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## **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING A VERITABLE INSTRUMENT OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

By

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### **Abstract**

Education for sustainable development is the focus of nations around the world, it is not just a country's project. Humans are at the centre of education for sustainable development, Guidance and Counselling is needed for effective functioning of the human organism to achieve education for sustainable development goals. Education for sustainable development is the ability to acquire the needed knowledge, skills, attitudes and necessary values to shape a sustainable future. If the future must be sustained through education, then a veritable instrument must be put in place to achieve the desired results and this instrument is Guidance and Counselling. The paper is a position paper highlighting Guidance and counselling as a veritable instrument of education for sustainable development. Related and relevant information were gathered from, educational websites, textbooks and journal articles. The purpose of this paper is to draw attention to the role of guidance and counselling in education for sustainable development. The paper specifically highlights the following; conceptual clarifications, theoretical framework, Problems confronting Education for sustainable development and possible mitigation strategies and guidance and counselling as a veritable instrument of education for sustainable development. It was suggested amongst others that Guidance and Counselling should be provided at all levels of education since it has been recognized by the National policy on Education as an essential education service needed to support and sustain education.

### **Keywords**

Education, guidance and counselling, professional guidance counsellor, sustainable development



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## Introduction

The drivers of education for sustainable development (ESD) are humans and the beneficiaries are also humans, this means man is at the centre of education for sustainable development. This assertion is in line with the definition of education for sustainable development given by Springer link (2020) which says that ESD is a form of education that emphasizes the development of skills and habits necessary for individuals, and thus their communities, to live in a way that contributes to a world that is 'sustainable' this definition goes a long way to emphasize the importance of the human element in education for sustainable development. If the goals of education for sustainable development must be achieved then guidance and counselling should be a major feature in the programme. Education for sustainable development is yawning for Guidance and Counselling as a veritable instrument for its sustenance because the individuals in the education system must live a balanced life mentally, educationally, psychologically and otherwise to function effectively.

Every living being need Guidance and Counselling for effective functioning, it touches every phase of an individual's life (Uzoeshi, 2013, Nwachukwu, 2007, Akinade, 2012, Kemjika, 2008, Alutu, Ifelunni & Ikegbunam, 2016). When one is at a cross road guidance and counselling is needed to take the right decision. Guidance and Counselling services are universal to all people, irrespective of race, colour, creed, language, position etc. (Kennedy, 2008). In Nigeria guidance and counselling has been long misconstrued as a service for schools or children that is why counselling is not very popular in non-school settings. This belief is erroneous and misleading as Guidance and counselling services are meant for diverse individuals and groups in diverse setting on diverse issues who by nature, condition or circumstances may be subjected to series of problems that need solutions (Kennedy, 2017). Man with problems, challenges, emotional issues etc. cannot do anything meaningful, psychological and emotional issues may cripple man's ability to take the right decision that is why guidance and counselling is needed to assist man in taking the right decision to function effectively in order to achieve the goals of education for sustainable development. It may be necessary to note that the problems of life can be solved in diverse ways, counselling is only one of those ways. Many people resort to friends, family, religious faith when they have issues beyond their coping (Hackney & Cormier, 2005). Even with these means at their disposal challenges may be nagging, a professional guidance counsellor is needed to facilitate the process of growth, development and adaptation to these challenges for education for sustainable development to thrive.

The public lacks clarity about the function of the Professional Guidance Counsellor that is why his patronage in the Nigerian society is lean. The reason could be due in part to the proliferation of modern-day services that have adopted the label counsellor. They range from investment counsellors, credit counsellor to retirement counsellor but they have little in common with the Professional Guidance Counsellor this study is interested in. The Professional Counsellor has emerged as the descriptor for the treatment of interpersonal/intrapersonal issues so common to mankind (Hackney et al, 2005). The content of the Professional Guidance Counsellor includes both internal and relational concerns. The internal concerns takes care of the intrapersonal dimensions such as self-concept, self-esteem to Psychological disturbances while the Relational concerns takes care of interpersonal dimensions ranging from communication and perceptual problems between an individual and others to issues of hostility, aggression, and criminal activities. These problems are not age specific they span across all ages, and developmental stages. Viewed in this way Guidance and Counselling can assume the function of change, prevention, or life enhancement. As a change agent people are concerned with situations that, for whatever reason they become so disruptive that they are unable to continue through the normal passage of life without excess stress, dissatisfaction, or unhappiness. As prevention, counselling is able to take into account those predictable life events that produce stress,

cause people to draw on their psychological resources, and ultimately, demand adaptation to changing life forces. On the other hand enhancement counselling goes beyond life's challenges and predictabilities. Enhancement attempts to open clients' experiences to new and deeper levels of understanding, appreciation, and wisdom about life's many potentials. The several potentials of man that can enable him to function effectively to achieve the goals of education for sustainable development can be fertilized, sustained and groomed by the instrument of guidance and counselling.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

