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Guidance and Counselling in the Sustainability of Educational System

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Abstract

Education developed from human struggle for survival and enlightenment. It is an act of acquiring skills passed on from generation to generation for the development and comfortability of mankind. Gradually education has been developing from all levels. Hence it's development needs to be fortified and sustained. Education has some problems contending with it just as there is nothing that is free from problems. If these problems are not solved, they can make education regress in nature and use. Therefore, for the development of education to be sustained, this paper has attempted to proffer solution to such unprecedented problems in the area of guidance and counselling.

Key words: Guidance and Counselling, Sustainability, Educational System

Introduction

Education is the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning, especially at a school or similar institution. Education developed from human struggle for survival and enlightenment. It may be formal or informal. Informal education refers to the general social process by which human beings acquire the knowledge and skills needed to function in their

culture, while formal education refers to the process by which teachers instruct students in courses of study within institutions.

Before the invention of reading and writing, people lived in an environment in which they struggled against natural forces, animals, and other humans. To survive, preliterate people developed skills that grew into cultural and educational patterns. For a particular group's culture to continue into the future, people had to transmit or pass it on, from adults to children. The earliest educational process involved sharing information, even though about gathering food and providing shelter; making weapons and other tools; and acquiring the values, behaviour and religious rites or practices of a given culture. Through direct informal education, parents, elders, and priests taught children the skills and roles they would need as adults. These lessons eventually formed the moral codes that governed behaviour. Since they lived before the invention of writing, they used oral tradition or story telling to pass on their culture and history from one generation to the next. By using language, people learned to create and use symbols, words, or signs to express their ideas. When these symbols grew into pictographs and letters, human beings created a written language and made the great cultural leap to literacy.

The age of enlightenment in the 18th century produced important changes in education. During this period called the age of reasoning educators believed people could improve their lives and society by using their reasoning and their power of critical thinking. The enlightenment principles that considered education as an instrument of social reform and improvement remain fundamental characteristics of education policy in the countries of the world (Fafunwa, 1976).

Aims and objectives of education

Education seeks for the growth of the nation and the development of individuals. As a result, education is expected to draw out people from darkness and lead them to a world of enlightenment. It can also be said that education is purposed to nourish, bring up or raise people for a better standard. From the above expressions, education can be summed up as a process of helping each individual to lead in the fullest life he is capable of living that would also be of immense benefit to the society. Education also involves the process of acculturation which is the act of learning to live in the society and to interact with other people amicably. In other to fulfill and

establish the above, the Nigeria government has a policy which is a focus and guide to the stake holders of education.

The National Policy on education (2001) carefully and clearly states the following as the aims and objectives of Nigeria Education:

1. The inculcation of National Consciousness and National unity.
2. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for survival of the individual and the Nigerian Society.
3. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around him.
4. The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence, both mentally and physically, as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his society.

Aims and objectives of guidance and counselling

Educational guidance is “a process of helping an individual to plan a suitable educational programme and make progress in it” (UNESCO 2000). One of the most important roles in educational guidance and counselling is facilitation of the smooth transition of children from home to school, from primary to secondary school, from secondary to post secondary educational institutions, and to the world of work (UNESCO, 2000). According to the 2005 Britannica Book of the year as cited in Awake (2005), the overall literacy rate of Nigeria is 64% (Omini, 2005).

Even though counselling is one of the services rendered through guidance, counselling is deeper than guidance. Counselling can be defined as a number of procedures in assisting an individual to solve his problems. Counselling is more involved emotionally in the affective realm personalized learning, that is, emotions and feelings, values, attitudes. Counselling is an interaction or relationship between two or few individuals, the client counsellor relationship of trust (Geshinde 1991).

The aims of education can easily and reasonably be achieved with the collaboration of Guidance and counselling services. Both the aims of G & C and that of education are inseparable, because G & C is integral part of education. According to Geshinde (2000), the aims and objectives that G and C set out to be accomplished include the following:

1. To contribute to the improvement of the standard of education, for example, poor memory, inability to adjust to school environment, under achievement, inability to decide on the subjects, inappropriate educational programme, learning disabilities such as mental retardation, truancy, school anxiety school drop out.
2. To help individuals deal effectively with developmental problems as well as problems arising from the gradual disappearances of the extended family system, mass movement to cities, the importation of technology and foreign culture.
3. To help an individual identify and know special aptitudes and abilities to make realistic choice of careers. For example in the third National Development Plan (1975), it was said that absence of career counselling in our educational training system in the past must be held responsible for the frustration observed among many of the nations young men and women.
4. To help individuals develop adequate values and moral discipline that are necessary for the building of a just society. The adolescents engage in nefarious activities to the extent that many of them become juvenile delinquents, drug addicts, and underachievers.

