counselling interventions in all spheres of our national life.
 6. The world is paying more attention to preventive rather than curative medicine. Preventive medicine largely involves enlightenment and counselling. With proper counselling, preventable diseases such as cholera, poliomyelitis, typhoid, Lassa fever, Ebola. HIV/AIDS, sickle cell anemia and malaria can be prevented and totally eliminated. HIV/AIDS counselling is an emerging area of interest worldwide; therefore, the relevance of counselling to the health sector cannot be over emphasized.
 7. The Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) has contributed significantly to the development of counselling in Nigeria. The efforts of the Association has led to the inclusion of guidance and counselling in the National Policy on Education (NPE) and the Approved Minimum Academic Standard (AMAS) for training of guidance counsellors in Nigerian universities. Its other achievements include recognition of guidance and counselling personnel as full-time personnel in schools by the National Council on Education (NCE), sensitization of private and public organisations on the relevance of guidance and counselling, institution of Certification and Licensure Board (CALB) and advocating the establishment of Guidance and Counselling Departments and Counselling Centres in many Universities in Nigeria. These and other numerous activities of CASSON prepare the Association for the future challenges and are avenues for job opportunities.

The recent complex changes and education trends in the world of work and society calls for proper implementation of guidance and counseling services in Nigeria particularly in the school system. Some of these trends are unstable homes, poor academic performance, drug abuse, high risk sexual exploitation, cultism; kidnapping among others of latest concern to the government and stakeholders of education is the trend where some graduates of primary school and secondary school are unable to pass common entrance examinations into secondary and tertiary school levels. Also, some graduates of the tertiary institutions are no longer fit into the labor market because of unemployment and underemployment among others. This trend calls for proper functioning of counseling services in Nigeria, to remedy the sorry situation.

The Federal Government in realization of this need has in the National Policy on Education (2004), stated that it is desirable to provide Guidance Counselors in each post-primary secondary school in Nigeria. Also, Fafunwa (1990) supported the idea as Minister of Education by saying that a mandatory student Guidance and Counseling

Service should be established in all Nigerian Institutions of Higher learning because through such services, the true condition of the Nigeria Economy and its ever Increasing labour market demands will be met by students as employers or employees of labor in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. Denga (1986) also noted that developmental needs of young people call for proper guidance in these issues: Developing concepts of good value, and desirable behavior in society. Understanding personal assets and liabilities. Making plans for deep personal relationship. Making good vocational plans for the future. This Hemised needs of youths call for proper implementation of guidance and counseling services. Other areas of needs in Nigeria are areas where manpower is in short supply such as engineering, agriculture, architecture, medicine and aviation, these areas call for guidance of youths in order to reduce the problem of unskilled and incompetent workforce (Egbochukwu. 2008; Kottler; 2004; Mogbo. 2004; Ipaye, 1983).

It is perceived that, day by day adolescent problem behaviours are increasing harrowingly. Increasing academic pressure, difficulties in adjusting with parents, teachers and peers as well as adjusting themselves in the rapid transition of life are some of the main reasons behind such erratic behavior. Incidents related to mental health and problem behaviour have become very frequent in the daily newspapers of the country. Suicide, vandalism, peer bullying, and absenteeism among school going children are also on the rise. As observed in literatures, education has been considered the cornerstone for development of any nation. But we wonder, is Nigeria's education system catering to the moral education and mental health development of the students, Numerous educational projects with new methods and innovations have been taking place over the years. Yet, education institutions are failing, leading to a rise of anti-social behaviours of children and adolescents.

Hence, the importance of school counsellors in the revival of Nigeria's education for global competitiveness cannot be overstressed and should not be underestimated. Proper functioning of counselling services in our education system would come to the view as critical in fostering personal values and learning motivation among students at all levels, in resolving problems linked to their *career* and in preventing addictions and undesirable behavior. It is observed that counselling services are becoming an integral part of those educational institutions' activities which aim at creating a positive and stimulating learning environment, while taking account of the needs of the individual students (each of whom is a personality with unique qualities and peculiar strengths and weaknesses), as well as of a particular group of students. However, counselling services include bringing to the students an increased understanding of the educational, vocational and social information needed to make wise choices. Ipaye, (1983) opined that guidance within the Nigeria culture complies a quasi-parental style of steering the child towards behaviors or decisions deemed to be his good. Olayinka (1985) is of the opinion that guidance is a programme that provides *service to individual* students based upon their needs and understanding of their immediate environment factor have on the students and the unique features of each school. Guidance and counseling can also be as the process and techniques used by a counselor to assist individual to cope with the problems in the areas of his/her life, so that he/she can become useful and contribute to the society in which he lives. One can assert that guidance and counseling is a process development in nature by which an individual is assisted to understand, accept and utilize his/her abilities aptitudes interest and attitudinal patterns in relation to his/her aspiration.