Guidance and Counselling as a concept – Contemporary Guidance and counselling is one of the educational support services used in helping students and individuals to manage their educational, vocational and personal social challenges. Though the idea of guidance and counselling is as old as man, it is not new in human history and it is part of our cultural heritage because man has always sought help when faced with difficulties which prevent him from functioning effectively (Kennedy, 2008, Kemjika, 2008). Variety of individuals in history and across cultures have played the roles of help givers themselves such as friends, parents, members of extended family, community elders, chiefs etc. have traditionally provided an informal type of help when called upon (Achebe, 1988). This kind of traditional/informal help is quite different from the help rendered by the professional guidance counsellor who undergo a professional training to systematize and refine the helping approaches and strategies, it is this professional helper that executes the guidance and counselling services needed for the smooth running of education for sustainable development.

The concept of guidance and counselling has been defined in many different ways as opinion differs among experts, each author define it to convey his/her opinion. For instance Nwachukwu (2007) define the concept as 'a systematic and organized educational helping service, professionally given by a professionally trained counsellor or therapist to a learner of any age within or outside the school walls at appropriate level' For the purpose of this paper the definition of Bakare in Oladele (1991) will be adopted, the concept is defined as 'a number of processes used in assisting an individual having problems in any facet of life so that he can be more effective, satisfied and useful to himself and the society in which he lives' An analysis of this definition emphasizes the centrality of man in the guidance programme. Guidance and counselling stresses assistance to all humans in all areas of life to discover his interest, potentialities, and opportunities in life and learn how best to effectively utilize his assets as well as minimize his weaknesses to live a maximum productive life.

Guidance and counselling activities are centred around three major areas and each of these areas supplement one another in helping an individual to overcome his/her problems;

- (1) Educational Guidance and Counselling, this area relates to educational issues, this aspect relates to every issue about schooling such as success in school, furtherance of education, making effective choices.
- (2) Vocational guidance and Counselling, this area is centred at the world of work. Assist individuals to make realistic career choices with regard to the needs of the society, interest and potentialities of the individual.
- (3) Personal-Social Guidance and Counselling, this area is related to issues that are personal, social and psychological which an individual may not like to share with others. Some of these problems are confidential to the individual, he may only wish to share them with a trusted few. Example inability to approach the opposite sex (Uzoehi, 2013).

It must be noted at this point that the traditional modes of guidance and counselling still exist in various forms and shades in this modern society but they can only function effectively in the area of

personal-social guidance and counselling. Educational and vocational guidance and counselling require more in-depth knowledge to handle by someone who is professionally trained for that purpose, these areas need a lot of information, various psychological test and testing techniques and interpretations (Kemjika, 2008). An individual experiencing a problem arising from any of these areas may destabilize the coping ability of the individual and the gains of education for sustainable development may not be achieved, since man is the sole conveyor and beneficiary of education for sustainable development guidance and counselling services are needed for man's effective functioning.

**The Concept of Sustainable Development** - The idea of sustainable development came to play with the rise of industrial revolution from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when western societies started discovering that their economic and industrial activities had a significant impact on the environment and the social balance, this gave rise to several ecological and social crises that took place in the world and rose awareness that a more sustainable model was needed. United Nations (2023) reported that in September 2015, the General Assembly adopted the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, development that includes 17 sustainable Development goals (SDGs). Building on the principle of 'leaving no one behind' this new agenda emphasized a holistic approach to achieving sustainable development for all, persons with disability were not left out in this regard. Youmatter (2020) define sustainable development as the idea that human societies must live and meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. In the same vein ECGI (2022) gave the universal definition of sustainable development as 'meeting the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to do same. Sustainable development is a way of organizing society so that it can exist in the long term. This means taking into account both imperatives present and those of the future, such as the preservation of the environment and natural resources or social and economic equity (Youmatter, 2020). The year 2016 marks the first year of the implementation of the SDGs and its goals to transform the world and they include, No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and well-being, Quality Education, clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Reduced Inequality. Sustainable cities and communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land, Peace and Justice Strong Institutions and finally partnership to achieve the Goal. These 17 sustainable development goals are for the sole interest of mankind; they must be sustained for education for sustainable development to take place. The sustainability of these goals largely depends on 4cs of collaboration, control, communication and commitment (Hans, 2022).