Guidance services in schools

According to Shertzer and Stone (1976) and Adegoke (2004), Guidance means assisting, piloting, helping an individual with all the services to bring out the best of himself or herself towards maximizing his/her potentials. To effectively achieve this objective, some services have to be rendered efficiently. Some of these services include the following:

- a) **Orientation service:** Students who are newly admitted into a school need advice and guidance to familiarize with a new environment. There are lots of information to familiarize, a new student on his/her arrival in a new school. The student needs to know the rules and regulations of the school, the school layout, how to locate each room, office and other facilities. Generally, he has to know his way within the school compound. So also the teachers, other officers and the students he might need to work with. He needs to know the services that are available in the school and be acquainted with them. The school counsellor is to assist each student in his problem of adjusting to the school environment, and be actively involved in

planning the orientation programme for new students (Shertzer & Stone, 1976).

- b) **Appraisal service:** Personal records of the child are to be written down in the cumulative folder. The cumulative records apply to all records that make provision for the accumulation of the significant and comprehensive information about an individual student over a period of years for which he is in the school. The cumulative records include the student's academic records, (the scholastic records), school progress, form master's and house master's reports. Result of test and interpretations are also to be written.
- c) **Information service:** Information is not stable there are changes from time to time. There is need therefore for the counsellor to provide and be a source of information for educational and vocational guidance, information about various institutions of higher learning and the courses available in them. Admission rules do change from time to time; therefore the counsellor should have at hand current brochures relating to information about all manners of both internal and external examinations. Information about industries, firms and job opportunities should be available to the counsellor. Information about vocational schools, both government and private owned should be made available to the students (Mamman, 2002). Information about jobs, qualification requirement, remunerations, hazards, working time, training opportunities, age factors, condition of service and the general working environment should be made available. The processes for getting employment and interviews need to be supplied. Socio-personal information on hospitals and their locations and so on, recreational facilities, amusement parks, holidays resort, zoos, as well as games reserves hotels, referral agencies and welfare centres are required.
- d) **Counselling service:** Counselling service includes the client to understand himself better. Counselling involves something more than a solution to an immediate problem. Counselling itself is supposed to maintain a personal stability interview of repeated challenges and repeated changes. Counselling is at the heart of the world structure called guidance (Adegoke, 2004). The counselling includes educational, vocational, personal/social aspects. The students' problems in these areas can easily be solved if only the

individual student can open up, ready to be helped and participate fully in solving the problem at hand.

- e) **Placement service:** Placement service deals with appointing a student into an office in a company or hospital to work. A confidential report is usually written by the counsellor to the manager about the student indicating his confidence in the student. Placement is a crucial function of counselling (Geshinde 1991)
- f) **Follow up service:** Follow up means monitoring drop-out or a graduate of the school. The counsellor will have to see the result of the counselling after the counselee must have left the school. Questionnaire needs to be prepared and sent to him. So addresses have to be collected when the students are about to graduate or leave the school.
- g) **Referral services:** When a student is proving difficult, there is the need to refer him elsewhere. If the problem is beyond the counsellor's ability, there is need to make a referral. The counsellor needs to have a list of resource persons that will be useful for the clients, for example, Doctors, Lawyers and so on. There should be telephone facilities in order to reach the resource persons easily. Even when there is no client to refer, there is the need for the counsellor to renew the relationships with the resource person. According to Geshinde (2000), the counsellor should seek the approval of the client and discuss it with him/her before he/she makes a referral. The counsellor should write a letter to the resource person but read it to the client's hearing (for confidentiality) for his/her approval, when the resource person finishes his work the counsellor must be written to explain what was done and the counsellor must reply showing appreciation over the job well done.
- h) **Liaison with the community:** Guidance personnel can also help the administration in providing liaison between the school and the local community. As a result of counsellor's interaction with the parents, employers, government official, private humanitarian organization and so on, counsellors occupy a vantage position in interpreting the entire school programmes to these various groups as well as the community in general. Any feed back from interaction with the community will also help the administration to intensify or readjust its programmes. Bakare (1996) seems to be expressing the same

liaison role of guidance's personnel with community when he stated that the guidance programme is one of the most important lubricants for reducing the friction between the school and the community.

Contribution of counselling towards the sustainability of education system

It seems education is in its top gear in this twenty first century, but there are other distractions that could hinder the advancement of education if care is not taken. Education is a very vital source of enlightenment so it should be held in high esteem thus salvaged from collapsing at all the levels of primary, secondary and tertiary. One of the means is counselling. It is an inseparable and integral part of education which helps to uphold and improve the standard of education to sustain its development.

Information is very essential in this era. An individual that is not informed will be deformed. The heart beat of counselling is information. Counselling helps to update the individual's knowledge for adequate improvement. Creativity and innovation develop from ideas and information. According to Akinboye (2003), creativity, innovation and success work together to help man achieve his dreams. An individual can have good dream(s) but when the dreams and visions are not strengthened by good and adequate information, the dream would die abruptly. Creativity and innovation are the ways of dynamic change, leaps of progress and surprise. Counselling will not only give the information but guide the steps to make the dream actualized.

It is very vital for the students to be guided and managed especially in this era when they start schooling at a very tender age at all levels. They are faced with problems ranging from personal to social problems, so they need to be guided. They are also faced with problems at schools setting, such as under-achievement, stress, inability to manage their time, skill acquisition, study habit, to mention but few. Counselling with manage all these problems so that the students can function effectively.

