

**CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN GUIDANCE AND  
COUNSELING: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR NATION  
BUILDING**

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**Abstract**

Guidance and counselling today is an important integral part of the educational process of this nation (Nigeria). The guidance and counselling programme is widely recognized as an important educational service which aims at assisting individuals and to ensure success in one's life pursuit. Since the inception of the programme in the nation's educational system, its role in ensuring the achievements of the educational system, is widely acknowledged. This papers thus, examined the objectives in the system; functionality; innovation and education, innovation within functional education for nation building and the role of guidance and counselling in nation building too. Focus, was also placed on creativity and innovation in the programme. Furthermore, some challenges hindering the much needed success of the programme such as ineffective planning and inadequate sustainable funding ofcounseling actively were highlighted. Finally, some suggestions were proffered such as urging state and federal governments to adequately fiancé the training and development of guidance and counselling and restructure the school curriculum to pave way for creativity, innovation and interactive sessions between the counsellors and the clients (students) who are always at the receiving end.

Education has been identified as a very essential tool for the development of any nation. It is an invaluable instrument of political; social; economic, scientific and technological development. This is why people and societies look up to education as a source of hope for the achievement of their inspirations and aims. Nigeria as a country recognized this very important role of education. Any nation that means well for its citizen should have a viable education with well-defined aims and objectives. It is in this regard that the country has developed a national policy on education with the following broad aims:

- a. A free and democratic society;
- b. A just and egalitarian society;
- c. A united, strong and self-reliant country;
- d. A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (NPE 2013).

From the aims above, it means that education is the most desirable vehicle that can readily afford our nation, the much needed awareness; skilled manpower; creativity; inventiveness; innovative thinking; technical advancement, viable, durable political culture and stability needed in building the nation.

### **Guidance and Counselling**

Counselling is generally referred to as a developing profession. It is a relation between two or more people, that is the counsellor, who is the professional and the counsellee or

client(s) that is the person or people who need help. Counselling itself could be said to refer to a number of proceedings use in assisting an individual in solving problems which arise from various aspects of his life or overall personal development so that he could be more effective, satisfied and more useful to the society in which he lives Mallum (2004:189).

Counselling services include all the techniques and strategies adopted by the counsellor to facilitate changes in the behaviour of the client through understanding of himself and the environment. When the client understands himself, this will help him appreciate his problems and personality which includes values; attitudes; interest, abilities and capabilities. Counselling services also takes care of the problems of the affective, cognitive and psychomotor dimensions.

Counselling is one of the services in guidance. Guidance is the total programme engaged in by an educational institution that is aimed at helping an individual client to make meaningful choices that would achieve self-actualization. Counselling is the heart of guidance services. It is the most important and central service, hence it is usually written with guidance as "guidance and counselling".

The roles of Creativity in the transformation process in every educational endeavours should not be undermined. The essence of being alive is to create. MacMillan Dictionary (2007) defines creativity as the ability to

create new ideas or things using imagination. Simply put, creativity is the inborn tendency in man to form a thing. In the words of Ogbe (2012:216), creativity deals with abstract thing, imagination, originality, inventiveness and or giftedness. This means creativity is all about abstract thinking and imagination to do or produce something which may be of economic value. A person is said to be creative if he has the ability to combine or rearrange established patterns of knowledge in a unique fashion.

Creativity and innovation enable human beings to get the most out of experiences and resources. Creativity and innovation are cheapest ways of getting added value from existing assets. Without creativity and innovation, man is not able to make use of information and resources available but locked up in old habits; structures; patterns, designs and perceptions. Creativity and thinking are therefore, the most fundamental of all human resources and skills. The quality of human thinking determines the quality of his or her future.

### **Nation Building**

In this paper, nation building is synonymous with national development. In this regard the first theory underpinning it is social responsibility theory, education has a social function beyond educating. The society and the public have right to expect high standard of performance from educators and education. Another relevant theory is the development theory which posits that

educators should accept and carry out positive development task in line with action established policies (Nworab, 2005). Many polities have been in Nigeria in virtually all spheres of national development. Educational which is functional and innovative is therefore a desideratum in meeting national goals of development. One of the problems that have inhibited national development is not the absence of human capital or human capital flight.