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is allowing every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. Education for sustainable development should inject key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning such as weather change, tragedy risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction and sustainable consumption (UNESCO in University of Plymouth 2020). Mext (2022) on their own averred that ESD includes learning and educational activities that aim to develop alternative values and transformative actions that lead to problem-solving and to realize a sustainable society by taking the initiative to accept these problems of modern society as our own and tackling the problems in our immediate environment (think globally act locally) in order to ensure that human beings are able to secure an abundant life for future generations. Participatory teaching and learning methods are also needed to motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and involve in actions for sustainable development. ESD consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imaging future scenarios to enhance making decision in a collaborative manner. Far reaching changes in the way education is practiced is needed for sustainable development. No doubt ESD is very important

for the achievement of a sustainable society and so essentially desirable at all levels of education and training as well as in non-formal and informal learning (Council of the European union in University of Plymouth, 2022) .

Sustainable Development Education Panel Report 1998 as reported by University of Plymouth (2022) is all about the learning needed to maintain and improve our quality of life and the quality of life of generations to come. ESD empowers individuals to develop the knowledge, values and skills needed to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and internationally to improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future.

Education for sustainable development do not have a definite teaching method for sustainable education, rather there is a consensus that it requires a shift towards active participative, and experiential learning methods that engage the learner and make a real difference to their understanding, thinking and ability to act (University of Plymouth, 2022). Looking critically at the concept of ESD it actually requires the inclusion of guidance and counselling service for its sustenance and actualization. In summary ESD is education that fosters the builders of a sustainable society.

The aims of ESD as stated by MEXT (20220 includes the following amongst others;

- (1) Teachers and students elicit issues related to building a sustainably society centring on the six perspectives that constitutes the building a sustainable society. Concepts of sustainable society building includes
  - (a) Diversity (variety exist)
  - (b) Interdependence (relating to each other)
  - (c) Limitation (limits exist)
  - (d) Fairness (valuing everybody)
  - (e) Cooperation (cooperation with others)
  - (f) Responsibility (taking responsibility)
- (2) Teachers and students acquire the seven competencies and attitudes necessary to solve problems in order to build a sustainable society. These competencies and attitudes to be emphasized in ESD includes
  - (a) Ability to think critically
  - (b) Ability to plan with anticipation of a future scenario
  - (c) Ability to think in multidimensional and integrative ways
  - (d) Ability to communicate
  - (e) Ability to cooperate with others
  - (f) Attitude to respect relations and connections
  - (g) Attitude to participate proactively

### **Theoretical framework**

The study is anchored principally on the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) of Aaron Beck and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) of Albert Ellis.

### **Cognitive Behaviour Therapy**

Beck (1976) noted that Aaron Beck the originator of the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy discovered that self-critical cognition which he referred to as 'automatic thoughts' are one of the keys to success in therapy. When clients pay attention to the stream of automatic thoughts (internal Dialogue) that



accompany and direct their actions, they can make choices about the appropriateness of these self-statements, and if necessary introduce new thoughts and ideas which will automatically lead to a happier and more satisfied life. McLeod (2009) note that the cognitive therapy tradition became a combination of cognition and behavioural ideas and methods and translated to be cognitive behaviour therapy. This therapy is based on the idea that a client's cognition has a huge impact on his/her feelings and behaviour. This simply means how we think (cognition), how we feel (emotion) and how we act (Behaviour) are all interrelated. This therefore implies that negative and unrealistic thoughts can cause us anxiety, unhappiness, depression, anger or psychological problems resulting to major problems that can hinder our wellbeing. Becks believes that the emotional and behavioural difficulties we experience in life are not caused directly by events but by the way we interpret and make sense of these events. Individuals who show maladaptive behaviour have faulty or distorted thinking pattern. These patterns stem from what he called 'cognitive schemas'. Cognitive Schemas are deeply held general statements that sum up the assumptions that client hold about the world. They are core beliefs that bias the way we perceive and interpret experiences. Beck stressed that challenging the aim of therapy is to help people reorganize and change their faulty thinking patterns and self-defeating behaviours for lasting change to occur, it is important to move beyond identifying irrational beliefs and automatic thought, and deal with schema within which they are embedded.