Most of the time, the students have career problems whereby they don't even know the career to choose. In the choice of subjects, they tend to follow crowd. Some of them are negatively influenced by their parents' career. At times parents even force them to do the course they are neither interested in nor have the ability to cope with. The presence of counselling will remove all these problems and positively order the steps of the students to the right choice without being forced.

Behavioural problems are synonymous to adolescents/youth, it is part of growing. These behavioural maladjustments are either imbibed from their immediate family or friends as a result of influence from the peer groups. These problems can hinder smooth running of education. But for sound and wholistic education, their behaviour and moral values are very important. Counselling will help to solve such problems that can endanger their lives and tamper with their education. In fact education without moral value and discipline is no education because of the negative effect it will have on the society.

Moreover, the wave of advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in this millennium is creating problems, even though it has its positive contribution towards development. But the negative consequence can easily be checked through counselling. The use of computer to defraud which is being tagged “419” can be checked through proper counselling. The use of ICT for immoral acts such as the watching of pornographic films can also be checked through proper counselling. This can be done both in school and at home. Parents also need counselling so as to guide their wards and salvage their future. The students can be counselled in the school. Both teachers and parents can make the students know the implication of the wrong use of ICT, as well as the benefits and the advantages of its proper usage.

Possible issues and problems of guidance and counselling in schools

For the guidance and counselling service to be rendered effectively in the sustainability of our education, some antecedent problems attached to the programme by the society have to be solved. Modern techniques of guidance and counselling are relatively new and imported from America. Due to its importation, it meets a lot of resistance. The service is not meant for pampering students but for making individuals discover who she/he is, identifying the problems being encountered and making him explore grounds to solve the problems. The counsellor is usually perceived as someone who performs magic to change the student, and also as a rival in the school system. In other words, from all indications, guidance activities are seen as negating virtues held tenaciously within the cultural setting.

Moreover, the counsellor usually employ the use of some psychological tests to enable him understand and appreciate students problems during the diagnosis and treatment of these problems. He/she is in the better position to counsel students and explain to their parents the reason why particular course

should be read and not the other. But in most cases the school doesn't see the need for tests and show non-challant attitude towards its purchase. One very important problem that confronts the counsellor in his/her relationship is lack of adequate physical facilities of guidance programme. The issue is that the service is not well funded in our schools. There also the aspect of his workload which usually constitutes an "excess" of what the actual load should be. For instance, in America where the service is imported from, the workload is 250 students/clients to a counsellor, counselling versus teaching.

The issue of ethics of the profession which is confidentiality (i.e. keeping our secret, secret) is another problem facing the service. Due to the peculiar nature of counselling relationship, most other personnel within the school system like the principals, teachers and so on would want to probe into the clients problems, which is quite unethical. This attitude makes the students not to patronize the Guidance & Counselling centre in their schools, thereby managing their problems which are daily affecting their academics negatively.

Last but not the least of such problems is the issue of educational, vocational and personal social information that are constantly changing due to unpredictable nature of both the economic and political instability in the country. This is suggesting that, to be current, the counsellor needs to regularly read the pages of newspapers for current information or else, he would be found giving obsolete information to clients which can affect negatively the educational advancement of such clients. The above can easily be solved with the context of G & C in order to be functional in the sustainability of the educational system.

Conclusion and recommendation

Without Guidance and Counselling, the problems associated with learning cannot be easily and understandably alleviated. This millennium is witnessing global rapid educational development with the aid of technology. To sustain the development in Nigeria and remove unwanted cataract, counselling has to be taken into serious consideration. Its importance cannot be overlooked. The negative impact of technological advancement too cannot be overlooked. Counselling centres should therefore be established in each school from basic to tertiary institutions.

Nevertheless, the problems facing G & C can easily be solved so as not to impair its usefulness in the realization of educational goals (Mamman, 2002). The counsellor should be perceived as one of the stakeholders of education

that should be given the free hands to help achieve educational goals. He/she is not a magic winder that will change student's behaviour overnight. The societal cultural setting should not militate against the services of guidance and counselling rather the two should complement each other. More awareness about the counselling functions should be created. For G & C to be effective in our school system, it should be well funded because of its role in the sustainability of educational development. Adequate and enough psychological tests and physical facilities should be made available in all schools of learning. Although the counsellor could teach so as to have contact with the students, but he/she should not be given too much of teaching loads, and the students given him/her to manage shall not be too many, so as to create room for good guidance and monitoring.

Since confidentiality is the soul of the profession, it calls for privacy. The office also should be connected to internet so as to have updated information for the students. The office should be equipped with reading materials where information can also be gathered such as the internet service, newspaper, magazines, encyclopedia and other related materials. This is very essential so that the students will not be fed with obsolete information.

However, the role of G & C in the sustainability of educational development cannot be over emphasized. It is as important as education because it helps education to achieve its goals. Guidance and counselling should be allowed to take its rightful place as a force to be reckoned with in the educational system and the society.

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