### **Objectives of Guidance and Counselling in Nigerian Educational Setting**

Guidance and counselling in education provide such experience that assist each pupil to understand himself, accept himself and live effectively in the society.

The main purpose of guidance and counselling is based on the assumption that individuals who understands themselves and their world will become more effective, more productive and happier human beings. The professional school councillor meets the need of students in three basic domains: academic development, career development, and personal/social development, understanding and selection of these domains are developed through classroom instructions, appraisal, consultation, coordination and collaboration. The counsellors facilitates communication among teacher, parents, administrators and students to adopt the school environment in the best interest of each individual student. The help

individual students to make the most of their school experiences and prepare them for the future endeavours.

### **Functionality: Innovation and Education**

Functionality is from the parent word “function”. According to MacMillan Dictionary (2003), function means “the job that something is designed to do”. In another language coinage, it defines function as “to work or operate in correct way”. By implication therefore, functionality in education is the display of the expected attitudinal changes by the product of an educational programme.

Innovation, on the other hand comes from parent word “innovate” going by MacMillan Dictionary (2003), it means to “invent or begin using new ideas, methods, equipment etc”. These new ideas, methods, equipment etc are called innovation. That is to say, innovation in educational system implied application of new ideas, methods equipment etc towards enhancement of knowledge.

Thinker, (2006) stated quite succinctly that education cannot thrive without innovation but effective innovation do not just happen, they need to be on solid ideas, they need to be developed by talented team with diverse skills and they need to be widely disseminated.

### **Innovation within Functional Education for Nation Building**

Education is an instrument for facilitating nation building. It is expected that it should focus on assessing the individual in his/her self-actualization bid. It therefore, considers the individual’s peculiar circumstances. Innovations are utilized in this process. Functional education in this context should not only emphasize only acquisition of knowledge; skills, attitudes and feelings. It should go more than that. Critical thinking (creativity/innovation) should be pursued vigorously. Students should be made to think for themselves and not only learn what other people have thought out.

Critical thinking should be at the core of what happens in education. Logic and objective reasoning are central. The process of thinking is equally relevant. Thinking should not only look at what to believe but should equally focus on making out sense of the experience. The interaction therefore, between teachers and students should engender critical thinking so that students can cease to write down everything they hear but only the important substance.

Teachers, particularly at the primary and secondary school levels should use dialogue; this is difficult as it takes longer time and may prevent content coverage before examination. Focus of most teachers even though is on content but thinking must equally be given prominence. Thinking can be

down within the context of content. Reading abilities should be very helpful in this regard. An implication of this is that teachers should equally be able to think. You cannot give what you have.

One areas that parents have not fared well is in the area of helping children to develop appropriate skills which they have the capabilities and interest. Learner should be encouraged to pursue area of interest. If the innovations are introduced and learners do not have the requisite skills and interest, then such innovations may be frustrated. Taking into consideration the interest of the learners, can assist self-learning on continuous basis. Innovation tied to functional education would help in developing holistic individuals who would not be misfit with the nation.

### **Effective Counselling Services in Classroom Interaction**

The classroom atmosphere is very important for students to learn as well as for counselling services. When a classroom is tensed, hostile, and unfriendly, counselling services cannot be effective or achieved. In a classroom where the teacher has no control and does not provide conducive environment for both learning and counselling to take place, learners will behave in ay way they like and will make counselling difficult for the teacher even when he has identified the problems. Learners bring in with them many and different problems to the class with an expectation that these problems will be met in one way or the other. This

is why the teacher should be knowledgeable in many fields and also serve as parent and guide to them.

For effective counselling services to take place in the classroom, the teacher must ensure the following: create conducive classroom atmosphere, identify learners' problems, love, them, avoid using cane always, be firm, have self-control, be knowledgeable especially in your area of specialization etc. this will create on avenue for learners to open up to the teacher and he will effectively counsel them. Teachers are expected to make reference to their school counsellors when they identify learners who have problems or are with problems.