Oye, Obi, Mohd & Bernice (2012) observed that prior to 1937 very little attention was given by the government and education to formal guidance of young people in educational settings. Due to the rapid development the country is undergoing, it calls for technological advancement hence guidance and counseling needs to be adopted to the changes faced by the new system of education (6-3-3-4) system which is a two tier secondary school system of six years duration and it is divided into two stages of Junior and Senior secondary each being a three (3) years duration. The Federal Ministry of Education initiated the establishment of guidance and counseling in all secondary schools as a result of the apparent prospects and in view of personality mal-adjustment among the school children. Counseling has become an integral and essential component of Nigeria educational process for all students as they progress through the educational system.

Benefits to Having School Counsellors in school

School counseling services have a positive impact on several groups of people in the education community. Understanding the benefits that school counselors afford to students, parents, teachers, administrators and student services personnel could help you make the decision to pursue this career. The benefits to having school counsellors in our Nigeria's education cannot be overstressed, hence they include but not limited to the followings:

- a. **Student Support:** The biggest benefit of school counselors is that they prepare students for academic, career and social challenges by relating educational agendas to their success in the future. They make students motivated learners and facilitate their exploration of careers. Counselors also encourage students to talk to their parents or guardians about the things that they are worried about. When students do not feel comfortable talking about emotional or social problems at home, school counselors may have individual counseling sessions with them. If there is a problem occurring with a group of students, a group of counseling session might be warranted. Sometimes counselors include the parents in these sessions for larger issues to determine whether outside counseling or support is necessary.
- b. **Parent/ Guardian Support:** The support that school counselors provide for parents and guardians is just as important as the support that they give to students. They may facilitate individual, parent-teacher or parent-parent consultations and discussions to ensure that everyone is on the same page when it comes to issues regarding the students, whether it involves disciplinary decisions, specific educational material or social provocations. School counselors might even provide education to parents and act as a resource for parents who have questions about child-related problems. They also ensure that parents understand the services that other staff such as nurses, psychologists, resource teachers and social workers can provide for students who have special needs or abilities. When the parents need extra support, the counselors help them find it, whether it is within the school system or the community.
- c. **Teacher support:** School counselors provide a lot of support to teachers by completing a team that can effectively address the educational goals and needs of students, leading to an increase in student achievements. They can help plan classroom and group activities that meet the student's needs. Counselors gather and share resources with teachers to help the staff develop their skills in classroom or playground and provide teachers assistance with their roles as guides. School counselors review student records as well to ensure that teachers understand their implications and to facilitate parent-teacher conferences.
- d. **Administrative Support:** School administrators are responsible for running all school operations, from educational materials to everyday school activities. School counselors are an integral part of these responsibilities. They ensure that the school counseling program and academic mission are in line and promote student success. Counselors also develop a system to manage the program and help the administration use counselors effectively to augment student development and learning. By evaluating the program, they can monitor data to make improvements to it and streamline its goals with their responsibilities. Additionally, they provide useful data from the program for funding and grant application purposes.
- e. **Student Services Personnel Support:** Student services personnel include nurses, psychologists, resource teachers, social workers and other professional staff who provide special assistance to students. School counselors work in collaboration with these staff members and cultivate a positive team approach to their relationships with students to ensure that each student has the means to achieve success. They may increase collaboration between one or more student services members to utilize resources within the school and community. By sharing data from the school counseling program, the team can work together to maximize the educational and social benefits for student growth. Counselors can also bring their observations of students to a staff member's attention to address specific concerns.

Conclusion

It has been perceived that the counseling service is designed to facilitate self-understanding and development through dyadic or small-group relationships. The aim of such relationships tends to be on personal development and decision making that is based on self-understanding and knowledge of the environment. The counselor

assists the student to understand and accept himself thereby clarifying his ideas, perceptions, attitudes, and goals; furnishes personal and environmental information to the pupil, as required, regarding his plans, choices, or problems; and seeks to develop in the student the ability to cope with/and solve problems and increased competence in making decisions and plans for the future. Counseling is generally accepted as the heart of the guidance service. This paper therefore advocates that as a determine nation like Nigeria that is so enthusiastic about her educational remodeling for global competitiveness, there is an enormous needs to install and update the various counseling service centers in our schools, hospitals, among others for global competition. We therefore conclude that all stakeholders of education school explore ways and means of mitigating the prerequisite of reinventing our Nigeria's education for global competitiveness discussed herein this paper.

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