The following kinds of cognitive distortions were identified by Beck:

- (1) Overgeneralization: this has to do with drawing general conclusions from very limited evidence.
- (2) Dichotomous thinking: This is a situation where an individual tend to see situations in terms of polar opposite that is seeing things as completely good or completely bad.
- (3) Personalization: this has to do with the tendency to imagine and always attribute his/her actions to his/her shortcoming.

CBT can be used to treat people with a wide range of mental problems and other behavioural problems. The aim of therapy is to teach client that while they cannot control every aspect of the world they can control how they interpret and respond to situations around them. Closely related to this theory is the Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy

The Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (Albert Ellis)

Ellis devised a set of rules for effective living that meets the desire of those who are forward looking without relying on the support of others just to help man overcome fears and anxieties and other emotional disorders of man that are rooted in his cognition and by extension his feelings (Alutu, Ifelunni&Ikegbunam, 2016). Ellis view of man includes;

- 1) Man is inherently rational and irrational. This suggest that man has the ability to think reasonable and at the same time unreasonably. He is happy and sane when he is rational but creates challenges for himself when he is irrational.
- 2) Man's feelings are to his thinking, hence there is a strong link between cognition and emotion. This simply means that our emotional problems are caused by our irrational belief systems or our crooked thinking
- 3) Man's major disturbances arises from his self-talk or self-verbalization. These are perceived negative events in the life of the individual which he internalizes and continually voices out that they soon become part of his thought processes and by implication his emotion
- 4) Man imbibes his illogical thinking processes from his early interactions with his parents and culture

- 5) It is not the event in man's life that make him irrational but rather his perception of the consequences of such events
- 6) Because man is rational, he is capable of changing his thought processes and feelings through re-organising his perception and replacing such negative thoughts with a more positive one

Ellis believes that human beings makes themselves victims of irrational thinking and can virtually destroy themselves through irrational and muddled thinking (Anagbogu, 1992). The main work of the counsellor in this approach is to cure 'unreason with reason' the counsellor makes conscious efforts geared towards helping the client to get rid of illogical and irrational ideas, attitudes and to substitute them with logical and rational ideas and attitudes. Real teaching is employed in helping clients to resolve their problems.

These theories are cognitive approaches to counselling, they view counselling as a cognitive process, cognition include people's thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes towards themselves and others, and their perceptions of the world around them (Hackney et al, 2005). Neukrug (2003) averred that cognitive therapies are logic-oriented processes that involves replacing irrational thoughts with rational ones. Most times people would say that cognitions determine who they are, what they do, and how they feel. This view can be interpreted to mean that errors in thinking, sometimes called faulty thinking, are especially likely to produce distressing emotions and/or problematic behaviour. For example, an individual who expects to fight prepares him/herself for a fight, and the result is that he/she approaches life events from a 'fight' orientation, and the probability is great that this person will always fight at the slightest provocation. This kind of person may benefit from strategies that focuses primarily on changing beliefs, attitudes and perceptions about self and others (Beck, 1976; Lazarus, 1989).

Cognitive therapeutic interventions have been used extensively to restructure cognitive processes of individuals especially in problems relating to anxiety reduction, stress management, anger control, habit control, depression, phobic disorders, and sexual dysfunction. Many persons get into trouble by thinking too much. These cognitive oriented theories gives clients the necessary tools to change to more productive and accurate thought patterns. Thinking is a very special quality possessed by humans, but it can be misused in most cases, when this happens, it can lead to depression, physical illness, even suicidal thoughts and attempts, can someone with such tendencies succeed or participate actively in education for sustainable development? This is the crux of the matter. The cognitive oriented therapies underpins this study by re-orientating humans from faulty cognitive processes that may hinder their active participation in the education for sustainable development.

### **Problems Confronting Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria and Possible Mitigating Strategies**

Education gives room for a country's development in all spheres of life. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in her national policy on Education (2004) recognizes this fact in these words ' education is 'an instrument' 'par excellence' for effecting national development. Concerted efforts have been made by Government and education stake holders to sustain the gains of education yet there are nagging problems confronting education in Nigeria, these problems make the achievement of Education for sustainable development impossible and they cut across politics, economy, attitudinal and social spheres. Though the list cannot be exhausted the following can be identified;

- (1) Poor Funding – education is not cheap and it needs extensive funding, the budgetary allocation in Nigeria is lower than the recommended 26 percent by the United Nations. This benchmark was recommended to enable nations to adequately fund the rising cost of

education, this is a major setback for education for sustainable development. Government should take a bold step to work in line with the 26 percent budgetary allocation before touching any other sector.