Counselling has now come of age with innovation to make the programme attractive to the target learner like the students, teachers and parents. In planning and organizing school programme, all areas of the child's development and needs are highly focused. The programme include developing and stating unambiguously; the objectives of the needs to be achieved. This is follow by determining the evaluation methods and selecting strategies that can be must pertinent. The implementation involves executing the strategies, monitoring the progress made or achievement attained and carrying the evaluation of the programme, to determine the success or failure of the total school programme.

### **Challenges**

Many problems hinder effective guidance and counselling programme in Nigeria. One of these is ineffective educational planning. Educational planning is the application of a rational, scientific approach of examining wider alternatives before proceeding systematically to implement the choices thus made.

Educational planning also involves a succession of independent actions which include classification of educational objectives, the diagnosis of the present conditions and assessment of alternatives. Other challenges/problems confronting effective implementation and successes of guidance and counselling programme include:

- a. Inadequate training of guidance/counsellors
- b. Maintenance of the trained counsellors
- c. Counselling strategies improvement
- d. Sustainable funding of counselling services
- e. Quality control and co-operative education counselling

### **The Role of Guidance and Counselling in Nation Building**

The rapid changes in science and technology and the introduction of new technology in particular, have changed the development prospects of many nations. The adoption of new technologies have given some developing nations new hope while others have fallen behind in economic

terms. The technological advancement in many newly industrialized countries can be attributed to dramatic changes in school curriculum and emphasis on practical rather than theoretical base instruction.

In order to meet up with these change, guidance and counselling programme is the instrument through which the training of needed manpower in any country could be achieved.

Nigeria needs the services of guidance and counselling because of the latest development in terms of population explosion, demand for white collar job, and increase in robbery and other related crimes, examination malpractices etc. Every student nowadays want to go for courses or secure jobs that will earn him a living in the society. Some want to be medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc. it is the work of the counsellor to help the students to actualize their potentialities and dream so that they can contribute meaningfully to nation building.

In summary, therefore the guidance programme can help in nation building through:

- a. The planning of curriculum with matter and method well stipulated and evaluation process well mapped out.
- b. The educational planners can easily know the countries potentialities in the field of man power.
- c. Through personality services provided by the guidance services, character are moulded

- and people behave better and discipline in the country is improved.
- d. Pupils will now be placed on the right job that fits their personality and ability, aptitude and interest.
  - e. Certain health catastrophes like HIV, hypertension, maladaptive behaviour like drug addiction, smoking, juvenile delinquency and other crimes can be averted through counselling.

### **Conclusions**

From the forgoing discussion, it is clear that guidance and counselling if fully operated in Nigerian educational system can expedite meaningful technological, social and economic development of Nigeria as a nation.

Nation building is a desire of any country. Education is a potent factor in this regard. Through it, corps of trained and skilled professionals are produced to manage all spheres of national development. Therefore, education which is functional and uses innovative approaches can be helpful in this regard. One needs to tailor educational programme to the interest and needs of the learners. Critical thinking or creativity is an important instrument which should be relied upon here. Teachers and indeed learners should be exposed to it. In this way school product would not be passive recipients but active receivers of what the school have to offer in totality.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the discussions so far, it is observed that if guidance and counselling programme is fully embraced and the following suggestions put in place, the future prospects of our country in technological development is sure to be achieved.

1. The teachers, counsellors, parents, youth and the government should be involved in guidance and counsellings responsibility.
2. The federal and state government should adequately finance the training and development of guidance counsellors considering the fact that the task ahead is enormous.
3. The school curriculum should be restructured to cater for an interactive session between the students and counsellors.
4. Government should see to it that our various colleges in the country posse a counselling centre to assist the students in their various problems.

State and federal government should put in more efforts to reawaken in guidance counsellors their professional consciousness to duty by encouraging them through necessary incentives and seminars.

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