

## Implementation of Guidance and Counseling Services in Nigerian Schools

<sup>1</sup>Mogbo I.N; <sup>2</sup>Obumneke-Okeke I.M and <sup>2</sup>Anyachebelu, F.E

<sup>1</sup>Department of Science Education, Federal University of Technology  
Minna, Niger State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Early Childhood & Primary Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University,  
Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

**Corresponding Author: Mogbo I.N**

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### Abstract

*The challenges of facing the ever changing frontiers of knowledge in various fields in the society and the task of helping individuals to adjust to these changes, call for proper implementation of guidance and counseling services in schools. This paper examined the need and concepts of guidance and counseling in schools. It also suggested what roles stakeholders should play for proper implementation of guidance and counseling services. It recommended among others that guidance services be started at the primary school level, where a model guidance centre and organ gram, model infrastructure and equipment be put in place to guide all schools in federation, be they public or private schools. It emphasized adequate funding for maintenance and sustainability of guidance and counseling services in schools. If this is done, students will be found worthy in character and in learning to face the challenges of the globalize world economy in Nigeria.*

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**Keywords:** guidance, counseling, counselors, schools, stake holders

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### INTRODUCTION

The recent complex changes and education trends in the world 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 e.t.c 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 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 implementation of Guidance and 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 conditions of the Nigeria Economy and its ever increasing labor market demands will be met by students as employees or employers 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 values, 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).

### CONCEPTS DEFINITION

Some basic concepts would be clearly defined to give clear direction for adequate implementation of guidance and counseling services by stakeholders, these concepts are guidance and counseling. Guidance literally means to "guide", inform, direct, watch over, aid and assist individual, students in making choices, adjustments and solving problems they encounter in teaching and learning situations." The individual is assisted to understand, accept and use his abilities, aptitudes and interests to achieve his goals and aspirations (Odemelam & Uwani 2009; Mogbo, 2005; Shertzer & Stone, 1981). Guidance therefore is a process of helping individuals to understand themselves and their world. It is developmental in nature, the individual is assisted to understand, accept and use his abilities, aptitudes,

interest's attitudinal patterns in relation to his aspirations. It is an integral part of the education process where students are assisted to understand themselves, their abilities, interests and goals. Guidance held the individual to view himself objectively and realistically thus he/she gets self-insight, motivation for wise decision-making skills. The major goal of guidance is facilitation of personal development of the individual/student. Guidance services therefore should be properly implemented at all stages of the educational process from primary to tertiary level. Counseling on the other hand, is a process by which trained counselors offer help to an individual in a one to one or one to many encounter. In counseling, information is given but it deals more intensely with personal and emotional issues. The individual is assisted to understand his feelings, thinking and behaviors particularly behaviors that make him to live a happy life. It is more private and confidential than guidance, hence it is known as the nucleus of the guidance programmed. Counseling helps the individual to take an honest look at himself, locate his strengths and weaknesses, consider those feelings, thought and behavior patterns in the context of laws, rules and regulations approved by society. Counseling makes him to consider alternates in the light of existing facts and information to make an informed, wise and personal decision. Counseling aids growth, independent thinking and self-reliance. The individual/student understands what he can do with his head, hands and soul that are of great benefits to him and the society. Counseling makes the individual to be self-directed and self-actualized, hence he can solve his problems when assisted (Breidenbach, 1998; Akinboye, 1987; Kolo, 1981).

The National Policy on Education (2004) again pointed out the guidance and counseling services, are important education services that are essential for successful implementation of the Nigerian educational system. It advocated setting up guidance services as earlier mentioned in all post-primary schools with professionally trained counselors to administer such services. How then do we implement this important service in Nigerian schools?

The proper implementation of the guidance and counseling services in schools can only be effective, if all stakeholders can properly play their roles in the implementation process. The stakeholders or team players and requirements are listed as follows;

- ❖ The Federal and State Ministries of Education.
- ❖ Human Resource provision (Counselors, teachers, parents, students, other support staff).
- ❖ Provision of physical and material resources
- ❖ The provision of fund (Financial Resource Provision)
- ❖ The Society (Religious Bodies, NGOs) support.