- (2) Poor Governance – the way and manner education is being managed in Nigeria is a major setback for education for sustainable development. Any government can wake up and introduce wild changes in the education system, for instance before the nation could master the 6-3-3-4 system, the 9-3-4 system came in to replace it. Government attitude towards education is lackadaisical especially quality education. At times attention is laid at one level at the neglect of the other levels. Government at all levels should give more attention to education because it is the foundation for development and experts should be consulted before wild changes are made.
- (3) Corruption – corruption have eaten deep into the fabrics of the Nigerian system the education sector is not an exemption. Stories are bound about lecturers collected money from students in exchange for grades, money is demanded from students for admission, monies meant for maintenance of the school are diverted for personal use etc. Corrupt officers in education sector should be shown the way out after proper investigation is carried out on such issues, this will go a long way to sanitize the system to give way to education for sustainable development.
- (4) Lack of Responsibility and control – Education in Nigeria keep shifting from one tier of government to the other, for instance the control of primary education is neither fully in the hand of Federal Government, State or local Government, this is a major setback at the basic education level. Each tier of government should be given the responsibility to take care of a level of education for proper control.
- (5) Politicization of Education – Education in Nigeria have been politicised and this has been a major setback for education. Schools (mostly private) are accredited at every nook and cranny all in a bid to generate more revenue for themselves. Existing government schools have not been properly financed yet more schools are been opened just for the credit. Existing schools at all levels should be properly financed for the gains of education for sustainable development.
- (6) Lack of infrastructure – there is dearth of infrastructure in the education sector, the Nigerian students have suffered under the burden of dilapidated infrastructure, lack of technology at all levels, retrospective academic curriculum, lack of teaching aids etc. the end result is an education system that is inexplicably worse than what the colonial masters handed over to us 63 years ago (Kpolovie, 2012). This needs urgent and radical critical all round remediation, intervention by government for a sustainable education.
- (7) Indiscipline – this is manifested at all levels of education in form of examination malpractice, secret cult activities, sexual harassment, sorting etc. students are no longer concerned about excellent academic activities but paper qualification. This is a major minus for education for sustainable development. Guidance and Counselling should be put in place to instil moral values that can promote discipline.
- (8) Poor parenting and Guidance – Parents cannot provide the basic necessities needed to meet the challenges of their wards, parents sort unholy means of satisfying their needs at the detriment of their education. Government at all levels should give support to indigent students in form of bursaries and scholarships to ease the burden on parents.
- (9) Other problems include, unstable curriculum and subject, unwillingness to study education in schools, Lack of good teachers' welfare, unaffordable education, Scarcity and prohibitive cost of books at all levels of education and many more



From all indication serious education for sustainable development will remain elusive and unattainable if the nation's education concept and content remain as it is that could not guarantee positive change among learners, especially the children such that they could in turn influence the development of their immediate environment and the nation in general, (Kpolovie, 2012).

### **Guidance and Counselling a Veritable Instrument of Education for Sustainable Development**

Education is an integral part of sustainable development and a key enabler for it, which is why education represents an essential strategy in the pursuit of sustainable development goals (Global University Network for Innovation (2023). For education to be sustained as a key enabler guidance and counselling must feature prominently in the education system. This is lacking in most schools and at all levels. Nwachukwu (2007) note that Guidance and Counselling is a vital component of any type and any level of education. If the vision of education for sustainable development must be achieved, sound education policy and management for public good, then our education must be reformed accordingly to include guidance and counselling at all levels. This simply means that wherever formal basic, secondary or tertiary institutions exist, there ought to be a fully functioning units of school guidance and counselling. The fundamental reason for this wakeup call is due to the fact that every human being experiences growth and developmental needs for help at one stage or another. The learner needs this extra help in order to make the best out of his/her educational opportunity (Nwachuku, 2007). The significance of guidance and Counselling as an essential service in the school system cannot be overemphasized as the Federal Government (1977) for the first time recognized this fact in these words;

'In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects, and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post primary institutions. Guidance and Counselling will also feature in teacher education programmes'

It is regrettable to note that forty-six years after this policy statement its full implementation is not insight rather partial implementation persist, only the Unity schools and a few private schools and state government owed schools can boast of guidance and counselling activities. Most of the vices experienced in schools would have been averted or minimized if guidance and counselling is given its pride of place in schools, it is an indispensable programme for the achievement of educational goals.

