

# TRENDS IN NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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## CHAPTER 18

### RELEVANCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN OVERCOMING PSYCHO- EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS

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#### *Abstract*

*Provision of Guidance and Counselling Services is one of the educational policies of the Federal Government to cater for the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and personality maladjustment among school children. This paper, therefore, discusses the relevance and importance of Guidance and Counselling in the implementation of educational policies vis-a-vis problem areas that Guidance Counsellor could tackle for the purpose of educational development.*

#### **Introduction**

Teachers in their professional responsibilities of imparting desirable knowledge into students are faced with many hindrances. Some of these are not directly from them. For instance, despite the fact that they employed the most appropriate methodology in teaching, evidences abound which reveal mass failure in both internal and external examinations. A case in point was in 1985 when over seventy per cent of candidates who sat for West African School Certificate Examination failed woefully. Day-in, day-out, percentage of students failing greatly exceed those who are passing.

A critical analysis of the above tends to reveal that some factors other than or apart from teacher's methodology should be held responsible. Students that can still be classified as performing well have their own problems, such as inability to determine the implications of their results in terms of career choice or choice of institution. It has also been discovered that some students are not performing academically well because of psychological disturbances and frustrations which originated from their relationship with significant others in their life. This in effect creates personality maladjustment that can inhibit excellent academic performance.

When the Federal Government envisaged and realised the overall evil effects of all these hindrances to educational development vis-a-vis economic growth of the nation, it stated for public consumption in the Third National Development Plan that:

The absence of career counselling in our educational and training systems in the past must be held responsible for the frustrations observed among many of the nation's young men and women.

In order to rectify these anomalies in the Nigerian educational system the Federal Government deemed it fit in 1981 policy statement that:

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. Such qualified personnel is scarce, Government will continue to make provisions for the training of interested teachers in Guidance and Counselling. Guidance and Counselling will also feature in teacher education programmes.

It would not be incorrect to conclude that the Federal Government with this policy statement was heeding the earlier recommendations made in 1974 by the Nigerian Careers Council to Nigeria's Joint Consultative Committee among which are:

- (i) that a career master or mistress be appointed in each secondary school throughout the federation to undertake educational and vocational guidance in the school.
- (ii) that the career master or mistress post be recognised by all Ministries of Education, secondary schools proprietors, and secondary schools administrators.
- (iii) that the Federal and State Governments should make a special grant for guidance services to the Universities to enable them organise courses on guidance and counselling;
- (iv) that University Institutes of Education and Ministries of Education should co-operate to organise as many training courses as possible for career masters and mistresses;
- (v) that Universities' Institutes of Education which do not run courses in guidance and counselling should now plan to do so.

## What is Guidance and Counselling?

Guidance and Counselling is a professional process of assisting individual or group of individuals by a trained Guidance Counsellor to understand integrated self, life problems and discover alternative solutions to lingering problems. This will pave way for self-actualization and adjustment to environmental conditions. The assumption is that an individual who understood himself in terms of interest, values, beliefs, potentials, weaknesses and what is happening around him would function effectively. Guidance and Counselling is relevant to all aspects of human life be it in schools, industries, marriage and family affairs, politics etc.

Guidance Counsellors are specially trained to assist people and as such they are professionals. Their personality traits in order of frequency include understanding, sympathetic attitude, friendliness, sense of humour, stability, fact, fairness, tolerance, neatness, calmness patience, objectivity, sincerity, broadmindedness, kindness, pleasantness, social intelligence and poise (Hamrin and Paulsin (1950) while their methods of operation range from less directive to more prescriptive form of assistance depending on the client's problems.

## Importance of Guidance and Counselling to Educational Development

In the developed countries of the world the importance of Guidance and Counselling cannot be overemphasised. In fact, in some of these developed world hardly would one be able to distinguish the central objectives of education from that of Guidance Counselling. They work hand in hand to achieve educational objectives. Warnath (1965) asserted that school guidance is designed to assist students to develop and to accept an integrated picture of themselves, and of their roles in the world around them, to test these concepts against reality; and to convert the concepts into reality with satisfaction to themselves and to society. Similarly, the American Psychological Association sees counselling as being designed to help individuals towards overcoming obstacles to their personal growth, wherever these may be encountered and towards achieving optimum development of their personal resources.

In the Nigerian context, scholars of varied backgrounds have identified the importance of Guidance and Counselling towards the successful implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education. Some of these scholars submitted that in the absence of Guidance and Counselling the central objectives of education cannot be realised. Abiri (1973) for instance, argued that if our society is not to be plagued by a brood or disgruntled, frustrated and unrealistic individuals, secondary school students should be exposed to available opportunities and social expectations in the country through career guidance and counselling. In the same vein, Awokoya (1980) realising the importance of Guidance and Counselling to

education asserted that without it in schools the whole programme of education will be meaningless.

Oladele (1987) in his contribution itemised the central objectives of Guidance and Counselling towards the successful implementation of educational objectives in various institutions. He identified the assistance that Guidance and Counselling will render to students populace, teachers, parents, counsellors and government. This paper, however, will concentrate on the advantages to be derived by students, teachers, parents and government.

(1) Students will be able to

- (i) progress toward a productive and rewarding career through making appropriate and satisfying personal, social and vocational choices;
- (ii) effect smooth transition from primary to junior, and from junior to senior secondary or to vocational schools and from senior to higher institution;
- (iii) remove barrier that might come in whilst learning;
- (iv) develop positive image of self, the rough self understanding, self direction and skills in problem-solving and decision making;
- (v) participate meaningfully in the opportunities provided by the school in curricular and co-curricular activities.

2. Teachers on their part will be able to

- (i) understand better the individual way of learning of each student for whom they are responsible;
- (ii) understand and utilise the services of the guidance programme;
- (iii) develop a flexible curriculum to provide a meaningful education for each student.

3. Parents will

- (i) understand better their children educational progress;
- (ii) understand information about educational and occupational opportunities and requirements available to them and their children;
- (iii) develop realistic perception of their children's development in relation to their potentials.

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