The Federal and State Ministries should play the

leadership role of policy formulation and implementation. Consequently in the year 1988, the Federal Ministry of Education at the meeting of the National Council on Education set up the following policy guidelines for states to implement concerning guidance and counseling services in Nigerian schools.

1. States should intensify training programmers to produce enough guidance counselors for all post primary institutions within the state.
2. Train career masters/mistresses using the criteria spelt out in the taskforce report on guidance and counseling interim measure before the production of adequate qualified guidance counselors.
3. States are to use their scholarship schemes in training counselors at Bachelor and Master of Education levels.
4. Federal Government would also train more counselors at Masters level through her yearly scholarship programmed.
5. All qualified counselors should be redeployed to function as full time counselors in schools and not used as teachers of subjects.
6. States should have counseling units/sections in the Ministries of Education headed by a trained qualified counselor.
7. States should create separate budgetary allocation for implementing guidance and counseling services and programmers, in all levels of operation namely (Ministry, Zonal and School levels).
8. The implementation of guidance and counseling services in the state should be supervised, monitored and evaluated on regular basis. These policies are yet to be adequately implemented.

This paper suggests that the states should target having at least one counselor per school. Also, the state should develop a "model/standard counseling centre" with modern equipment and infrastructure in the state capital for schools in the state to copy or emulate. This "model counseling centre" should carry out major guidance services/programmers that will act as a basic pattern/guide to all other schools in the state. The Federal Government is to assume the leadership role of policy formulation and the State Government of setting up of one "model Guidance and Counseling centre" in her capital city for all schools in the state to use a guide.

The implementation of Guidance and Counseling services and programmers requires adequate funding which is the key factor for proper implementation of the guidance services, the areas that should be funded are training of human resources (Counselors) through scholarship scheme at Bachelor and Master's level. Training career Masters/Mistresses and provision of adequate allowances for the school guidance committee or team. The school guidance committee

should be made up of the following members;

1. The principal, who should be the chairman
2. The Counselor, who should be the Secretary
3. The HOD's for Science, Arts, Commerce and Technical vocational subject's members.
4. Senior House Master/Mistress -Member
5. Physical Education Teacher - Member
6. The School Medical Personnel/Nurse - Member
7. Representative of the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and student's representative when necessary – members.

The role of the guidance committee will be to assist each school in planning, organizing and mapping out strategies for effective implementation of guidance programs in their schools. They will also assist the school on issues relating to students values, behavior reports, and procurement of physical facilities support, encouraging smooth and cordial relationship between the counselor and the school personnel and parents, in the implementation of the guidance and counseling services and programme delivery. Other relevant personnel that can work with the Counselor are computer literate typist who will do correspondence work and also assist in the gathering of educational, vocational, personal, social information and running other errands for the counselor particularly in reaching out to students, teachers and parents in the school and outside the school community.

#### **Provision of Physical and Material Resources\Facilities**

The Counselor should be given a standard office located in a place where privacy is possible. At least two rooms should be provided, the clerical staff room and the consulting room for counseling. The office should be modestly furnished and comfortable. The basic furniture provision expected in such an office are as follows; Bulletin Board or Notice Board, Bookshelves, Suggestion box for students to slot in their needs and concerns. Special cabinets for storing and retrieving students cumulative record folders. Filing cabinets for files. Audiovisual materials such as projectors, computers, radio and cassettes. Connection to internet facilities/school net. Computer Discs (CDs), empty tapes, desks and laptops. A small library shelf with books, magazines, journals, newspapers and career/vocational information guides.