The following reasons justify making guidance and counselling a veritable instrument of education for sustainable development though not exhaustive;

- (1) Fundamental human rights of the child to love, care, help, guide and direct. This is one of the focal points of guidance and counselling services, when a child enjoys these rights potentials are bound to be achieved
- (2) Need for assistance to deal with obstacles to growth, development and good educational progress. Guidance and Counselling services enhances growth and development for educational success
- (3) No two individuals look exactly alike not even identical twins. Guidance and counselling activities recognizes this fact and assist students to have access to the right type of education
- (4) Early attention will be given to maladjusted behaviour patterns of learners. Guidance and counselling picks early warning signs of such behaviours for intervention

- (5) Students /career choice is given proper attention for realization of potentials. Guidance and Counselling guides and directs students to make appropriate career choices to prevent grouping in the dark
- (6) Guidance and counselling assist students towards appropriate subject selection fit for them.
- (7) Help adolescent learners to overcome the stress and storm that accompany the period
- (8) Guidance and counselling assist learners to form positive self-image of themselves for proper living
- (9) Guidance and Counselling Services exposes learners early enough to the world of work

At the tertiary level the student faces multiple choices of styles of adulthood with several decision making demands almost on a daily basis. On this basis the undergraduate student faces major needs and problems requiring guidance and counselling amongst others; helps learners to increase academic performance, self-accountability, self-management, personal orientation and value, right decision making skills, personal responsibility for decisions, actions and life choices, pre-marital sex issues, issues relating to cultism, HIV, need for marriage, general life confusion and frustration etc.

Awujo, Kennedy and Alor (2012) observed that it is generally accepted that happiness and satisfaction in life influences one's emotional life to a great extent, when confronted by frustration, inadequacy, impossible demands and lack of interest, the individual becomes dissatisfied with him/herself, with others and with life in general. This simply means that the very core of his/her mental health is being affected and gradually the person loses perspective and grip of life. What becomes of an individual in a school system whose mental health is affected? How can the goals of education for sustainable development be achieved? The simple answer to these questions is that Guidance and Counselling is needed to help in safeguarding the future mental health of students and teachers for effective teaching and learning activities to take place. If guidance and counselling is given its pride of place in our education system, most of the attitudinal problems confronting education for sustainable development will be averted. The nation is indeed failing Nigerian youths in the absence of guidance and counselling in the school system.

The Nigerian child deserves the best from the education system because he is the sole beneficiary of education for sustainable development, the education system must be such that will offer the child the best for his rapid development, be it mental, health, social, academics, vocational and personal-social. Guidance and Counselling services will nurture and sustain the individual to function effectively to achieve the gains of education. There is no alternative to innovative, transformative and reformative educational system achievable without partnering with guidance counsellors in the education sector.

## **Conclusion**

Quality Education for all is central to creating a peaceful and prosperous world. Education equips man with skills they need to stay healthy, relevant, get jobs and nurture tolerance, to foster education for sustainable development. ESD is aimed at nurturing an individual who is capable to solve environmental challenges facing the world and to promote the formation of a sustainable society (EcoMENA, 2023). It is concerned with the content and purpose of education, and more broadly with the type of learning. ESD is a challenge for all forms of education and includes learning processes, validation of knowledge, and the functioning of educational institutions. The following suggestions are made to strengthen ESD they are;

- (1) Guidance and Counselling should feature prominently at all levels of Education to restructure the mind set of learners for ESD

- (2) For the accreditation of any programme at the tertiary level of education, opening of a well-equipped counselling centre where students counselling needs will be addressed should be a condition for it
- (3) Professional Counsellors should be employed at all levels of education to man the counselling centres/units
- (4) Counsellors must equip themselves with relevant information relating to the key drivers of education for sustainable development in order to have a clear insight to the appropriate counselling strategies to apply.

Education for sustainable development stands a risk without Guidance and counselling services in the school system, Education system must respond to this need by redefining the place of guidance and counselling in the education system. From the justification for its need as stated above suffice the author to say that Guidance and counselling as a prescribed essential educational service by the Federal Government should be given a place in the education system to feature prominently in order to achieve the goals of education for sustainable development.

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