This library holding should be relevant to guidance practice and current. Psychological tests such as scholastic, aptitude and intelligence tests, achievement and mental ability tests, interest, inventories to measure (expressed interest, manifest interest, tested interest and invented interest tests). Personality inventories for detecting normal and maladjusted personalities and self-concepts. Non-test instruments such as anecdotal records, observation and interview schedules and the personal data

perform for getting information on students background such as parents status, salary education, nature of work and other relevant information. These material resources are listed in details, so that schools will make adequate budget provision for procurement of the materials. Other relevant records/documents that should be in the Counselor's office are continuous assessment records for all classes. Proceedings and communiqué of workshops, seminars, conferences and talks within the state and from other states. These documents/papers should be put together and bound into a volume for reference, when needed. Also, Psychological tests should be procured or developed e.g. MOPS, ATAS, SHI, vii etc. They can be bought from the University of Ibadan from the author Baker. For effective implementation of guidance services. The roles of other major stakeholders in the implementation of the guidance services are summarized as follows;

The principal should assume a leadership role by being interested in the services/programmes. He should assist the counselor be effective in implementing the programme. He should ensure that a good rapport exists between the counselors and other stakeholders, by supervising, monitoring as well as evaluating the counselor's work in the school. The counselor's role are summarized as follows; Giving students information, guidance and counsel on educational vocational/occupational/career, social, personal/group concerns and some issues of students development problems and capacity building. The counselor should render also the following services to students;

- ❖ Educational services such as issuance of transcripts, vocational/occupation, referral services, placement service helping students to choose (subjects, courses and in class selection).
- ❖ Curriculum development or improvement, continuous assessment programme. He should help students in development of good study skills and habits. Help students to choose right subject combinations.

Advising school teachers, and administrators. Organizing orientation and remedial programmers for new students. Helping students to get information concerning further studies. Assisting students to face with success challenging subjects. Helping students to face and cope with examination anxiety and anxiety when speaking in class or in public or wherever they are called to speak in the" school community or society. Assisting students to use the library effectively. Making occupational information available to students. Helping students to organize and use their time and resources effectively. Helping students to develop proper decision making and leadership skills and a host of other life and social skills students can be assisted to get, if they are encouraged to consult the counselors for help because

counseling is a developmental process, in which one individual (the counselor) provides to another individual or group (the client), guidance and encouragement, challenge and inspiration in creatively managing and resolving practical, personal and relationship issues, in achieving goals, and in self-realization which only counselors can handle effectively.

For Niger and Anambra state schools, it is suggested that the following important services be offered in every school from primary to tertiary level.

1. Orientation service/programme for new students
2. Study skills examination phobia/anxiety skills
3. Decision making, healthy interrelationship skills particularly between boys and girls.
4. Remedial and referral guidance programmes
5. Vocational and occupational information guidance programmes
6. Placement service (counsel on choice of subjects, class and course selection programmers).
7. Stress management and management of time and resources programs)
8. Use of library, textbooks, internet search programmes
9. Local research into educational, vocational and personal social problems, concerns of students in schools at all levels.
10. Organizing seminars, talks, workshops, conferences at least annually, this will help stakeholders to get adequate information for proper implementation of guidance and counseling services in all schools in the state. Also support and encouragement of counselors to do their best, in implementing the programme.

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from all, we have discussed and examined that the implementation of guidance services and programmes in schools is an enormous task that requires concerted effort by all stakeholders. Stakeholders therefore should totally accept to do their best, be focused and committed to follow the principles and ethics of the profession, have mutual trust and respect for each other as a team in their working relationship. Remove suspicion on the activities of counselors, encourage and support committee counselors to do their best as counselors. Encourage and support counselors, but have the courage to call them to order when they stray. Always maintaining a good working relationship with counselors, to be able achieve the counseling and guidance goal of assisting students to critically examine themselves to understand their positive and negative feelings of fear, anxiety, and value orientation for adequate personality development and growth which helps the school to be more productive. Finally, it is also recommended that all resources (physical, social, economic and human) needed for the implementation of the guidance and counseling

programme in schools be provided by the stakeholders in and outside the school community.

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